

Subversion

Issue 17

FREE!

The Class Struggle goes on the road.

In this issue:

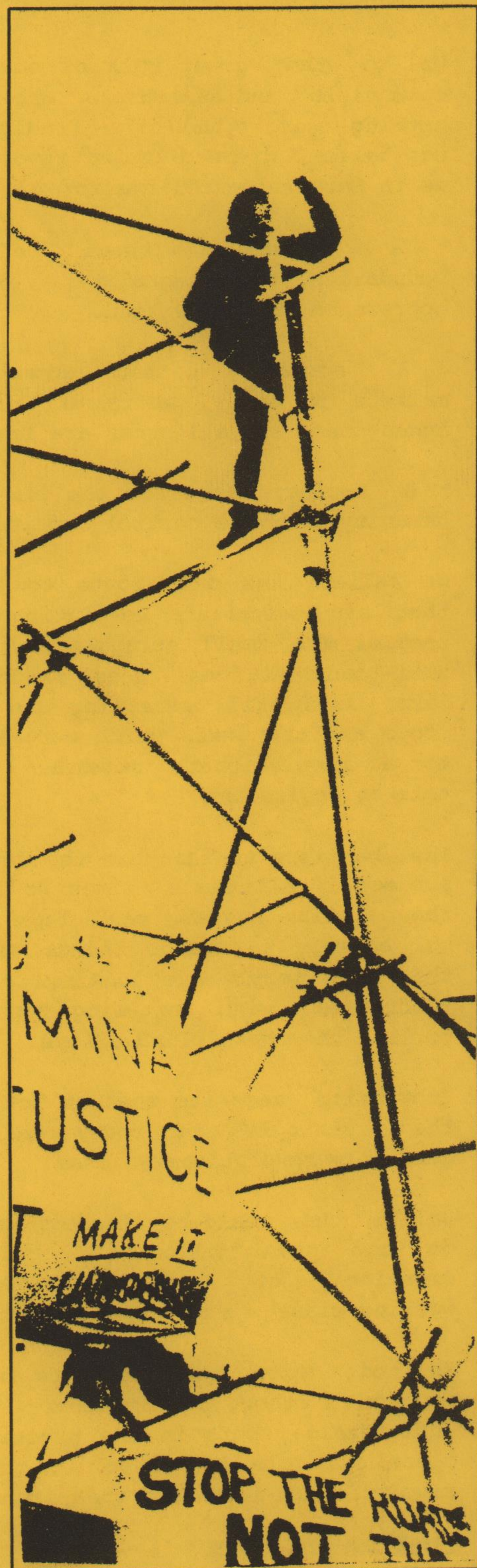
* The Changing State...

...and the Changing Working Class.

* The Animals debate continues.

* And more!

Plus:
Is OJ innocent?
See back page!



ABOUT OURSELVES

Who we are....

SUBVERSION is a revolutionary organisation which draws on the best elements of both the Anarchist and Marxist traditions. We define ourselves as being anti-state, anti-market communists.

Unlike the great bulk of so-called socialists, communists and anarchists who in our view aim at nothing more than a "radical" version of capitalism, dressed up in revolutionary language, we in Subversion believe in:

- A society without classes, national boundaries, inequality, exploitation or oppression of any kind.
- A society without commodity production, markets or money, where all production is for human need and all goods are free to everyone.
- A society where for the first time in history humanity can take control of its own destiny;

We believe the only route to such a society is that of worldwide revolution by working class people. The small struggles of today (strikes, anti-roads actions, mass raids on supermarkets like in Brazil, squatting and anti-rent actions etc.) are the seeds which contain the potential for a revolutionary movement powerful enough to take on capitalism.

The barriers to this are the fact that people are subjected all their lives to ideas in favour of the existing system, the lack of confidence in our ability to change things, and, not least, that when people are looking for change they are confronted with left-wing bogus revolutionaries to lead them down blind alleys.

Subversion sees its task as both participating in the struggles of today and putting forward genuinely revolutionary ideas.

Unlike the would-be leaders of the Left, we do not seek "followers" but aim at the creation of a conscious, revolutionary working class - a movement of equals.

In this spirit, we cooperate in a non-sectarian way with other revolutionary organisations (or individuals), both in the practical activities of class struggle and also in the development of revolutionary ideas and understanding.

What we do.....

We have members in Manchester, Oldham, Leeds and near London.

We meet regularly to discuss politics, to plan this magazine and other written material and to discuss the activities we have been involved in and the ones we hope to be involved in in the future.

At the moment we are active where we work, fighting the M66 and prisoner support. We have been part of a number of efforts to bring revolutionaries together and will continue to do so. In Manchester, we are trying to bring class struggle communists and anarchists together.

How to contact us

If you want to contact us, then simply send us this coupon:

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Class struggle hits the road

Motorway Madness

Part 1. The M66.

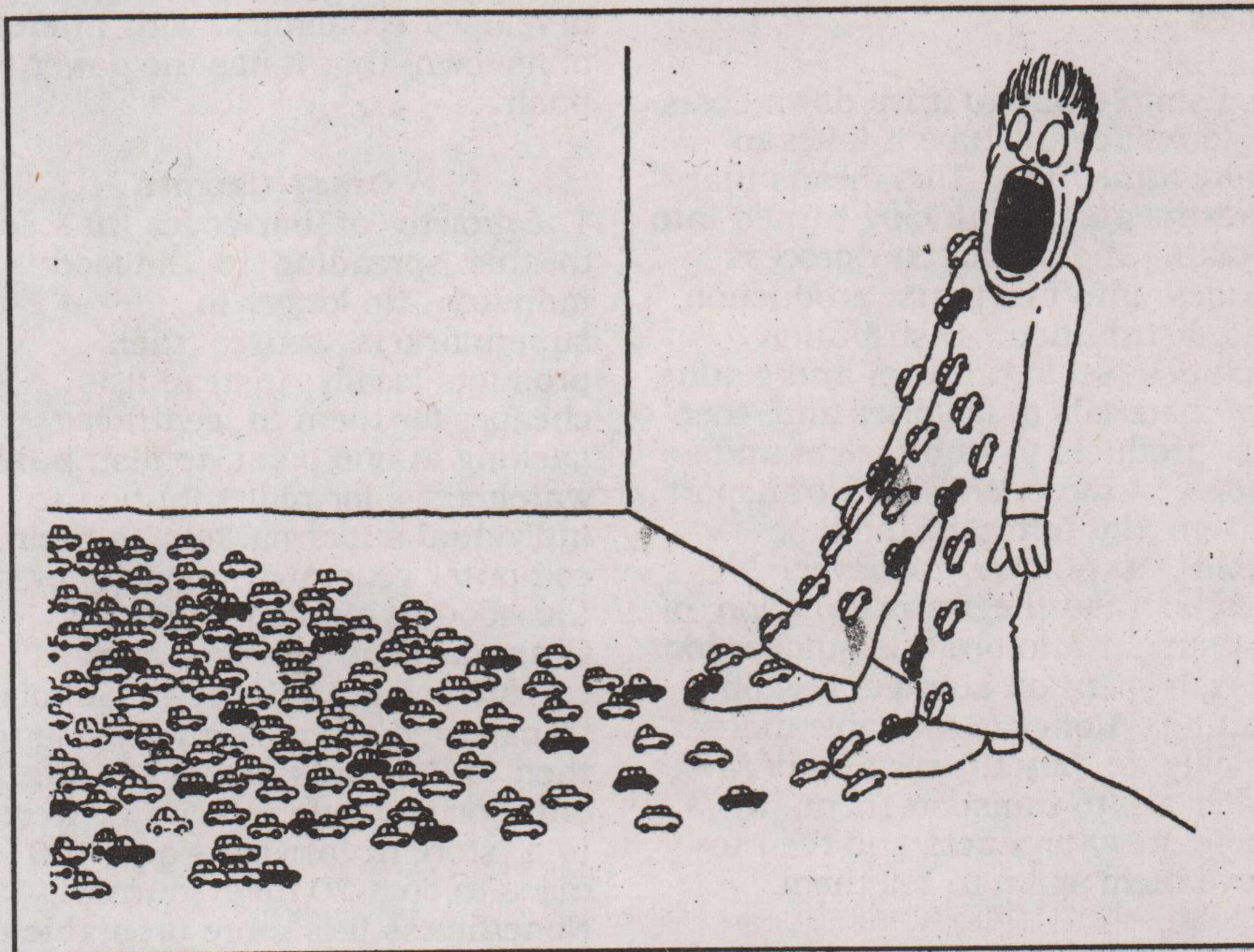
Motorway madness has finally come to Manchester. The latest phase of the state's scheme to "modernise" the road network is the completion of the ring round Manchester. This is taking the form of the extension to the M66.

This development cuts through fields, parks, schools and areas of housing. The council estate at Hollinwood, Oldham was turned into a dust bowl as the bulldozers and pile-drivers moved in. Residents found that work started at 7am every morning and carried on as long as it was light. Two local schools stood to loose chunks of their playing fields and one its gym. Streets of good housing were demolished. For many local people, the final straw was when they realised that this road was to go through Daisy Nook Country Park in the Medlock Valley. Predictably, this is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is stunningly beautiful!

As Well as threatening these areas, the motorway threatens to devastate other parts of Oldham and Rochdale. The building involves cuttings. The spoil from these will have to be dumped. Old quarries have been reopened to take care of this. Another plan is to dump in the Beale Valley, Oldham. This is an open area at the bottom of Sholver council estate. Having destroyed this area where local kids play, the council say they will reopen it in ten years time - as a golf course, for which local people will have to pay to use!

The fight back began when local activists called a picnic at Daisy Nook in June. Originally intended to test feeling, this was immediately transformed into a permanent camp. Over the summer an increasing number of, mostly local, people got involved. Their numbers were strengthened by a small number of eco-warriors.

Since the start of the camp there have been a number of successful actions against the motorway. Work



on the Hollinwood site has been stopped on more than one occasion, much to the satisfaction of local residents who have felt powerless in dealing with this menace. Knowledge of the issues involved is spreading throughout the area.

Work on the motorway is progressing slowly. The contracts for the Daisy Nook development

have not been awarded yet and work there is not expected until next spring.

Some of us have been involved in supporting the camp and we intend to continue to do so and fight the motorway as best we can. Any of our readers wanting to know more should phone the No M66 Campaign, 0161 627 4862.

