

the enemy

oct' '88

» within «

Free

Posties Stitched Up

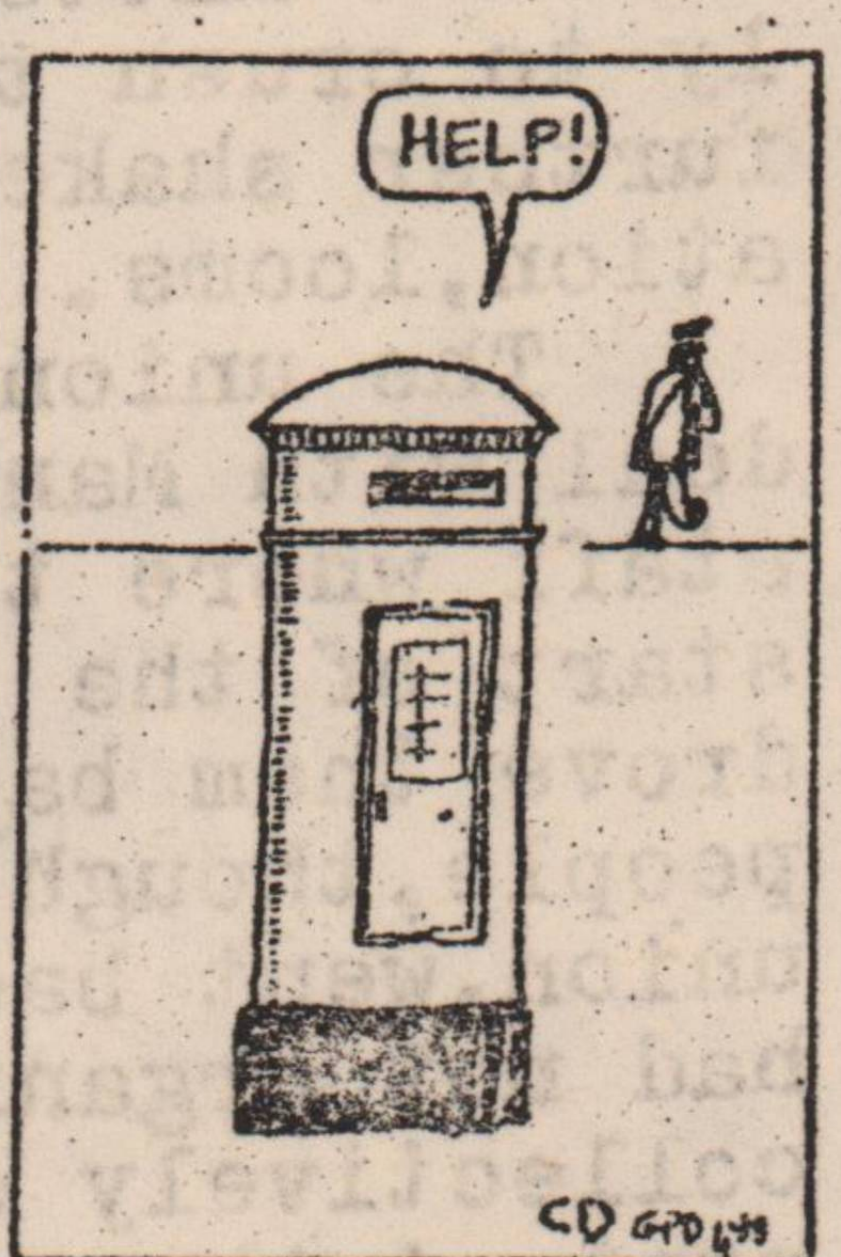
Wednesday 31st August saw the first national strike in the Post Office for 17 years. It was over the introduction of bonus payments (DRAS) to new recruits in areas where there are recruiting difficulties (parts of the S.E.). If the scheme were to succeed it would prove to be a very divisive measure, not only creating greater pay differences between different areas but also causing competition & division between new recruits in the same office—the bonus will only be paid to those individuals the supervisors recommend.

This is the first step towards office by office pay bargaining. The demise of national pay bargaining is something the union (the UCW) dread, it

would weaken it's national position with management & would also make it even more irrelevant to members. More importantly it will tend to divide workers in different offices & will mean offices with little power will get an even worse deal than they do already.

For the UCW the manner of the introduction of these payments was more alarming than the payments themselves. Twice this year P.O management has decided to impose new national conditions on the workforce without the agreement of the union. The first was team briefings, the second this new bonus. The UCW is shaking in it's boots because it is being excluded from the power-structure of management. In the past everyth-

Postman Plod
The Miserable Bastard





ing management has decided upon has been discussed & agreed with by UCW bosses before implementation. The UCW is very proud of it's record of negotiation instead of industrial action to solve problems-this must be the reason why there are regularly many more unofficial strikes in the P.O in six months than there is in any other industry in a year!

The original dispute over DRAS was superceded by a virtual national stoppage over the aggressive attitude of management after the one-day strike & the hiring of casuals.