Part 2. Why are motorways important?

So why is the struggle against the state's plans for motorway expansion important?

If we are to believe the Leninist Left or the "Left Communists", it is a side issue to the "real" struggles in the workplace. If we take the views of greens at face value, then it is a struggle for sanity against motorway madness.

It is our contention that the struggle against the motorways is

an important aspect of the class struggle today.

This is true for many reasons.

Expand or die....

It is beyond the scope of this article to explain why, but capital (and the economy of nation states) quite literally needs to expand or die. When the government talk about expanding the economy being essential to the needs of Britain, they are quite literally

stating the truth as far as capitalism is concerned.

An economy that does not "grow" cannot compete with its rivals. A company that does not constantly seek to cut costs and boost profit margins will see itself going to the wall. One of the main needs of capital; whether local, national or international is to drive down costs.

One simple way to drive down costs is to reduce the time it takes to make something. This means that investments are quickly turned into profits. The production process divides into two parts: production, and distribution. Distribution includes selling things and getting raw materials to factories and then the products to wholesalers and shops. A more "efficient" transport system (in terms of the time taken), a quicker turnover, means that the transformation of investment into profit is quicker too. Less is spent on storage, less on waiting. Money is available more quickly to buy the next lot of raw materials, to transport them, to make new products and then to move them again to sell them.

The need to cut down this time means at present that more and faster roads are constantly needed.

Just In Time

A good example of this is the delivery of materials according to the "Just-in-Time" principle.

Before the advent of the motorway network, factories all had large warehouses which stored the components needed in the production process. This was very costly as considerable investment sat around "doing nothing" until it was needed. The growth of computerisation changed this. Now it is possible for a factory to know exactly when a particular component is needed. A sub-contractor can be told to deliver on such-and-such a date, at such-and-such a time. Now there is no need for large warehouses. In effect the lorries have become mobile warehouses constantly moving on the motorway network. As a result, multinational companies are able to produce components where they can do so most efficiently. Thus if one needs labour intensive production it can be done where labour is cheapest, if it is hi-tech, then somewhere like Germany is preferable. The motor industry typifies this approach.

Not only are motorways needed to distribute materials to factories, they are also needed to circulate

commodities. This includes the commodity that each of us has to sell, our labour power. Put it another way, capitalism needs roads to get us to work! These are often not motorways, but are urban routes that make life hell for those living near them and drive us mad trying to use them. As part of this, the car industry is probably the most important industry in developed economies, with interests of its own that it has the power to push.

Crazy Carrots

The growth of bar-codes has led to this spreading to the food industry. No longer to supermarkets source their products locally. Instead it is cheaper for them to centralise packing at one point, to distribute to warehouses for redistribution to individual supermarkets as their computer generated models predict the food is needed. A recent Granada TV programme showed carrots being produced in Suffolk, transported to Preston for packing, then to Hertfordshire for loading onto lorries, before being delivered to a store in Ipswich - over 700 miles to do a 20 mile journey! Nonetheless it is more profitable to do this.

Euro-Roads

The European Union talks about an "Internal Market". What the EU wants is to integrate the various local and national capitals into one whole, the better to compete with other global capitals. "Efficient" communications is a vital part of this process. The talk is of a European Route Network. This allows for the greater efficiency of transport moving around the EU. To do this roads must be upgraded and widened - like the M6, M1, M42 and now the M66. Projects like the Channel Tunnel are undertaken with the eventual aim of providing a network linking Europe from Cork to Moscow.

A hundred years ago, production on the whole took place locally. Raw materials may have been imported, but power was locally produced (from coal), components were either produced on site or locally. This is no longer true. "Just-in-time", the roads and computers mean that everything is spread out to where it can be produced most cheaply. The various states take on the role of providing the warehouses, in the form of the road networks. In a sense, the whole of society has become the factory. Everywhere we go we are confronted with it, nowhere are we free from it.

So the road network is important for the current needs of modern capitalism. Unfortunately, those needs are in direct contrast to our needs. We need peace, quiet, fresh air and open spaces. All of these are threatened by the roads. We need good health - instead we get asthma. We need safe places for our kids - instead we are forced to keep them off the streets for fear of accidents. Over 4500 people a year die in Britain alone due to roads, worldwide the figure is nearer to one million. Our whole lives are becoming dominated by the needs of the roads and the motor industry.

When we fight back against road development we are hitting at capitalism's expansion needs. That is why the struggle is at the bottom a class struggle - a struggle by working class people against the needs of capital to dominate every aspect of our lives. By fighting the roads we are beginning the struggle to assert our own needs, a struggle that must eventually lead to the overthrow of this whole rotten system.

Footnote: If you want to read a more detailed analysis of the struggles against motorways, then we recommend you read Aufheben. Issues 3 and 4 contain excellent articles. They cost £2.00 each. Write to Aufheben c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton, BN2 2GY.

Friends and neighbours

If you like Subversion, why not have a look at these other mags?

Organise! Journal of the Anarchist Communist Federation. c/o 84b, Whitechapel High St., London E1 7QX

Aufheben, c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY

Proletarian Gob, Folder 19, 30 Silver St, Reading RG1

If you live near **Liverpool**, you can contact some local communists at:
PO Box 182, Liverpool L69 1UU

In **Sheffield**, write to: **Communist Headache**, PO Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY

The Chiapas and the Zapatistas.

Some comrades in Greece have sent us a long article, written after one of them visited the Chiapas region in Mexico. We can supply photocopies of it, send £1.50 for a copy.

They also sent us an article on Macedonia and the former Yugoslavia. For copies, send £1.20.

All cheques payable to **Subversion**.

DON'T TRUST JOURNALISTS

The following two articles come from the pages of past issues of *Proletarian Gob*. *Proletarian Gob* is written by one member of Subversion. You can find his address elsewhere in this issue. We think they go together well and should provide a suitable warning about the activities of journalists and the state.

You only have to read the newspapers or watch the television news to realise what a stupid and nasty bunch of gits journalists, newsreaders, commentators, and their camera operators are.

They only tell us half the story; they repeat police reports, or press releases; they are lazy; they sensationalise; they lie; they pester people; they are smug and ugly.

The "News" is very important to our rulers, not because it provides information (it hardly ever provides useful or important information, and if something useful is reported it is usually well after the event) but because it keeps us distracted, fills our heads with crap, and over and over again sell lies to us. The "news" is not news, but propaganda. However, this propaganda is fairly subtle and complex, most journalists are so stupid they don't even know they are peddling it. There is not just one "line" but several competing ones. What this means is that we are encouraged to agree with an opinion (or line) within a set framework, we can choose to favour any variations on a left wing stance or a right wing stance, but we are not allowed to go beyond that.

For example, the right wing will say that striking workers should not have attacked the police, the left wing will say that the police provoked them or started it. No one will be saying that attacking the police in general is a positive thing.

would be better off *without* an economy.

In general, journalism is a job in which you have to start at the bottom and work your way up - if you can't stomach what journalism is about you'll jack it in or get the push long before you're working on *The Guardian*, or reading *News At Ten*. If you don't want to report the school fete in the local newspaper, or pester the families of murder victims for a few comments and tears to sell your newspaper and keep your wages coming in then your career



won't go far. It's easier for journalists to write in cliches, they can't spend two weeks writing one article, and they've got to be punchy. The news is a soap opera - written to formula and full of lessons for us about things like law and order, the family, etc.

By the time a journalist has become established in our great democracies they are fully self-censoring propaganda machines, as reliable for the State and the bosses as officially controlled journalists in a totalitarian regime. But this doesn't mean we should feel sorry for the poor lobotomised dears, journalists are far more dangerous and powerful than the average police officer. Attacks and military

offensives in places like Bosnia and Somalia are often effectively directed by media reporting. Here police attacks/clampdowns are prompted by journalists.

The sight of journalists in "war torn" or "famine" areas is particularly revolting. Their high wages and the expense of carting themselves and their equipment around is supposed to be justified by their "telling the world the truth" or "making a difference". Of course we aren't actually told the truth - i.e., the capitalism creates the economic rivalries that cause wars and that war is actually good for business, or that famines are caused by the world economic system. We are meant to feel helpless, and to believe that "human nature" is at the root of everything bad, not that the system itself is what creates inequality, war, starvation, powerlessness and misery for the masses and boundless wealth and power for the few.

There is a saying that the first casualty of war is truth, well the first casualty of the class war should be journalists.

Journalists today in fact fulfil a similar function for Authority as priests used to do in mediaeval Europe. Priests used to (and still do of course) go around dishing out lies, filling peoples heads with useless ideas and debates (i.e., make people more interested in religion and heaven and hell than real daily life), and spying on people. Journalists do the same job - peasants and proletarians used to have to be forced to go to church, now we happily pay for the privilege of letting the Journo-Priest into our living rooms at 6.00pm every evening. The next day we are meant to talk about what was on the news, not our real, miserable, powerless daily existence.

Don't trust journalists - their humanity has been squeezed out of them and their brains are on auto-pilot.

One of the first tasks of a revolution is to abolish the media.

AGAINST CAMERAS ON DEMOS

In recent years there has been a proliferation of people on demonstrations who use cameras. Time was when you could tell who the journo scumbags or police spies were on a demo, these days you can't.

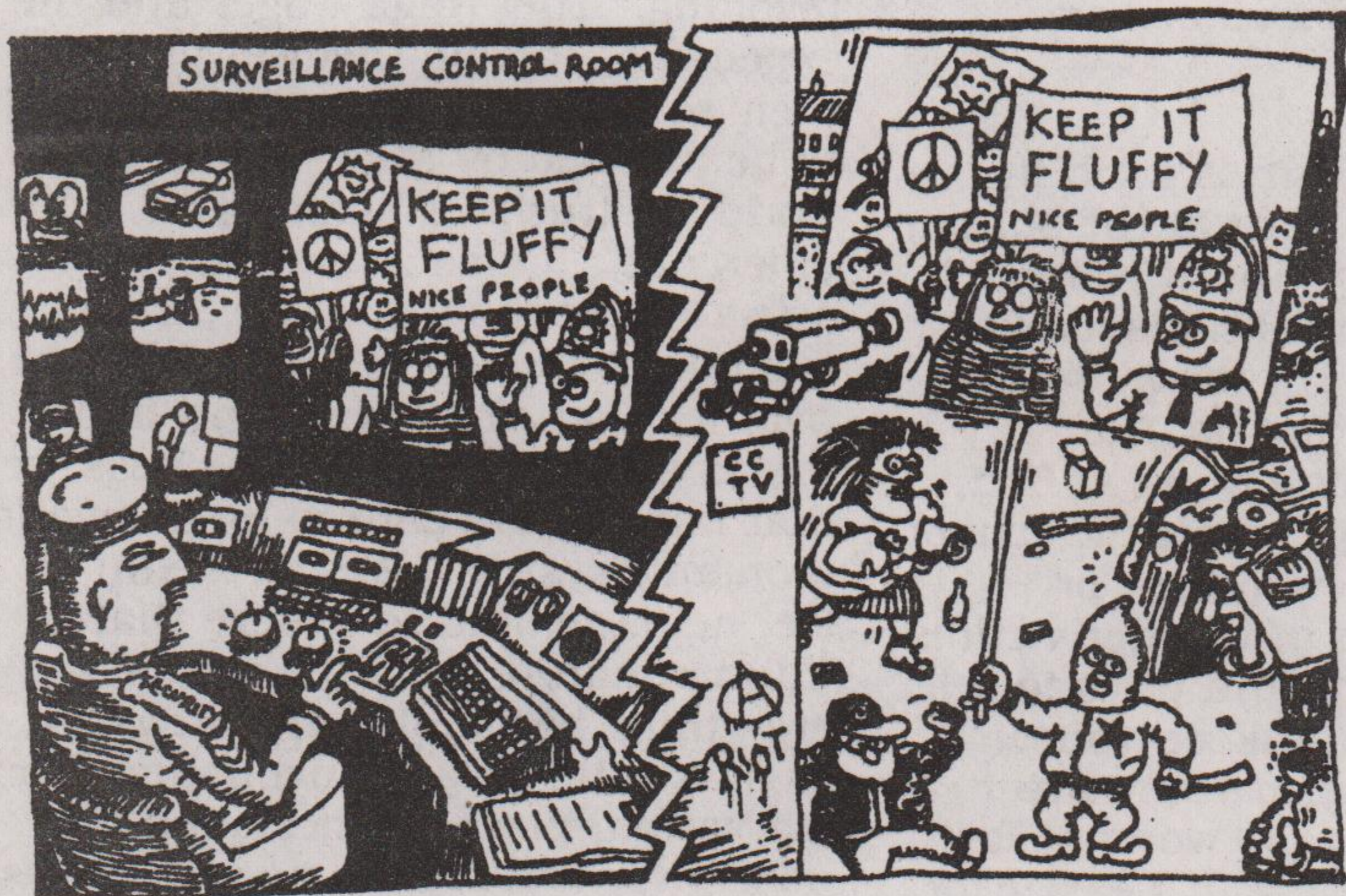
away with lying in court or beating people up for no good reason. It is true that evidence of this nature might benefit the odd victim of State justice however it could just as easily damn others. Not everyone on a demo, in a riot, or a similar

action is going to be a passive law-abiding citizen willing to take a police kicking lying down. What if you get arrested, or lose your camera, and the cops get to see your snapshots?

road to hell is paved with Liberal idiots.

Another good reason you shouldn't take a camera on a demo is that one day journalists are going to be universally known for the anti-working class scum that they are, and when that day arrives their cameras, notepads and dictaphones are going to be shoved into the parts of their bodies where the sun doesn't shine. We don't want any innocent and naive proles to be at the wrong end of this unpleasantness.

If you have any demo photos at home, get rid of them. And don't bring your camera to any more demos.



Part of the reason for using cameras is no doubt to record some of the events and people of the day for the posterity of the photo album. This may seem harmless enough but having a stash of photos of faces on demos lying around your house might not seem like such a good idea when the police come battering down your front door. You could argue that the likelihood of the cops raiding your house is slim. Also that surely address books are far more damaging. Yes, they probably are, but at least they serve some useful purpose to us (keeping in contact with other comrades), whereas photos don't, and, more importantly, photos on demos record all sorts of things and faces that we don't know about. I don't want my face to appear in someone's album of demo shots: what sensible or wild speculations could be made by the State by its appearance on *that* demo; with *those* people; at *that* point; and in *this* person's photo collection?? The State doesn't need any more information or *evidence*, of whatever they want to concoct, than they already have.

The other reason for using cameras on demos, the serious and worthy one, is that by filming everything that happens the cops can't get

Some journalist types (the ones who pretend to be on our side, as long as we are good democrats) deliberately film bust ups between proles and the State not only for the money they can make when they sell the shots, but also so that lawyers and Jo Public can see what really happened. Unfortunately, this means the State can also see it, and after such bust ups the police are bound to say to themselves that these journalists should hand over their film so that they can identify the trouble-makers. These well-meaning, career-minded journalists could get us into a lot of trouble. They are the sort of people who believe that if only the police and the State were subject to more public scrutiny and accountability then all cops would be nice and the State would be a genuinely lovely thing. What they forget is that the State and its cops exist to maintain the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. The State and its hired thugs didn't arrive by accident, they're here for a specific purpose. If we don't realise who we are exploited by and why then we'll remain like stupid ants forever. These patronising journos and their ideological soulmates (eg. Tony Benn) just add to the general level of mystification and lack of class consciousness in our class. The

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Technology and Class

The following two articles were originally discussion texts that formed the basis of a day long discussion meeting held in Salford last July, sponsored by Subversion and the Liverpool Discussion Group.

We would welcome letters with comment, criticism or additions to the themes of this discussion or follow-up articles from our readers.

Capitalism is a system of social relations. In its simple form this is represented by a CONTRACT between the worker who only has his or her ability to work and the OWNER of certain means of production. The worker is then placed into the capitalist plan of production, that is the LABOUR PROCESS.

Capitalism is at one and the same time both a CHAOTIC and a PLANNED system. In the chaos of the market place the capitalist attempts to sell his products [for despite the fact that they are made by workers they remain HIS products]. But in order for him to be successful he has to sell his products at a competitive price, or a price that is dictated by the international market. He therefore seeks to obtain this price by paying the lowest possible one for labour and materials, AND by organising the labour process so as to minimise the socially necessary labour time that goes into making products. The workers for their part seek to get the best possible price for their labour [power] and to minimise the effort expended. Here commenceth the CLASS STRUGGLE.

One of the means which capital has used to extract surplus value is through the development of science and technology. Scientific development has ALWAYS been used as a weapon by capital to attack and break up concentrations of working class power. The problem for capital is that what replaces the old class composition can become an even bigger threat. Henry Ford's introduction of the production line process was designed explicitly to break the

power of the skilled craft workers, but in the process there was created a NEW and MORE ANTAGONISTIC composition of the working class. This was the MASS WORKER, the worker of the giant production factories. Some of us taking part in

the discussion are the remnants of that composition.

Fraud 2000

Today by contrast, with its new project called 'Ford 2000', that company is attempting, once again to be the 'cutting edge' of capitalist development. In addition, as the 'Fordist' model of production developed it also brought about changes in the 'state form'. What emerged was the 'Planner State', with Keynesian economics at its heart. The economies of capital were to be planned rather than left to the vagaries of the market.

The Keynesian project was an attempt to balance the unbalanceable. That is it attempted to contain the class struggle within defined limits AND to use it as the MOTOR for capitalist development of the economy. Wage rises and the 'social wage', that is the benefits of the welfare state, were to be paid for by increases in productivity, which in turn would provide the mass of goods and the consumers for this new market.

In the period after World War Two the 'Planner State' became the norm in all the major Western economies, and oversaw what has been called a golden age of accumulation or 'growth'. The 60s and 70s also saw however the emergence and growth of a new militant and political class struggle as the proletariat increasingly refused its part of this bargain.

The struggles of the 60s and 70s, which spread out of the factories and into the communities, undoubtedly threw capital into

crisis. The demands of the working class forced capital to look for newer and more radical solutions. These were sought in the fields of technology and economic policy. The production systems of the big factories were to be dismantled and a 'monetarist' approach to economic policy AND the state form became the priorities.

Multinational Capital

This project of MULTINATIONAL capital is dispersing the old concentrations of the working class.

Within the workplace the attack is not just technological but also involves changes in the length of the working week / year and in the status of workers. Increased 'casualisation' of work and the creation of 'core' and 'peripheral' work forces has helped to disperse our class. Some workers have become almost invisible. And the INTERNATIONAL division of the labour process, whilst creating for perhaps the first time a truly world wide working class, is making it correspondingly more difficult for workers to organise resistance. This attack is also not confined to the 'industrial' working class, but affects all sections of workers and all spheres of our lives.

Crisis for the working class

These truly revolutionary changes that have been and are taking place have thrown us into a crisis. They pose problems for the organisational forms and institutions developed by the working class and its revolutionary movement. For some they have proved insurmountable, many people have been physically and psychologically damaged by this current stage of capitalist development. Some have even been destroyed by it.

One final point by way of introduction, capital has made a determined effort to change the gender balance of the international working class. It believes [in so far as it consciously thinks about this at all] that women are more docile and therefore more easily controlled. Here I believe it is making a serious error for when the working class fights back [as it most assuredly will]

the solidarity of women will be a major weapon in our armoury. I also believe that the necessarily increased involvement of women will lead to the development of new forms of organisation.

'Modern industry makes Science a productive force distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital.' Karl Marx.

Uunnh! It's 6:25
— five minutes
before I have to
get out of bed.



Technology is an arm and a product of that Science. Technology therefore IS NOT NEUTRAL, it is a weapon of capital pointed at the working class, and it has enabled capital to disperse production around the globe and thereby create a genuinely international division of labour. The struggles of the 60s and 70s pointed to a horizon of separation, that is a separation of the working class from capital. It was those struggles which produced the technology and the political state form we face today.

It is actually workers struggles that provide the dynamic of capitalist development. Capital does not produce new technologies on a whim, but rather it is driven by its internal antagonism, it reacts to the THE OTHER that exists within itself - us, the working class. We are like the alien in the movie, striving to break out and destroy that which contains us. Capital has a constant need to forestall, disrupt and defeat the collective power of the 'enemy within'. And one of the methods it uses is technological innovation. Capital's tendency to increase the

proportion of dead or constant capital as against the living or variable capital involved in the production process arises from the fact that living capital, the worker, is AN INSURGENT ELEMENT with whom management is constantly locked in battle.