Management forced workers out by several means. They changed people's duties & applied even more rigid regulations, making working intolerable. One of the first offices out (Coventry) came out for this reason-not over casuals. Casuals were not needed to clear the backlog from the one-day stoppage, they're not brought in after bank holidays, so there was no reason to bring them in after the one-day. Management have suspended all workers who refuse to cross picket lines or hadle blacked mail.

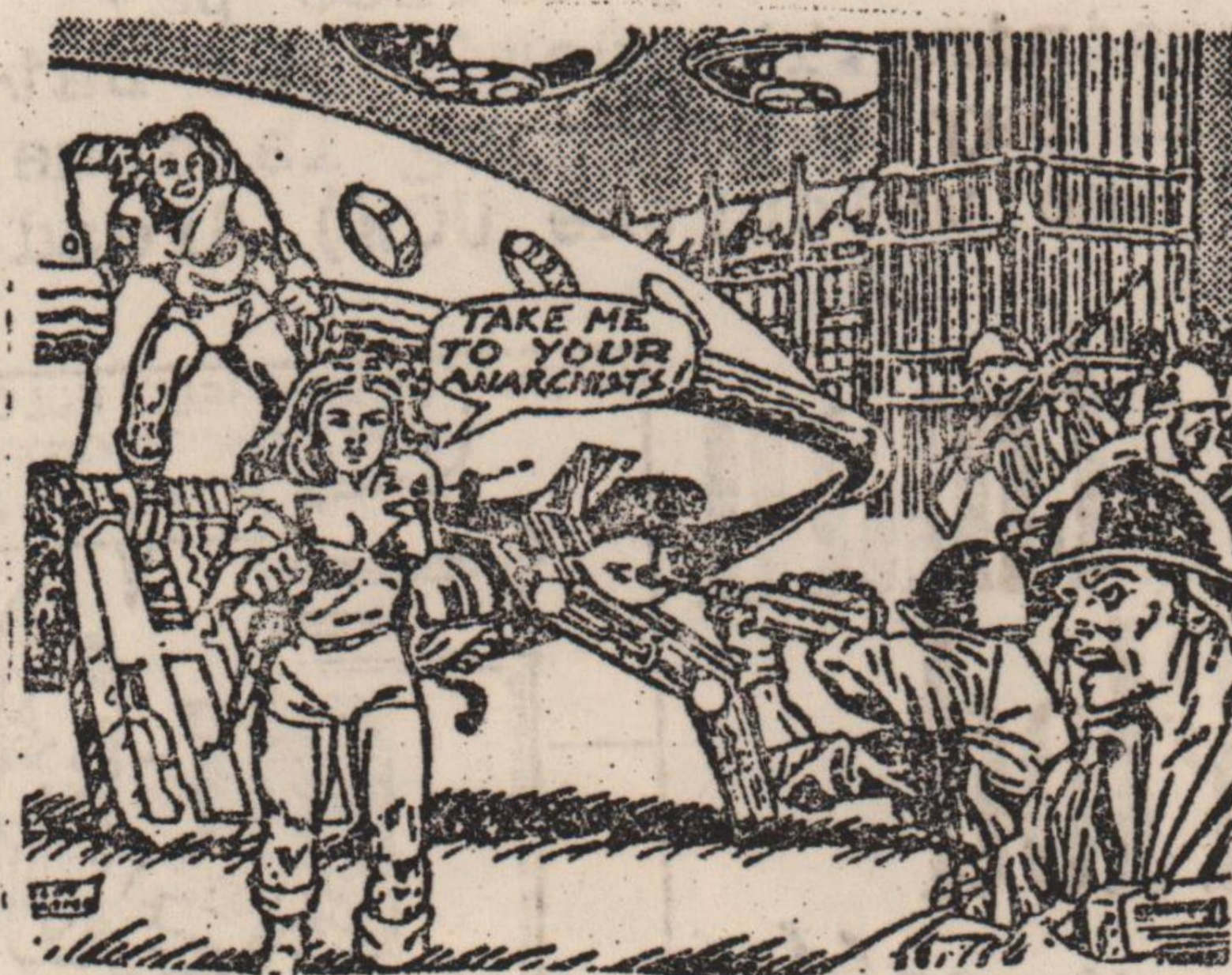
P.O workers know that all this was planned in advance & that the dispute was created to discredit the union (which doesn't matter) & them- & finally to crush their resistance as further shake-ups, or privatisation, looms.

The union bosses made a deal with Management which left staff where they were at the start of the strike. They then drove them back to work. Post-people, though angry at the union, went back because they had not organised themselves collectively outside of & against the union, & so had no option. The battle is lost, the class war continues...

@@ this article (bar final para.) from Communication Worker leaflet (radical posties) c/o BM Box 3644, London WCI

Attacks on Lesbians & Gays

On Friday July 15th several women were badly beaten up by four men at The Drum, a women's disco in North London. One man had managed to get into the club & when he was escorted out, his mates who were hassling the woman on the door, started laying in to the woman nearest. Although they tried to fight back, the woman on the door said that the men were pretty lethal & seemed army trained. When the women tried to get help from the landlord, they found that he'd locked them out & was standing in the other bar, laughing with his mates. This meant one of the women had to go outside to phone for help where a bloke on a motorbike viciously attacked her. It seems that the men concerned have links with a fascist base in Argyll Square & there have been attacks on gay men in the same area. Cowardly attacks on lesbians & gays have to be resisted, in the same ways that the Asian communities have had to organise



" Good news for all those women whose husband will be 105 years old on July 6th this year. They will now get a non-contributory pension " .From DHSS leaflet number NP 32.



to protect themselves: SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE.

We also have to explore ever more imaginative ways of using our resources to confront these frightened bullies who are brainwashed into believing that as members of the "master race" they should crush anyone who doesn't fit into this backward myth. The irony is that these pathetic macho racists willingly serve their real masters the patriarchal imperialist British ruling class.

We have the strength & imagination to overcome these robots. We need the confidence wherever possible we should discuss these issues, share ideas, give each other support & take whatever actions we feel capable of & are prepared to take.

*the enemy
» within «*

"Readers Meeting"

Readers of the Enemy Within are invited to come along & express their views & opinions, bring articles & graphics, get involved in writing, producing & distributing it. You too can inflame the masses! - Thursday October 13th at Marchmont Community Centre (address elsewhere).

Private Medicine

In the last few years there has been a great increase in the number of patients who use private health schemes in preference to the National Health Service provision. Who are these people why do they choose to pay private sector fees and what is the effect on the rest of us?

We are all probably aware that the private health sector is parasitical on the N.H.S.. Firms like B.U.P.A. may have their own clinics and one or two hospitals but mainly they use N.H.S. beds, N.H.S. paid nurses, N.H.S. doctors N.H.S. equipment and N.H.S. technical and clerical staff. Whilst these facilities are all being used for the well off scum they aren't being used on those who rely on the public sector. We'll just have to wait... and wait... and wait.

There has been a lot of talk about private health care being available to all - if you can't afford to pay, then maybe your boss or your scab union (e.g. the E.E.P.T.U.) will. The reality is that the typical private medicine user is an upper class white male. This category accounts for over a quarter of all people who have private health insurance whilst in contrast only 3% of semi-skilled workers and 1% of the unskilled use private medicine.

Why do people pay for medical treatment when they can have it free on the N.H.S.? Obviously, an important factor is that you don't wait very long for treatment if you have plenty of money. Doctors and nurses are falling over themselves to get a piece of the action. Secondly, if you have the money, you can call the tune. As a private patient you get more considerate treatment and you can fix the appointment and admission dates to suit your convenience. The rest of us in the meantime have to wait.

Since 1980, doctors working full-time for the N.H.S. have been allowed to do some private work. Supporters of private medicine argue that they help us to cut N.H.S. waiting lists. In reality many N.H.S. doctors lengthen their lists in order to see more and more pri-



vate patients. Now, over 85% of hospital consultants have private patients - we wait longer while they line their pockets. Since the private sector employs only a tiny number of their own doctors, it is us, the poor and genuinely needy, who have to be sacrificed to suit the rich and the greedy professionals.