This struggle has historical antecedents. In the first quarter of this century the dominant forces within the working class were largely the craftsmen, the highly skilled engineering workers who provided the nucleus of Bolshevism and Council Communism. Faced with the threat of these revolutionary movements and fearful of the spread of their ideas, capital undertook a drastic reshaping of production with the aim of deskilling the labour force and separating it from its political vanguards. There were two main components to the project, Taylorist based organisation of the labour process and Fordist restructuring of the working day and wage. In this capital was successful.

Thatcher, Regan and Ned Ludd

At a later stage those who resisted in the 60s and 70s faced a new state form by the beginning of the 80s - the 'crisis state' as Toni Negri calls it. We know it better as Thatcherism or Reganism, two names which I believe actually mystify and personalise CAPITAL's attack upon the working class. Welfare provision were dismantled in favour of discipline by austerity as capital refused any longer to bear the costs of the reproduction of labour power. Monetary policy assumed a central role in driving down real wages, and the ability of the class to fight back was hampered by legal restraints. We didn't roll over and play dead, we resisted, but WE WERE DEFEATED, and not just in Britain but on a world scale.

At the level of production, multi-national capital started to reorganise itself, to disperse and decentralise the locus of its productive activity. When capital began to realise the possibilities that existed within the new technologies it had called into being, it was unsure at first how the working class would react to these self same possibilities. Would a new form of Luddism arise? Would the working class see the technology as something designed to defeat them? It must have seemed likely for IBM for one ran a series of advertisements criticising Luddism and Luddite practices - and this 150 years after the real thing.

As well as the harsh economic

policies of monetarism, capital used the 'fifth column' of the 'fourth estate' - the press and the media - to break down resistance to technological change. The propaganda machine went into overdrive. We were told that the end of drudgery was upon us. We were going to spend less time in work and have more time for 'leisure' pursuits. And anyway the growth in the leisure industries would pick up any fallout in terms of unemployment from the manufacturing sector. We would learn new skills as old ones disappeared, life would become one continuous educational journey.

Some even posited the 'end of work' - and how we looked forward to that! But for four million people at least in this country, they were right! With paradise on the horizon how could there be any need for archaic notions like socialism or communism? Surely everybody was going to share the fruits of the technological tree. Because for so many of us in the 60s and 70s the struggle had centred on the 'refusal of work', the scam was bought.

As the media distorted the true nature of the changes that were about to take place our class was faced with another problem - the attitude of the trade unions to technology. Those grey minds in grey suits whose job it is to 'sell' us to capital had a grasp on it straightaway however. As the TUC put it in 1979,

'There is the challenge that the rapid introduction of new processes and work organisation will lead to the loss of many more jobs and to growing social dislocation. Equally however, there is the realisation that new technologies also offer great opportunities, not just for increasing the competitiveness of BRITISH industry but for increasing the quality of working life and for providing new benefits to working people.'

Well, 'quality of life' and 'new benefits' don't come easily to mind when trying to sum up the last sixteen years. This ambiguity is a constant factor in trade discussion of the subject, whether at national or local level. It is located in the totally mistaken belief that technology is neutral. In addition the 'Left' for the most part takes this view as well. But as someone said, 'The tool integrated into the system of machinery becomes a machine tool, a machine which incorporates social relations. The social relations of capitalism. Technology is not neutral because it incorporates in its mode of operation the dexterity and skill of the worker who is henceforth

deprived of her skill and subordinated from the point of view of social production to that technology.'

We are today in the period of 'real subsumption', where the urge to generate a surplus results in the wholesale reorganisation of work, with the aim of profiting from economies of scale and cooperation. Science is being systematically applied to industry, and technological innovation become PERPETUAL. The focus is on the relative intensification of productivity rather than the absolute extension of working hours, and consumption is organised by the wholesale cultivation of new 'needs'. The technological weapons we face today, based on the silicon chip, fibre optics and satellite communications, interact with one another to divide us AND the labour process up. Thereby making it easier for capital to control the cycle of accumulation.

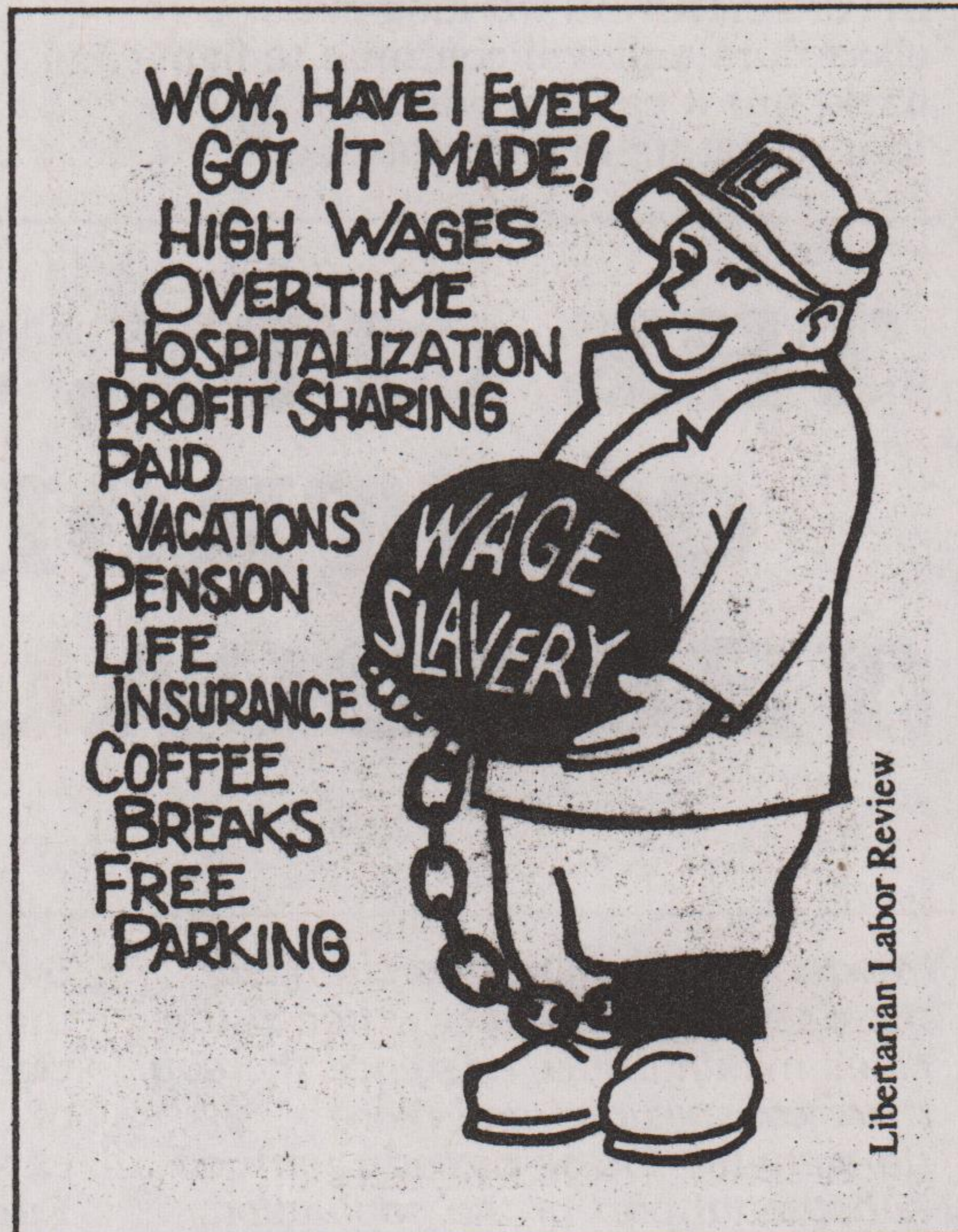
The giant factories are coming to the end of their life span as capital 'hives off' more and more work to subcontractors. And they in turn hive some of it off to smaller outfits, including homeworkers, who sometimes utilise the labour of their children. And in saying this I am speaking of this country as well as the so called 'third world'.

Sweatshops are a fact of life throughout the world. It is only by the use of technology that capital can at the same time disperse the division of labour around the globe AND at the same time increase its control over the labour process. The Ford Motor Company is at this moment centralising its control over the whole Ford empire. Alex Trotman, head of international operations and an ex-member of the English working class, has said that they now have the technological means to centralise everything at the company's Dearborn headquarters. They can now build the 'world car' and anticipate savings of between \$2 or \$3 billion from the Ford 2000 project.

The stark goals of the 'information revolution' are the control and reduction of the costs of labour. The rundown of the Welfare State has to be seen in relation to their ability to move production around the globe. Multinational capital is no longer prepared to pay the costs of reproduction of labour in the old economies of the West. When they

can hire twenty Phillipino workers for the price of one European, why should they ?

The fear and uncertainty that have been produced by the changes in world capitalism are being used to



push through strategies and tactics designed to further fragment us. The development of 'core' and 'peripheral' workers is one element; the precarious situation of peripheral workers is the price paid for the relative 'security' of the core workforce. And in the workplace the introduction of quality circles, continuous 'improvement' meetings and team working are designed to get us to police ourselves and talk our mates out of their jobs. Fear permeates into the public sector where the law of value is being applied.

Decline of the unions

In fact capitalism is now everywhere, in every aspect of our lives, it is a totally socialised system. Every aspect of our lives, not just work, is geared to the production and extraction of surplus value. The changes outlined that have and are taking place have had and will continue to have a profound effect on the 'labour movement' and the 'Left'. A 33% reduction in the number of unions in this country between 1981 and 1991 and the slump in membership figures reflects a world wide crisis for the trade unions. Increasingly capital has no need for the mediating role of the trade unions. With the technology at its disposal it can switch production around the globe if there are strikes or other

forms of 'disruption'.

The response in this country has been for the TUC to cuddle up to the CBI. They do this in order to convince management that they still have a useful role to play - in 'adding value'. And only when they can add value to the product will capital work with them. In other words the only role for the trade unions is to assist in the continued exploitation of the working class.