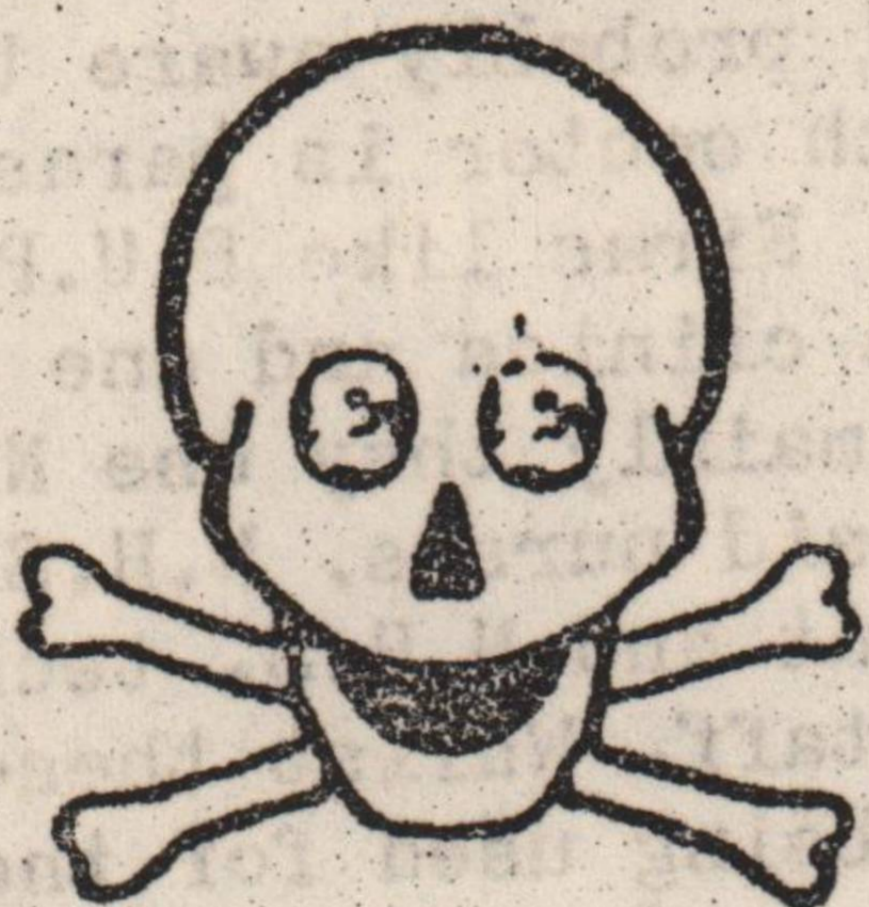
Seafarers: Fight On

In spite of the predictable decision by the National Union of Seafarers to disassociate the union from its members

actions in Dover, hundreds of seafarers & their supporters are defying the High Court judges & their own leadership & carrying on with mass demonstrations. This is part of a growing movement of workers openly defying the "new realist" retreats of Labour & Trade Union leaders who are desperately clinging to their privileges & fatalistically bowing down to the Capitalist system. The State, of course, is taking full advantage of the "unofficial" status of the demonstrations at Dover. Ten seafarers & sacked miner Terry French were arrested & held without charge under the notorious Public Order Act.

In spite of this, seafarers like Dick Savage who has worked 12 years at sea are determined to fight on. In an interview in the daily paper Newsline he says "We'll just carry on with or without them. If they don't stand up for the members, we'll show them we don't need them & continue the fight". This reflects the fighting spirit of many, many work-

PRIVATE MEDICINE



MAKES YOU SICK

Rich queue jumpers
cause
working class suffering

Designed by the London Group of the

The I.C.F. c/o Westwood High St,
London E.C.1.

Anarchist Communist Federation

A3 SIZE POSTER AVAILABLE FROM LONDON
A.C.F. We've printed 1000 so there are plenty
available for your locality.

Of course, it is not only doctors who work for the private sector. More and more nurses are deserting the N.H.S. for the juicier plums that private medicine offer. On average, every health district loses 5½% of their nurses each year to private firms, especially from the specialist areas like theatre nursing. Remember, the private health companies rely totally on the N.H.S. and the public sector to train and educate their doctors and nurses. Medical treatment is supposed to be available for our benefit not for profit. Sadly, unless we start to do something about the capitalists who see the N.H.S. as ready for milking it is us who will pay the price - in terms of declining service, increased costs and more suffering.



Allen

"We recommend they're kept well away from water..."



There is no doubt that workers in a particular trade, industry or profession be it the mines, seafaring, nursing or whatever know far more about the specific conditions of their struggle than those not directly involved & that has to be respected when support is given. However each of these struggles & their outcome affects every one of us as social beings of different sexes, races, classes & abilities. We have a right & responsibility to participate as equals on the general questions of how to defeat the ruling class, government & state. We demand a say in what kind of world we live in. As more & more people break from the reformist illusions we have all been spoonfed, it is essential we interact & discuss tactics, strategies, principles, ways forward etc. The process was already underway during the Miners' strike & we have much to learn, especially from those actively involved such as the youth & womens' support groups. Many of them have gone on to share their insights & experiences & give support to other struggles such as the campaign against the strip searching of Irish women political prisoners. The miners & their wives were affected by the intervention of black workers & lesbian+gay support groups. As anarchists we also have much to share. We have a rich, diverse history to draw on. A healthy respect for the untried & untraditional as well as a preparedness to learn from the past. We have confidence in the creative abilities of people to overcome their conditioning in the struggle to control their own destinies individually & collectively. We have to give each other all the strength & encouragement we can & not be afraid to disagree. This way

ers & raises the ongoing question of leadership in ever sharper ways.

Those who maintain that it is necessary to build alternative revolutionary leadership are competing to be that leadership, convinced that, in the words of one their predecessors "the proletariat is the heart & the party the head" of revolutionary struggle. In other words, workers are incapable of going beyond a trade union consciousness. Actually events have shown that it is precisely when workers are breaking from trade union consciousness that the parties step in to take over & effectively determine how things should proceed from then on. We are allowed revolutionary consciousness only in so far as it follows the party line. It is very easy to criticise dependency on leaders, but we have all been conditioned from birth to take as "natural" a system of leaders & followers. Leaders are often smooth/hard talking experts in state collaboration. They use bureaucracy disguised as democracy to ridicule crush opposition, & their fight for revolutionary or even trade union principles can inspire people.

there is also the danger that in rejecting the substitution of one set of leaders for another, we can lurch to the other extreme & tail behind workers in struggle, frightened to voice our opinions in case we are suspected of trying to takeover. People can become passively dependent on the struggles of miners, printworkers etc hoping that they will be heroes can take on Thatcher & the State on everyone's behalf; inspired when they appear to be 'winning' & demoralised & resentful when they appear to have 'lost'. This is just dependency on leaders in another form. we can move towards being both & neither leaders and followers!



Self Organisation

One of the most used terms in revolutionary anarchist vocabulary is the call for self-organisation. This means that we, the working class, must organise ourselves in our struggles today because only through this experience, and the rejection of leaders, will we be able to organise our life (production, relations with other areas, etc.) in the new society.

The struggles we might be involved in can range from workplace disputes, to fighting the local council, to conservation issues, to organising against fascists, to community action against such things as the poll tax.

In order to make struggles go the way we want we must control them ourselves. This means having everyone involved in the struggle involved in the decision-making, it means speaking for ourselves.

It doesn't mean setting up a committee which makes all the decisions or letting political parties (Labour, SWP, etc.) or union bureaucrats speak for us. Whenever we let leaders make decisions for us it usually becomes apparent that they have different intentions from us. They might want to enroll us into their Party or they might want to use the struggle as a stepping-stone to political advancement, or they might simply want to hold us back and keep us in line. By the time everyone realises this it is often too late to do anything about it. The Labour Party, SWP and others and the unions have done this countless times over the years.

If we want to win struggles we must involve everyone and decide on our own tactics and methods - apart from anything else this enables us to draw on a much wider range of initiative, as anyone with an idea is able to discuss it with everyone else. People are enthusiastic and determined when they are in control of their own battles, they lose heart when they lose that control.

However, the call for self-organisation isn't just a demand we leave hanging in the air. The idea that anarchists are anti-organisation is a myth put about by the ruling class and the political part-

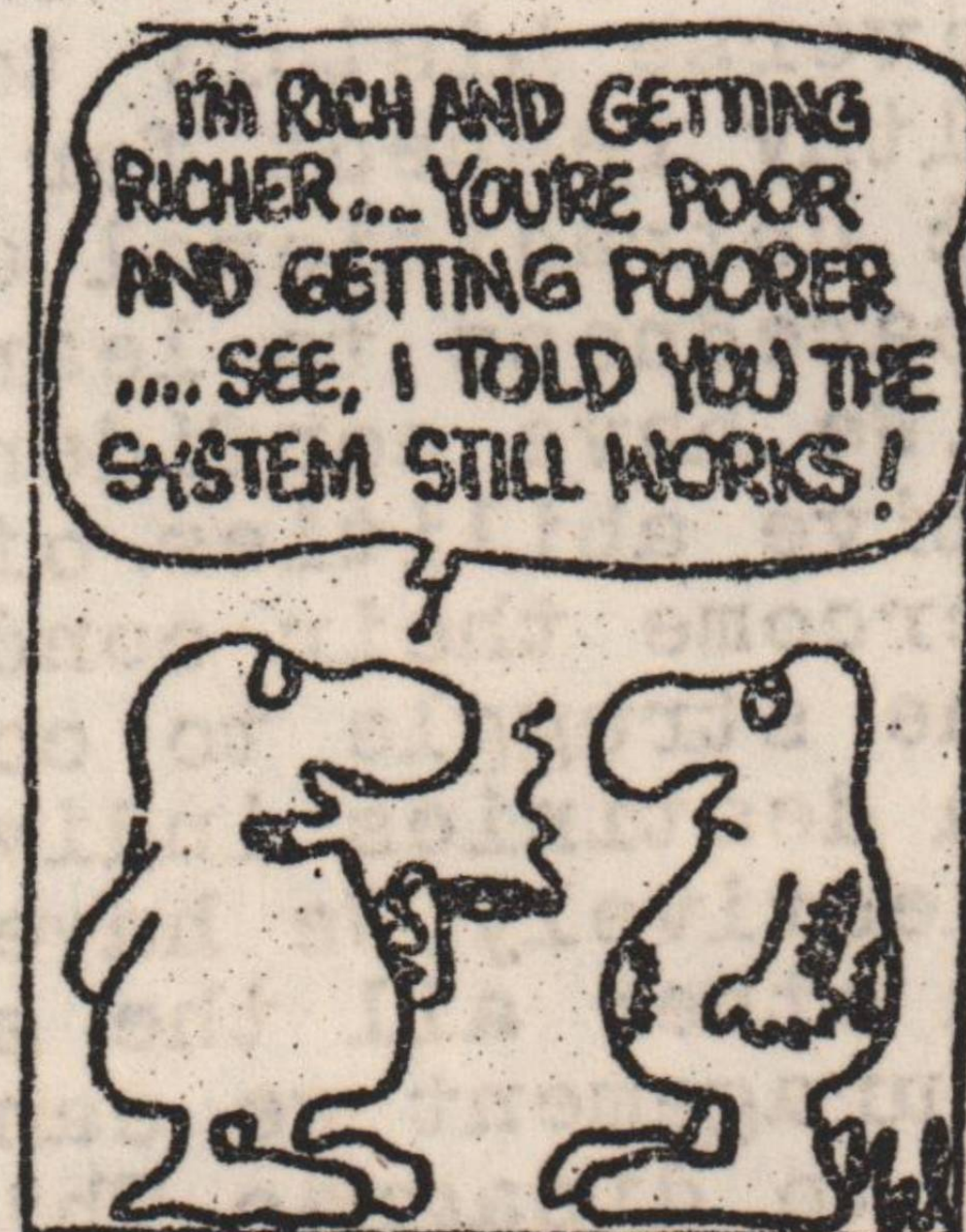
ies of the Left (unfortunately many people over the years have fallen for the myth and called themselves anarchists). To call for self-organisation also means we have to be prepared to do a lot of organising work. It is the structure and aims of the organisations