We have in addition seen the disintegration of the Stalinist economies of the former 'Eastern bloc' - this means there is now a huge pool of labour available for exploitation by multinational capital. The major barrier to this exploitation apart from political instability is the lack of suitable infrastructure especially in the field of communications. So communications capital, including our 'own' Cable and Wireless, owners of Mercury who have just pulled OUT of providing a public service in this country, are presently working on a system of financial and technological support for the old Eastern bloc and other states with similar 'infrastructure' problems. Billions of potential workers will then be ready to flood the world labour market. Ford's by the way, have opened two component plants in China in the last six months, with two more due to come on stream shortly

.The problems posed by these developments for the Western working class are perhaps, akin to the ones faced by the handloom weavers during the Industrial Revolution. These workers saw their wages drop by some 80 odd per cent in a thirty year period. The weavers and their families starved as they were replaced by machine minders. The experience of being on the periphery is a painful and disorientating one for the Western working class. The steady employment that many have taken for granted is disappearing and high levels of unemployment are becoming a permanent feature. The developments in technology and the access that multinationals have to a world labour force means that these levels are not going to fall. But the people in the dole queues will be constantly changing as they move in and out of jobs that are increasingly casual.

Multinational capital constantly demand lower costs and their suppliers must meet these demands. Casualisation of the labour force is one answer open to them. This is why work contracts tend now to be for less than two years, so that even

the meagre state 'protections' against redundancy is of no use. And companies like Ford are cutting back on the number of suppliers they use - in the case of the Mondeo this has been reduced by 65%. With the lifespan of new models continually getting shorter, the work 'guaranteed' to the chosen suppliers will be further reduced.

Labouring in Vain

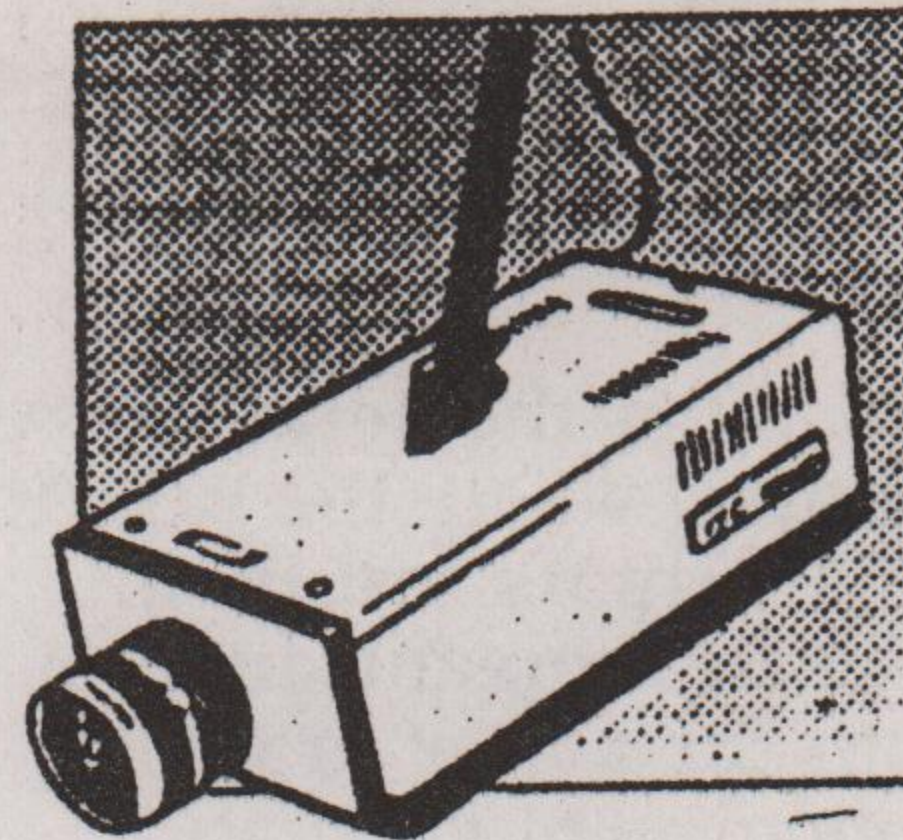
To those who think that the Labour Party will be able to do something about the movement of multinational companies and finance capital I say - GET REAL. The last Labour Government's ability to manoeuvre against the demands of the IMF and World Bank in 1976 was limited, but those difficulties will be as nothing compared to what they will have to face next time round. We have a truly international capital which now has the technology to circumvent any of the restrictions that nation state might want to impose on production or capital flows.

In fact the nation state is fast becoming an anachronism. Multinational capital like the first bourgeoisie, demands a state form that truly represents its interests. Of course the internationalisation of capital also means the internationalisation of the working class.

The nationalistic parties of Social Democracy and the sectionalism of trade unions are blockages and obstacles that the newly reemerging working class must CONFRONT and DESTROY. In the last two hundred years or so, driven by the motor of the class struggle, capital and the working class have continually changed their compositions. Can anything like the same be said for the revolutionary movement? In the main the answer has to be NO. In fact most of what claims to be revolutionary today is also anachronistic [at best]. It is somewhat ironic that the groups of the 'Left' can only offer our class forms of organisation and institutions that are rooted in the past.

Capital changes, the class changes, but the 'Left' is still living in the first twenty years of this century. The 'Left's forms of organisation - democratic centralism and council communism, were rooted in and products of a particular composition of the working class - that of the skilled craft worker. It should be obvious that that particular composition has long ceased to

exist, as SHOULD ITS ORGANISATIONAL FORMS. Both forms were created by white, male, skilled workers and yet they are continually offered as a model for a modern, multi-ethnic and increasingly female dominated, INTERNATIONAL working class. Our class does and will continue to fight back, but it can only do so in ways that reflect its new composition.



THE CITY, SOCIAL CONTROL AND THE LOCAL STATE

"Modern civilisation has crowded the destitute classes together in the cities making their existence thereby more conspicuous and more dangerous. These already form a substantial part of the population, and possess even now, though they are still ignorant of their full power, great political importance... Almost every winter in London there is a panic lest the condition of the poor should become intolerable. The richer classes awake for a moment from their apathy, and salve their consciences by a subscription of money... The annual alarm may some day prove a reality, and the destitute classes may swell to such a proportion as to render continuance of our existent social order impossible" - Sir John Gorst, Tory MP in the 1880s.

Charles Booth in the same period was also to articulate these fears and to promote a combination of charity and social reform aimed at containing the situation.

Periodically the ruling class has become alarmed at the reaction of the working class, and in particular sections of the poorest workers concentrated in the large urban conurbations, to the effects of capitalism.

At its most basic it has been the fear of general social disorder and lawlessness spreading to the wider working class and beyond that, fear that consent for the established order might break down amidst growing organised collective action by sections of the working class with literally "nothing to lose".

Similar fears began to emerge during the late sixties, as rising working class expectations hit the beginnings of the economic crisis to create an explosion of resistance across Europe and the rest of the world, in which rulers and revolutionaries alike saw the seeds of revolutionary change.

Our rulers had problems enough with the expressions of that resistance in workplace struggle but they did have in place flexible and experienced organisations of recuperation in the form of the trade unions. Outside the workplace, things were different. The traditional modes of instilling respect for authority, in particular organised religion and the family, were beginning to break down. 'Community' ties built up over generations on the back of stable single industry employment in heavy engineering, shipbuilding, coal extraction etc were also breaking down as these industries were consciously run down in the 'white hot heat of technological change'.

There was also the beginnings of open racial conflict in some areas as black workers began to flex their muscle and some white workers, uncertain of their future, began to resent this. Many young working class people brought up on full employment and the 'welfare state' and without the memory of the privations of war were less grateful and more challenging than their parents. There was the emergence of the 'generation gap' and the 'youth revolt'. Our rulers began to feel very uneasy about this seeming 'Pandora's box' which they had opened themselves.

But the ruling class in Britain is one of the most experienced in the world. They had come a long way since the 1880s and were certainly not going to sit around until the simmering revolt in the cities could only be contained, if at all, by simple armed suppression.

concentrated in certain working class areas. They recommended the setting up of 'special areas of control', 'priority areas' and so on where the central and local state apparatus would apply 'positive discrimination'.

At this stage the officials were stressing the need for extra financial

programmes and special area initiatives promoted by a range of government departments at the forefront of which was perhaps not surprisingly the Home Office who became very interested in extending their role from 'hard cop' into 'soft cop'. They were to set up one of the more enduring initiatives known as the 'Urban Aid Programme'. The first Urban Programme circular in October 1968 spelt out their objectives:

"The government proposed to initiate an urban programme of expenditure mainly on education, housing, health and welfare in areas of Special Social Need. Those were localised districts which bear the marks of multiple deprivations, which may show itself, for example, by way of notable deficiencies in the physical environment, particularly housing; overcrowding of houses, family sizes above the average; persistent unemployment; a high proportion of children in trouble or in need of care, or a combination of these. A substantial degree of immigrant settlement would also be an important factor, though not the only factor, in determining the existence of special social need."

These were pretty much the determining factors which were to be used for all the various schemes which subsequently emerged, although as concern increased about the financial burdens of caring for the old, large concentrations of elderly persons was also added to the list.

The Reports and programmes also started to conform to a pattern of pseudo-scientific language supplied by the newly fashionable Social Science departments which sought to define the problems in terms of the inadequacies of the people living in the areas rather than the effects of state-sponsored economic restructuring on those areas or the inadequacies of the competitive market economy etc. It is from this era that terms like 'multiple deprivation', 'cycle of deprivation', 'social malaise' etc originate. The definition of the problem as something related only to certain isolated areas implied that the 'system' was basically doing its job fine for the rest of us! The solution then lay not in wholesale social and economic change but in administrative and technical adjustments to the system.

A particular concern at this time was to draw people in the defined areas back into the system of 'democratic representation'. For instance, working class participation in local



The apparatus of the state - central and local government and the 'institutions of learning' - were soon put to work, firstly in research and practical experimentation, and then into the task of both shoring up the old institutions of recuperation and creating new ones. They launched an ideological and organisational first strike.

Already in the early sixties, there had been a series of government commissions which had raised alarm bells: Milner-Holland on London's housing, Ingleby on children and young persons, Plowden on primary education and Seeborn on personal social services. All of them were concerned not with poverty and its attendant effects on the working class as a whole but with the way poverty was particularly

resources to be applied as a worthwhile investment by the ruling class against worse and more expensive problems in the future. But as the economic crisis grew worse and the relative burden of state expenditure increased, it became more a matter of 'prioritising' scarce and reduced resources. Over the next ten years there were many more commissions and official reports looking into different aspects of the poverty problems of the inner cities. One of the earliest saw the setting up firstly of the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants and then the Community Relations Commission, whose overriding concern was to 'integrate' the 'newcomers' into British society.

What was to emerge from these reports was a series of state-funded

government elections was low at the best of times but one of the defining features of the areas which concerned the state was the even tinier proportion of people voting. The state has a continuing need to keep its fingers on the working class pulse but the absence of established channels of communications was preventing this from happening. Many of the schemes funded from the Urban Programme or set up separately were particularly concerned to establish new local forms of representation, which would include residents' associations, community groups, government funded agencies, councillors, council officials, the police, churches and so on, and which would act as a kind of bridgehead into the reformed local and central government structures. 'Neighbourhood Councils', 'Community Forums', 'Area Management Committees', 'Local Steering Groups' were just some of the names used to describe these experiments in 'democracy'.

Many of the early schemes were in the nature of 'action-research', applied to very small areas indeed, and intended on the basis of experimentation with different models of administration and technical applications to provide feedback to governments on the need for broader legislative change and ways of 'cost-effective' management of the 'poverty problem' and of the working class itself. The finance doled out in these cases was piddling, barely enough to cover the wages of a few administrators and researchers and fund a few public relations exercises.

In the housing field, some schemes did bring in real money but always there was always far more schemes bidding than actually got resources allocated. This was the beginning of a more intensive competitive approach to obtaining funds for 'special areas'. Local authorities had long been used to this on a broader scale but now local working class people were to be actively drawn into this process of competing with each other, usually on the demeaning basis of proving how much more rotten 'their' area was than anyone else's!

Obtaining 'community involvement' was not just about shoring up 'consent' to the system and its ways of doing things, it was also aimed at getting the poor to 'do for themselves' at minimal cost to the state. As usual, it was often women who were expected to do most of the

'doing'. Small amounts of money were aimed at various self-help organisations - playgroups, gardening clubs, advice centres, youth clubs, daycare, recycling workshops, crime watch, voluntary language classes and a host of others. The purpose, in summary, was to "take some of the load off the statutory services by generating a fund of voluntary social welfare activity and mutual help amongst the individuals, families and social groups in the neighbourhood, supported by the voluntary agencies" (CDP Objectives and Strategy, 1970).

These small sums of money were seen as 'seed corn' which through a lot of effort by other people would grow into something which could actually be 'eaten'. Another term often used was 'pump-priming', basically facilitating others to get things moving. Much was made also of the 'multiplier effect' - the idea that some initial finance could attract both money and effort from other organisations or the 'community' itself to make something much more effective than the initial sum would itself have provided for. Of course, any group which got a grant or a loan had to provide progress reports and accounts etc which kept the paymasters in touch with what was happening on the ground.

The various special area schemes came and went providing the state with much useful information along the way. Some new ones were set up with different names and in different areas and the whole process repeated. As for the multiplier effect, many groups suffered severely when the special area schemes disappeared and they had to rely on mainstream government or local authority funding which was being cut back. Many had to close down altogether.

In terms of any real impact on the social and economic conditions of people living in the special areas, the results were pretty negligible - where anything was achieved in a particular area, this was more than matched by serious decline elsewhere. In Liverpool, for instance, which in the late sixties and early seventies had more poverty initiatives than any other city, almost every indicator had got worse and seriously worse in the inner city areas.

Clearly none of the schemes was aimed even collectively at altering the general poverty suffered by our class. At best the more naive social reformers thought they might spread

the poverty more evenly - but even here they failed miserably.

The EEC had joined the bandwagon in 1974 with its Social Action Programme, demonstrating that the same problems and concerns of the British state (under Labour and Tory) were shared by states in the rest of Europe. The thinking of the Eurocrats was along familiar lines - the objectives of one of their projects - a network of family advice centres - was to "help the poorest families come to terms with the particular ill effects of extreme poverty". They followed the same path as the nationally inspired schemes, gathering intelligence for the state, deflecting independent class-based opposition but providing little in the way of new resources.

Although most of the 'action-research' type projects came to an end in this period, others like the Urban Programme and Housing Action Areas achieved a degree of permanence and continued to selectively fund various local schemes around the country.

Things had tended to settle down into more of an administrative routine until, in 1981, various inner city areas - Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Brixton, Birmingham and Bristol - exploded into riots. The initial spark for many of the riots was confrontation between the police and black youth. This in itself said much about the failure of various programmes to integrate particularly second generation black youth into the system. More worrying for the state was the fact that many other, young and not so young, working class people, black and white, working and unemployed, either actively joined in or gave support.

Suddenly the spotlight was again on the 'poverty stricken' inner cities and the 'failure' of twelve years of the 'poverty programme' was highlighted for all to see. After an initial period of government tough talk and then reflection, decisions were taken to both tool up the hard cops and reinvigorate the soft cop approach. Some extra resources were made available but generally existing programmes were re-prioritised towards the riot-torn areas.

Given the experience of the previous 'poverty programme', you might have expected some fresh thinking, but for the most part it wasn't forthcoming. The same concepts, approaches and strategies using the same language were simply beefed up a bit and relaunched.

If there was a change it was only that

now competition for the scarce resources was even more extreme. The government's 'Estate Action Programme' for run-down council estates was expanded. There was a reemphasis on local corporate management and the need to promote 'employment and training' as part of the process of physical regeneration.

As time went by, there was a shift to fewer but larger, more radical



schemes with the birth of Housing Action Trusts, City Challenge and Urban and Industrial Development Corporations. Although, in line with Tory thinking, private business has become much more involved with these schemes, the approach on the ground in terms of 'community involvement', 'self-help', 'building a consensus' etc was much the same as far as the inner city housing areas were concerned.

The objective of transferring responsibility to local people for administering themselves at reduced cost to the state and effectively making working class people themselves prioritise the resources doled out, received new impetus. On the one hand, through a process of atomising estates through pressure on people to buy their council houses, and on the other by dividing council estates through schemes for tenant management or even tenant co-ops. Needless to say, local Labour-controlled authorities, after expressing some initial concerns, have enthusiastically taken up all these ideas.

Having sold the need for 'local corporate management' approaches and 'multi-disciplinary' working in the special areas, the government, under increased pressure to cut public spending, cleverly repackaged most of its various

schemes into one pot called the 'Single Regeneration Budget' and in the process cut the overall spending. In future, special areas might be larger but there were a lot less of them, with EEC money also being 'prioritised' into the same areas.

The picture painted here is of a fairly consistent state policy being carried out throughout the period 1968 to the present day, with more or less enthusiasm, depending on the level of working class revolt in the cities. To the extent that some local working class areas have benefited from extra resources, this has generally only acted as a break on the deteriorating social and economic climate and has been at the expense of workers elsewhere.

From the state's point of view, the problems associated with the breakdown of 'community' and family support structures relate to the conservative role these have played in reproducing authoritarian pro-establishment values and maintaining at little cost to the state a sufficiently tolerable condition for the 'poor', to avoid open revolt. For workers there are also problems associated with these changes, including the effects of 'anti-social' crime, which predispose them to the enticements of the state, in the absence of anything better.

But it would be wrong to see the workers in these areas as simply being acted upon by the authorities. First of all, their selection has usually been a response to local revolt, local organisation and activity. Workers don't just give up in situations, even of extreme poverty; many fight back and try to do so collectively. If the form of that collective action is limited and stunted by capitalist ideology that is perhaps to be expected. Workers recognise and fight for (or at least campaign for!) more resources. Even where organisation is localised, the workers in many cases do not see their struggle as being at the expense of workers elsewhere. But the state does not hand back resources without having control over them, or at least ensuring the structures set up, and the 'thinking' of those entrusted with the resources are such that it can rest easy they will be used in the 'correct' way.

In the process, the very moment of victory, when hard fought-for money or other resources are won by local working class people, is often also the point at which the organisation set up to use the resources becomes an agent of the state rather than an

expression, however deformed, of working class aspirations. If the state manages to suck in local working class leaders from amongst the activists, it has succeeded in containing opposition, but since it can't actually solve our problems, revolt will inevitably reemerge. The state hopes when it does, that it has the right people and structures in the 'community' to deflect it - but there are no guarantees.

There are risks in the state's approach, that local working class people won't be sucked in and that promises made, skills developed, and organisations set up supposedly within secure state tutelage, will turn "against the hand that feeds them". It has happened in a number of cases. Even the state-paid workers employed to encourage this whole approach can turn out to be unreliable. A whole network of 'Community Development Workers' employed by Manchester City Council, for instance, had to be closed down when they turned into local agitators. Even more impressive were the national network of Community Development Project workers funded through the Home Office and local authorities who got together to expose the whole racket in a series of excellently informative pamphlets, one of which ("Gilding the Ghetto"), supplied much of the inspiration and information for this discussion paper! They were eventually closed down.

Unfortunately, there are many self-proclaimed radicals whose ideas around concepts of 'self-management', 'anarcho-syndicalism', 'local autonomy' etc are easily co-opted by the more experienced ideologists of the state. Credit unions, LETS schemes and so on, popular amongst many anarchists and greens, are already being eyed up by local representatives of the state - political and professional - as a useful adjunct to their machinery of incorporation! We need to be much more aware of the subtleties of the state's local management policies, if we are to try and help revolt turn into revolution rather than a means of reforming the existing system to help it survive a bit longer.


Footnote

For mechanisms of incorporation in other spheres of the state's activity over the same period, see also the article "Working Against the Left in Manchester" (available from Subversion) and "Bollocks to Clause Four" in Subversion 16



Letters....

.....Letters.....

....Letters... 

The following letter has been shortened for reasons of space.

Dear Subversion,

The writer of the article 'Bambi Lib' in Subversion 16 says that vegetarians should "stop bothering ordinary working class people who eat meat in the here and now".

It's true that many vegetarians adopt a moralistic preaching tone in their propaganda but a far more important issue here is the mass of scientific evidence from all over the world of the disastrous medical effects of the average 'western' diet containing vast quantities of saturated fat-laden so-called meat.