we create which will guarantee the equal and direct participation of everyone involved. Initially, however, most of the work may have to be undertaken by anarchists.

Take resistance to the poll tax for example. It is up to anarchists to produce leaflets, call meetings, and set in motion the creation of effective local anti-poll tax groups. This will mean a great deal of work. We have to learn how to organise - but as anarchists, not as leaders. It may mean we are left to do most of the administrative-type work (producing leaflets etc.) but this doesn't mean we are in charge of the struggle.

People won't change their ideas unless anarchists talk with them and act with them in their common struggles.

If our struggles are self-organised it will soon lead to the abandonment of the reliance on leaders, or parliaments to legislate in our favour. They do it to appease us and can easily take away the benefits we gain if we lose our collective strength. When the vast majority realise this and begin to take life into their own hands - then we'll start winning.





Scotching the Poll Tax

The Labour Party bureaucracy in Scotland is trying to hide its fear of resisting the Tory government's Poll Tax by implying that everyone will comply by registering & paying up. In other words "There's nothing we can do & we should not break the law anyway".

Unlike them many community groups based around delaying tactics & non-payment of Poll Tax, have formed & they're growing in strength & numbers. In Edinburgh there's around 25 & in Strathclyde about 35. Even the official figures from the Community Charge officer, no doubt doctored to disguise resistance, show that out of 310,000 households eligible to register 30,000 have not returned the forms at all, & 21,000 have returned them but with queries which of course have delayed registration. From the Southside of Edinburgh a postman reports that on private estates over 50% haven't returned the forms at all & on Council estates approximately 75% didn't return the first form & have had final warnings. The Stockbridge/New Town's latest Anti-Poll Tax leaflet points out "But even if you have registered it doesn't mean the government has won. Registration is only the first skirmish in this battle. If 10's of thousands of people are united & organised to refuse to pay, the Poll Tax will prove unworkable". Already 14,000 Edinburgh residents have signed the pledge to refuse to pay the Poll Tax. All this exposes those who try to stand at the head of struggles in order to head them off into defeat.

Although the majority of NALGO members concerned are carrying out Poll Tax work, a leaflet brought out by NALGO

Members Against The Poll Tax¹ calls on members to fight to overturn the "weak kneed" AGM branch policy. They also call for "Labour Councils to refuse to collect the tax; Trade Unionists to refuse to co-operate with its implementation; All 50 Labour M.P's to give a lead by pledging publicly not to pay; individuals & community groups to organise not to register or pay".

Whatever people might think of the chances of success of these demands, the important thing is, that a group of trade unionists are refusing to be confined by a weak union policy & are fighting beyond it. This indicates the importance of building a movement amongst the relevant workers to refuse to co-operate with the Poll Tax in any way. Alongside this, the lessons for us in England to be learned from the Scottish Community Resistance are many. As well as regular meetings, many of the groups have street co-ordinators & street committees responsible for keeping people in touch with local Anti-Poll Tax activity. There is also door to door leafletting & discussion with people. The Stockbridge/New Town group has a weekly Anti-Poll Tax stall outside a block of flats. Campaigners stressed the importance of groups being clearly based around refusal to pay so that they can't get diverted by wavering reformists who have no intention of resisting the law. They also spoke of the importance of fighting against authoritarian groups trying to takeover & impose undemocratic elitist structures. Meetings must be open to all who oppose payment so that they can participate in decision making.

It is essential, in England that we keep in touch with the resistance in Scotland & prepare & build our resistance NOW!



The Comrades New Clothes

The Russian ruling class, led by Gorbachev, is trying to implement wide-ranging political & economic reforms. Attempts at reform aren't new but their scale is. Glasnost (openness) includes an anti-corruption drive, freedom of speech-assembly & press, encouraging criticism of (& within) the ruling Communist Party, tolerance of independent (non-governmental) organisations. Perestroika (economic reform) includes cutting subsidies on necessities (housing, food, transport, health), making industry self-financing, cutting bureaucracy & giving more power to industrial management, making layoffs & encouraging private enterprise via co-ops (up from 4000-30,000 in the last year).

WHY REFORM?

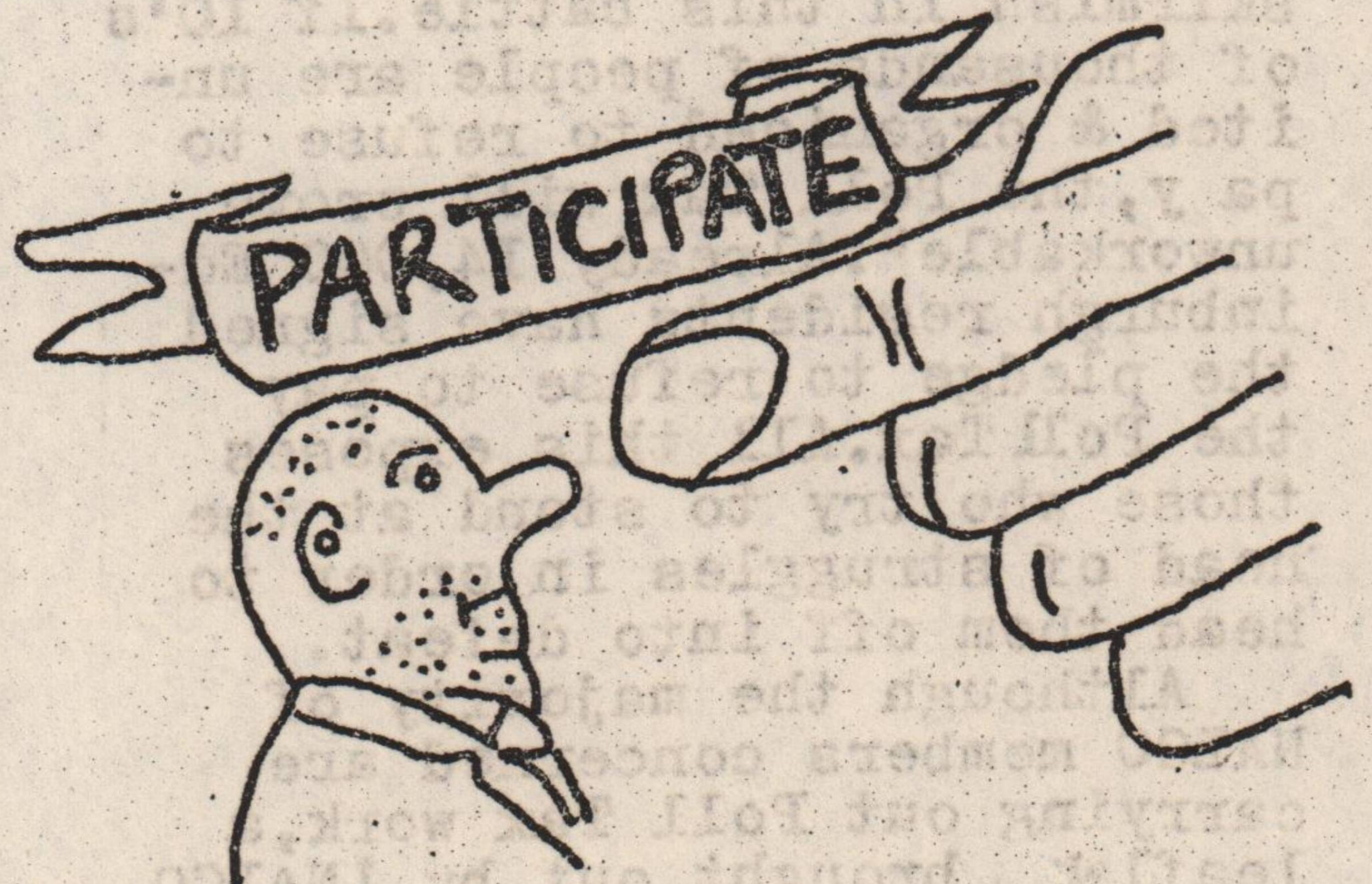
All Communist Parties in power have to resolve a dilemma-to maintain their position they must monopolise all decisions & reduce to a minimum the communication between ordinary people; yet communication is essential to co-ordinate a complex modern economy. This monopolising of decisions has led to a very centralised, bureaucratic & inefficient capitalist economy. Factories concentrate on output targets so sacrificing quality for quantity; the high level of military spending has retarded the economy-it takes up 19% of the Gross National Product & one third of the workforce. There are shortages of many goods which have led to a huge underground 'black' economy & worker unrest. Working class resistance has taken the form of strikes (especially in the 1970's) & mostly alcoholism & absenteeism: 'They pretend to pay us & we pretend to work' (Russian folk saying).