... Bear in mind that the ruling class generally regards working class (or even middle-class) human beings as farm animals to be exploited when possible and disposed of when not and it's not surprising that they and their media should remain silent about the harmful side-effects of flesh gobbling even though the evidence has been available in some cases for decades.

... It is surprising that professed revolutionaries like the 'Bambi Lib' writer should think that this issue has nothing to do with class interest, class solidarity and class struggle.

... As for socialism, which I take to be a more or less egalitarian society, the main obstacle to its achievement is the perceived interests of the majority of the developed world's population (who are definitely middle-class by world standards) in the continuation of capitalism which among other things gives them meat every day if they want it. So any efforts to convince them that at least one of the 'benefits' of capitalism is very much the reverse just might hasten the revolution a little.

Yours etc.

J. W.

Subversion Reply:

Dear Comrade,

Sorry about the delay in replying to your letter.

We quite take your point about the unhealthy nature of the food capitalism offers up to us - like everything else in capitalism, it's not there to do US any favours. The point about the article in Subversion that you refer to is that it was dealing with the Animal Rightist argument that berates the workers for not rising above the

conditions that life under capitalism imposes on us, and striving individually for "purity". In other words we were attacking the anti-worker arguments of many animal rightists, rather than the anti-capitalist argument that you were putting forward in your letter.

While there are of course steps that can be taken in daily life to try to ameliorate some of the effects of life under capitalism, like trying to eat a bit more healthily, we have always taken the view that substantial change is only likely to result from a fundamental challenge to capitalism itself, and that comes from the radicalisation that will accompany a large scale upsurge in class struggle. We believe that our efforts are most fruitfully used when directed towards that goal - the goal of communist revolution.

As for your final point, we strongly disagree that most people in the developed world are middle class by world standards. Class is not a matter of level of income/living standard but of the relationship of people to the production process. If one group of workers (for instance in the developed world) are given a bigger portion of crumbs from the capitalists' table, they are still working class and still exploited, and the capitalists will always have a need to squeeze more profits out of them, to attack them in various ways. This means that the objective basis for class unity on a world scale permanently exists.

As to educating the "better-off" workers as to the unsavouriness of capitalism's commodities (whether meat or whatever) we are not at all against this but we think the "education" of class struggle is a million times more potent and so, as we said above, we concentrate our modest efforts in that direction.

We hope this clarifies our views somewhat, but don't hesitate to write again if you want to.

Yours etc.

SUBVERSION

**A FURTHER CONTRIBUTION TO
"THE ANIMAL DEBATE":**

**THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY
NATURE OF NICENESS**

This is a response to the two articles that appeared in the last SUBVERSION (16). It is written by another SUBVERSION member.

Firstly, I agree with both the previous articles, what I want to examine further is the notion that large sections of the working class must become more compassionate, caring, selfless and generally nice before there is a hope of us being able to embark on a successful global insurrection against class society.

A lot of "revolutionaries" in the working class argue that unless we challenge (and win against) "unacceptable" behaviour in our class now we won't have the "revolution" we want and nothing will be solved. The cry is: "The 'revolution' won't solve everything at once, as if by magic".

The "revolutionaries" who say this sort of thing reveal the poverty of their notion of what the overthrow of class

society means also they expose their lack of understanding of the class struggle and their fear of a working class that gets out of control.

For us at Subversion the revolution, the class war, won't be over until the last vestiges of trade, exchange, slavery and all exploitation of humankind is extinguished. When we all live for ourselves, and not for work, or for others, in one amazing, diverse and brilliant global human community then we will have achieved freedom.

So, those who think that the "revolution" won't create a world human community must think of revolution in terms of a coup d'etat, a simple change of the people who run the State. Maybe they think that there was a real revolution in Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, China, or that the Russian Revolution basically succeeded but went a bit wrong later. If these people are aiming for this sort of revolution (with maybe a few added nicenesses, like "equality" for women) then they should, of course, sign their brain away to the leaders and hopeful future tyrants of groups like the Socialist Workers Party.

Secondly, it is a misunderstanding of what class struggle really is that leads people to dismiss it as "not enough". Class struggle is the continual fight between the owners of this planet (the bourgeoisie) and the dispossessed, the workers. They try to control and exploit us as best they can and we try to avoid control and exploitation as much as we can. Obviously, for most of the time we haven't done very well, however our bosses are shit-scared of us, and even if many of us don't know it now, when capitalists and the friends of capitalism look at the working class they know they are beholding their future executioners. Now, the working class engages in class struggle because it sees a way of making its life more tolerable (this may be by defending existing, or getting more, material comforts and/or it may be as a way of getting their own back against all our bosses and wise sages) - this struggle holds the germ of revolutionary action because the only way we can hope to even maintain tolerable living conditions is by removing the bosses and the system (the economy) that exploits us. More than this, as our consciousness of class and capitalism is raised through the war we wage on our bosses and their friends it becomes easy to see that if we eradicated class society entirely, if we abolished

money and exchange and our lives were driven by our desires and needs instead of by profit and control, then our lives would be far better than merely tolerable. In fact, in a revolutionary situation it becomes obvious that the only way we can actually survive is by going the whole way to communism, otherwise we'll be exterminated.

This class struggle goes on whether revolutionaries are around or not, workers do not need to be condescendingly led into struggle by messianic politicians. In fact, they are not led into struggle by these types, invariably it is the swell-heads of so-called "revolutionary politics" who tag on the end of events desperately trying to catch up in order to take charge.

The task of revolutionaries is to examine struggle and changing conditions and to participate in class struggle in order to warn of false friends and blind alleys and to push the struggle ever further by inspiration and deed. We must also, of course, try to attract as many disgruntled proletarians to revolutionary views as possible, so that when things start happening there are enough of us around to help prevent our class slipping back into defeat or into the jaws of manipulators and other scumbags. This does not mean attempting to create a mass movement - this is impossible because a mass movement can only come into being in a revolutionary event - it simply means getting enough individuals and groups of revolutionaries around the world so that we can make a difference. Revolutionaries did not invent class struggle and will not make the revolution, but their role in explaining what is happening or what will happen is important during the course of daily class struggle and vital during a revolutionary event.

The decryers and doubters of the actuality and potential of class struggle have failed to understand what the real motivations of the working class are (i.e. class struggle) and instead of acting on this knowledge they hope to change workers under capitalism through an ideology of niceness. They want workers to become, for example, non-sexist, non-racist, non-meat-eating, and generally polite. They fear that if a revolution came and large swathes of the population

weren't polite and lovely then the masses would form into hysterical bands of blood thirsty louts who ate babies and raped sheep. This sort of thinking is indicative of tyrants on both the left and right wings of capitalism. It is based on morbid fantasies about "human nature". The only way a revolution will occur is through an escalation of class struggle, when workers in struggle find their common interests and identify their enemies and make the leap from defending their living conditions to attacking without mercy the source of their misery. It is only through struggle that workers will unite as equals - because it makes their fight more effective, not because they have suddenly become "politically correct".

Continued on page 17



Ⓢ Understandable sentiments from the teeth behind this er.... non-violent direct action protester.

ANARCHIST-COMMUNISM IN JAPAN

BOOK REVIEW

John Crump. Hatta Shuzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan. Macmillan Press, 1993.

In this year when we have been bombarded with so much nauseating propaganda over

The book opens with a description of the rise and fall of anarchist communism in Europe: how it emerged in the 1870s, defining itself in opposition to the collectivist and syndicalist strands in anarchism, and how it went into decline after the First World War, losing much of the theoretical clarity it had achieved earlier.

Anarchist ideas were introduced into Japan by the prominent socialist Kotoku Shusui in 1906 on his return from a stay in the USA. The existing labour movement split into social-democratic and 'direct actionist' wings. Within the anarchist camp however the division between syndicalist and communist anarchists was not pronounced. All anarchists directed their activity towards the labour unions which emerged after about 1915.

One constant feature was the unremitting repression exercised by the state. Public meetings were broken up, publications seized, organisations banned,

known militants hounded, sacked from their jobs, imprisoned. In 1911 Kotoku was hanged with 11 others following their conviction on trumped-up charges in the 'High Treason' trial. Osugi Sakae emerged as the most able anarchist amongst the younger generation. He too was murdered by the state in the chaotic aftermath of the 1923 Tokyo earthquake.

Enter the ex-clergyman Hatta Shuzo, reputedly an alcoholic and wife-beater, also a captivating public speaker, and the one person who for a few years in the late 1920s and early 1930s best expressed in his writings the revitalisation of anarchist communist theory which emerged from the

activities and debates of the Japanese anarchist movement in the interwar period.

Here is one writer's assessment of Hatta's significance, quoted in the book:

"Basing himself on Kropotkinism, he developed the theory of anarchist communism one step further. After Kropotkin's death, world anarchism rapidly regressed from the level to which Kropotkin had brought it...there was nobody other than Hatta (not only in Japan but in the entire world) who took a step forward in this way".