The fundamental aim of the Bosses' reforms is save their economy-which is in crisis- by confronting & attacking the working class. As in the West, they are trying to restructure the economy to make it profitable & efficient. Resources must be shifted from the traditional heavy industries (which are also 'over-staffed') to microchips, plastics & consumer goods. They hope to discipline the working class through layoffs (& cut labour costs), wage cuts (scrapping subsidies) & increasing productivity (i.e. exploitation). The old party-bureaucratic & military caste are being replaced in the ruling class by technocrats (not without resistance), & the professionals and intelligensia are becoming more powerful: Gorbachev is a university educated lawyer.

Glasnost is to buy the support of this new middle class, & to try to fool the working class into participating in their own exploitation 'it's your system'.

OUT OF CONTROL?

As anarchists we know that 'real freedoms aren't generously handed down by the ruling class & that anything given is easily taken back. Real freedoms are taken & won by people through





direct action & maintained (and extended) through practice.

Such reforms can fuel resistance, a mass revolutionary movement out of control of the Bosses as started to happen in China during the 'Cultural Revolution' of 1974-'76 & Czechoslovakia in 1968. Already unrest has increased, particularly over regional & nationalist grievances e.g. Nagorno-Karabakh where the whole population is on the streets. Yugoslavia is also on the boil (with the class struggle more obviously to the fore).

There are big protests in Hungary against a planned huge Hydro-Electric project; Czechoslovakia had mass demonstrations on the anniversary of the 'Prague Spring' of 1968, a big strike wave has again erupted in Poland this year. NO COUNTRIES, PARTIES OR STATES - ALL POWER TO THE WORKING CLASS!

Anarchy Quelled !

26 years of authoritarian one party rule in Burma were ended by a 6 week mass popular uprising which began in July.

The uprising started over lack of food: people took to the streets, & when troops kill children, they erupted. Police stations were attacked & their inhabitants publicly beheaded, soldiers were disarmed, food & other necessities obtained through looting & freely distributed. Mass strikes of workers paralysed the economy. The Army withdrew after their attempt to suppress the revolt failed (tho' not before hundreds of people had been killed). There followed weeks of daily mass demonstrations, speakers on street corners & peoples' courts. Students & youth picketed out factory workers who were demanding better conditions & higher wages. Workers from government offices commandeered official vehicles to take them to marches & rallies. In many parts of the count-

ry party officials fled for their lives leaving administration in the hands of monks and strike committees.

During this time Opposition leaders & (too many) insurgents were demanding free & fair elections to create a multi-party democracy, & demanded that the military keep out of politics. All this at a time when people had created their own organisations through which they directly controlled & organised their lives: strike committees, peoples' courts etc. In such circumstances, revolutionaries fight for the maintenance and extension of popular self-organisation. The military are not neutral (though mostly drawn from the working class); they are part of the State. Their job

is to protect (& increase) the wealth & power of the ruling class. For a revolution to be successful they must be militarily defeated; or (more likely) many must be persuaded to mutiny, sharing out their weapons with the insurgents & fighting the Bosses. Revolutionaries encourage the formation of Workers' Militias so that all the insurgents can defend & extend their revolution.

THE ARMY REAPPEAR

On 19th September there was a new military coup with the leaders mouthing the usual pious promises of elections when (ruling class) order has been restored. The army have taken over strike committee offices & are trying to enforce a curfew. People on the streets (especially looters & those near barricades) are being shot. Resistance continues however; continued strikes, looting, bamboo stockades, firing on troops, catapults & machetes



One Big Union

There has been much talk recently in the media of massive union mergers. Both NALGO & NUPE annual conferences supported the idea of a merger. COHSE discussed but rejected a merger with NUPE, while the AEU and EPTU are casting long lingering glances at each other, despite the electricians being suspended from the TUC. So, isn't this a good thing? Won't it mean less division among workers, more solidarity, less crossing of picket lines, and more effective action? The answer, unhappily, is no.

The mergers that will probably take place are the trade union bureaucrats' reply to the troubles facing them. One initial benefit they see is that they will make up the membership levels that have fallen over the last ten years, due partly to unemployment and partly to disillusion with the unions. They look favourably at the AS EMS-TASS merger of last year, which then boosted its membership by 22,000, whilst the original bureaucrats kept control.

The bureaucrats also hope that mergers will provide them with bigger block votes in the TUC and the Labour Party, increasing their influence and bargaining power.

One result of the creation of a smaller group of general unions would be greater competition at the workplace. They

would attempt to win members with all sorts of come-ons like cheap holidays, whilst reaching accommodation with the Bosses with single union, no-strike deals. And a fusion of NUPE and NALGO would mean union branches that contained both ancillary workers and their managers!

Workers can't look to these proposed mergers as a step forward. We must continue to rely on our own self-organised struggles, independent of the union bureaucrats!

Discussion Meetings

The next ACF discussion meeting is 'The Middle East: Revolution & Change'

Thursday October 6th

Meetings start at 8-30pm and are held at
Marchmont Street Community Centre
Marchmont Street
London WC1
(nearest tubes: Russell Square, Kings Cross, Euston)
These meetings are free and open to all.



ACF

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