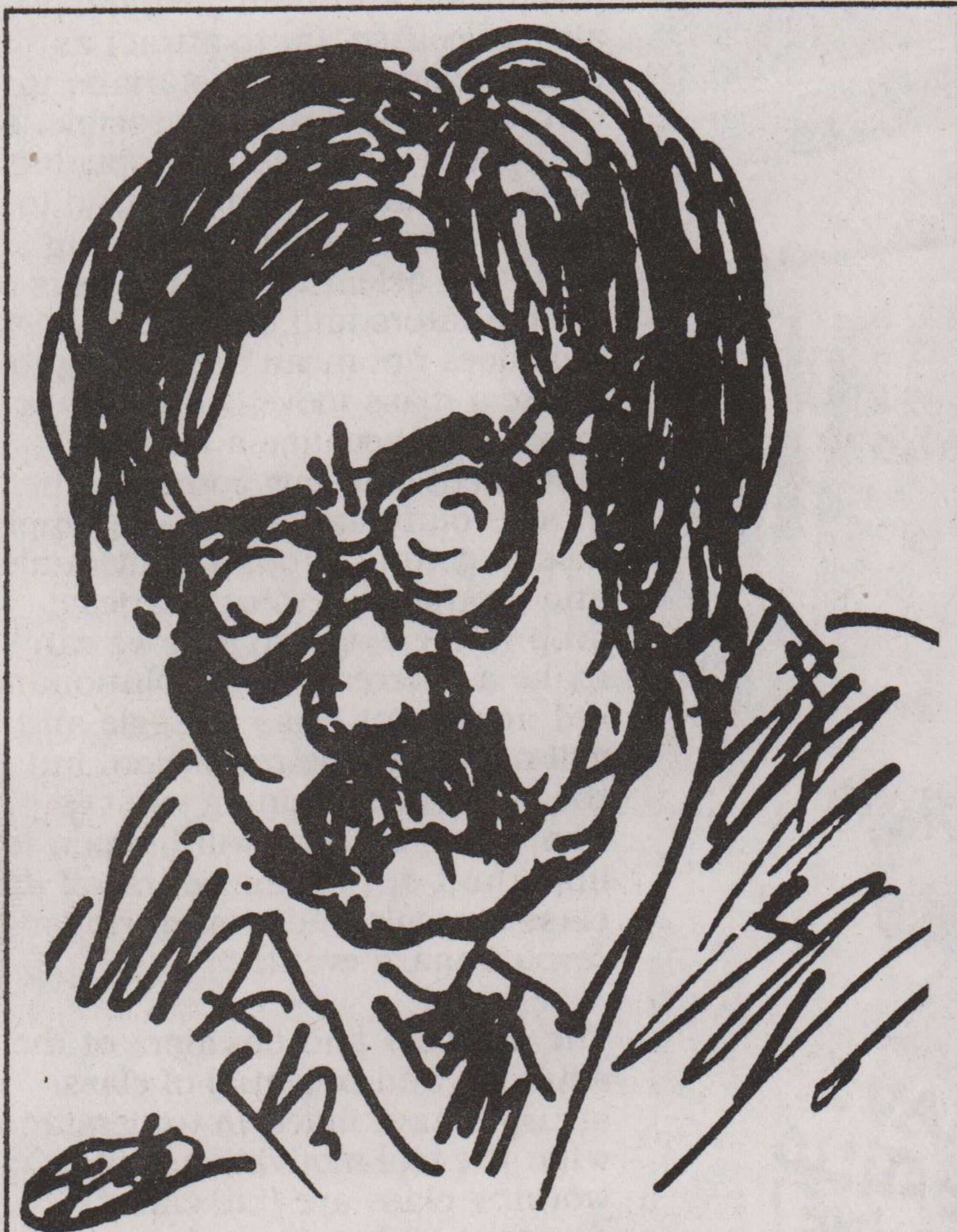
[Petr Kropotkin (1842-1921) was an anarchist communist whose writings strongly influenced the early Japanese anarchist movement].

An anarchist federation (Kokuren) was formed in 1925 and a libertarian union federation (Zenkoku Jiren) the following year. By 1927-28 both organisations had become strongholds of the 'pure' anarchists - that is, those who sought to purge anarchism of all non-anarchist elements, particularly syndicalism, whose adherents were forced to form separate organisations of their own.

The pure anarchists' opposition to syndicalism focussed on the likelihood that the organisational structure of industrial unions would keep the division of labour, perfected under capitalism, intact in the new society, thus sowing the seeds of new forms of social conflict, and leading inevitably to the necessity for some sort of "superior coordinating machinery" - in other words, a new state.

Hatta's position on this and other issues is described at length in the two central chapters of the book, titled "Critique of the Old World" and "Hope for a New World". Here we can do no more than indicate the main areas over which the debates ranged: the relationship between class struggle and revolutionary action

the analysis of science as an example of the form knowledge takes in class-divided societies - monopolised by specialists and used by the ruling class to exert social control



Sketch of Hatta Shūzō by Mochizuki Kei

"VJ Day", how inspiring it is to read of men and women who were as far removed as anyone could be from the racist stereotype of all Japanese as emperor-worshipping nationalist fanatics, and who stood instead for a world of no classes, no markets, no states, no frontiers, no wars.

Hatta Shuzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan is a fascinating account of the struggles and arguments of revolutionaries in Japan over half a century ago. But it is of more than just historical interest. Many of the issues debated there and then are still very much alive here and now, not only among groups like Subversion, but also within parts of the 'Green' movement.

the notion of historical progress: has capitalism been a necessary stage in human history, bringing into existence the essential preconditions for communism, or (Hatta's view), has communism been an option which has been "permanently open throughout history", depending for its achievement "not on material circumstances but on human determination"

the conception of anarchist communism in terms of "social physiology" - meaning "the discovery of the means for satisfying human needs with the minimal expenditure of human energy so as to realise universal happiness"

the relationship, before and after the revolution, between the countryside and the cities

how to accomplish in practice the theoretically desirable elimination of the division of labour

the role of revolutionaries and revolutionary organisation

We do not see all of the views expressed by Hatta as representing a step forward for revolutionary theory, even in those days. During this period the working class formed only a small fraction of Japan's population and were not regarded by Hatta as the sole potentially revolutionary force in society. Instead he looked to the "propertyless masses", a category which did include wage labourers but was dominated by the tenant farmers.

Since the "propertyless masses" were not a class, they could not engage in class struggle, (which Hatta dismissed anyway as a dispute over the share of the spoils within capitalism, or a fight to replace one ruling class by another), but could simply join in a sudden, once-and-for-all explosion of revolutionary action. However understandable such an analysis was as a reflection of a specific stage of development of capitalism in Japan, it is not one we could share. In fact we would go further and say that it was somewhat paradoxical that the pure anarchists, who were so firmly implanted in the urban centres and in the struggles of the industrial working class, and whose advanced views were no doubt a product of those material circumstances, should nonetheless have pinned their hopes so firmly on the rural peasants and tenant farmers.

As the 1930s progressed, the Japanese state's imperialist conquests abroad were accompanied by increasingly severe

repression of opposition on the home front.

Among the pure anarchists various strategies for survival were attempted, none of them in the end successful. Some advocated a reunification of Zenkoku Jiren with the syndicalist union federation, Jikyo. This took place in 1934 and, interestingly, was in part the outcome of a recognition of the need for greater involvement in day-to-day struggles. Others favoured the abandonment of the cities and the dissolution of the anarchist federations. At the opposite extreme to this a third tendency favoured a highly secretive and tightly structured organisation.

This last view found expression in the formation of the Anarchist Communist Party of Japan, and had disastrous consequences. In 1935 a police investigation into a bungled bank robbery carried out by members of 'the Party' led eventually to the arrest of hundreds upon hundreds of members of the entire anarchist movement. Subsequently, "For most anarchists in Japan, there was from 1936 no alternative but to retreat into private life, think one's own thoughts, and try to stay alive, while waiting for the day when the state would, in its turn, be brought to its knees".

We leave the last word to the author: "Even if one judges some of the strategies the pure anarchists employed to have been seriously flawed, they surely deserve respect for the fact that the state had to crush them, since it could not win them over".

Footnote: at £45+ this book is beyond most people's means, but it is worth trying to get hold of it through your local library. Much of the information in the book, and lots else besides, is summarised in a 36-page pamphlet on The Anarchist Movement in Japan, which is available for £1.50 from John Crump, Department of Politics, University of York, York YO1 5DD.

Against Niceness

Continued from page 15

Anyone who thinks that it is possible for the working class to unite as equals in a sea of niceness before we have started to smash capitalism is just pissing in the wind. And worse, these ideologues of niceness will act as a brake on revolutionary impetus because essentially they despise and fear the working class and think we need to be kept under control. At best they don't understand what class struggle is and at worst they are tyrannical scum who will prove that

they are the friends of capitalism rather than of humanity.

We can't make life appreciably better for the world's proletariat under capitalism, we can only improve our lot by embarking on the struggle against the bosses and their world economy and eventually destroying class society completely. If we don't attack the source of our misery not only will we fail to change anything but they will kill us anyway.

For this reason the debate about animals is irrelevant unless we can show that being nice to animals under capitalism is utterly unimportant to the nature of class struggle and the task of freeing this planet from the stranglehold of our bosses and their friends. Already, parts of the bourgeoisie are defending animals and the environment because they can see a profit in it. With all this niceness around, people defending animals, local government recycling old rubbish, equal opportunities as law, roads protesters, ecological campaigners in every walk of life, health food shops everywhere, and people like David Bellamy and Alan Clark around I reckon I should be well on the way to achieving a state of complete nirvana! But sadly I'm not. None of this has done anything to change my miserable life as a wage slave or given me any more control over my existence, and it hasn't done anything for the rest of my class either.

Some people look to the animal rights protesters and admire their courage and the fact that they are fighting one aspect of business and the even the cops - but frankly, so what? working class fascists fight the cops too, should we admire them as well? If we are going to be uncritical of any one or group that fights an aspect of authority then we may as well stay in bed with our wet dreams and posters of Nelson Mandela. How soon will it be before English lefties and anarchists start supporting the Orange Men of Northern Ireland, with their heroic slogan: "No Surrender!""???

But to return to the original argument: if you think it is more feasible to make everyone nice to each other, and everything, than it is to destroy capitalism and class society then you may as well join the Christian Church - and see how far that gets you!!

**AGAINST THE TYRANNY OF
NICENESS!
FOR PROLETARIAN
UNCONTROLLABILITY!**

OJ is a RICH BASTARD.

We say: There's no
such thing as an



INNOCENT RICH BASTARD!

WHAT WE STAND FOR

We meet regularly for political discussion and to organise our activities. The following is a brief description of our basic political principles:

- We are against all forms of capitalism; private, state and self-managed.
 - We are for communism, which is a classless society in which all goods are distributed according to needs and desires.
 - We are actively opposed to all ideologies which divide the working class, such as religion, sexism and racism.
 - We are against all expressions of nationalism, including "national liberation" movements such as the IRA.
 - The working class (wage labourers, the unemployed, housewives, etc.) is the revolutionary class; only its struggle can liberate humanity from scarcity, war and economic crisis.
 - Trade unions are part of the capitalist system, selling our labour power to the bosses and sabotaging our struggles. We support independent working class struggle, in all areas of life under capitalism, outside the control of the trade unions and all political parties.
 - We totally oppose all capitalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. We are against participation in fronts with these organisations.
 - We are against participation in parliamentary elections; we are for the smashing of the capitalist state by the working class and the establishment of organisations of working class power.
 - We are against sectarianism, and support principled co-operation among revolutionaries.
 - We exist to actively participate in escalating the class war towards communism
-

Subversion,

Dept 10, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M11HW