

WHERE THERE'S BRASS
THERE'S MUCK
ECOLOGY AND ANARCHISM



A N A R C H I S T
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WHERE THERE'S MUCK THERE'S BRASS

ECOLOGY AND ANARCHISM

**ANARCHIST COMMUNIST
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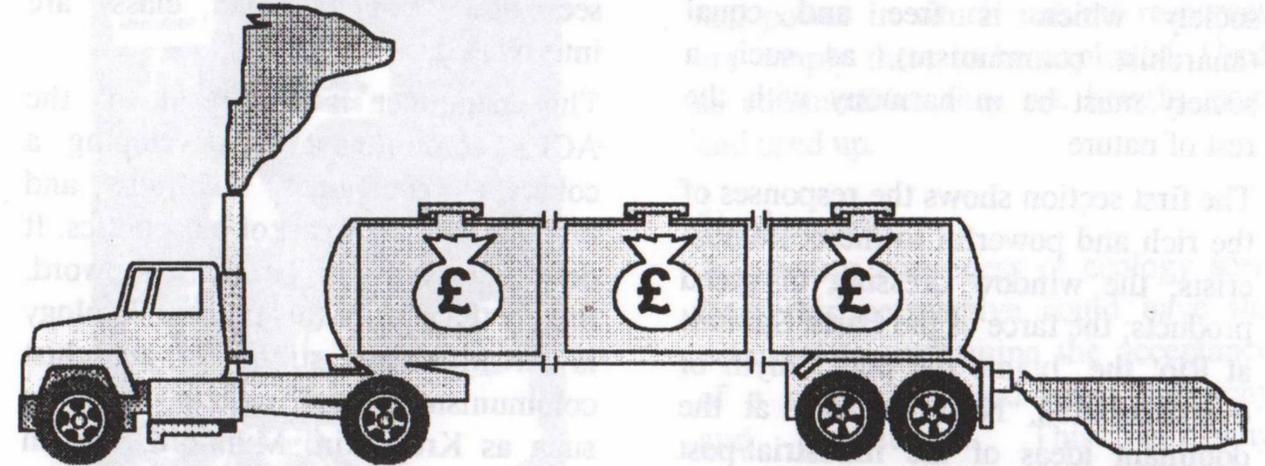
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**WHERE THERE'S BRASS, THERE'S MUCK:
ECOLOGY & CLASS**



***Introduction - Ecological
Crisis***

Many people are aware of the massive worldwide problem of environmental pollution and destruction. Rainforests such as Amazonia are being decimated, large areas of land are being turned into desert; droughts, floods and earthquakes affect millions; pollution worsens/causes dangerous climatic changes such as global warming. Ecology (the science of living things and how they interact with each other) is therefore vital, literally a matter of life and death.

In Africa and Asia deforestation and desertification reinforce the effects of grossly unfair land ownership to produce starvation and malnutrition for millions of people. In the affluent West cancers from the nuclear and other industries affect thousands; the death and injury toll from cars is huge and the resulting air pollution causes a

worsening asthma problem (affecting 1 in 7 children). Water is undrinkable due to added fluoride and pesticides from farming and pollution from industrial chemicals. Food is generally laden with chemicals (additives, pesticides and pollution) and irradiation to prolong its shelf life.

Ecological analysis needs to be part of a wider class analysis - both are interrelated and equally important. For too many greens however, green issues/green politics are neither "left or right", "beyond politics". This is dangerous nonsense leading to flirtations (or worse) with paganism, eastern religions and mysticism (e.g. parts of British Green Party); people-hating (sections of the Animal Rights movement); nationalism and racism (David Icke and leading American Earth First! people in the 1980's); and neo-fascism/fascism (Icke and Third Stream fascists such as Andrew Harriman in Britain). On the other side, class analysis for example cannot

ignore ecology e.g. by regarding technology as neutral. If it does so, it will be incapable of creating a future society which is free and equal (anarchist communism), as such a society must be in harmony with the rest of nature.

The first section shows the responses of the rich and powerful to the ecological crisis; the window dressing of greed products; the farce of the Earth Summit at Rio; the "blame the poor" myth of overpopulation. Next we look at the dominant ideas of the industrial/post industrial era - Social Darwinism, Patriarchy etc.; the myth of the neutrality of science and technology, analysed in detail through an examination of car society and opposition to it. Section 3 examines

radical green responses to ecological issues by individuals, (lifestylism), and by radical political groups. Finally, we see how ecology and class are interrelated.

This pamphlet is the result of the ACF's commitment to developing a coherent ecological analysis and practice as a vital part of our politics. It does not claim to be the last word, merely the start of this process. Ecology is an important strand in anarchist communism through writers - activists such as Kropotkin, Mumford, and in the present day Murray Bookchin, although we profoundly disagree with his current idea of "Libertarian Municipalism".

RULING CLASS RESPONSE



ECOLOGY AND SURVIVALISM

The term "Survivalism" usually refers to people going out into the wilds and living through a nuclear war or similar catastrophe by using their survival skills. However, in recent years the term has taken on a new meaning.

Survivalism is capitalism's response to the growth in concern and awareness of environmental issues. Ecology, once seen as a marginal concern, has, at the level of appearances, been taken to the heart of capitalism. Why is this?

The present ecological crisis is the inheritance of centuries of tyranny and exploitation in which the mass of humanity, as workers, peasants, slaves and soldiers, have been used by a small elite as mere tools in the accumulation of wealth. In the process the ecosystems of the planet have been torn apart to meet the demands of a system

based on the endless pursuit of profit and power in which natural resources are simply there to be exploited. Used as commodities they are bought, sold and used up.

Undermine

A growing awareness of ecology seen from this perspective could have the potential to undermine the acceptance of a society founded upon hierarchy and exploitation. This is why capitalism needs to be seen to be embracing ecological ideas. In doing so it is able to redefine the ecological problem in terms which pose no threat to its existence and actually increase its strength.

Through the media, consumerism and politics, the ecological problem is phrased as one of survival within the capitalist system rather than a transcendence of that system. In the rhetoric of survivalism we are all responsible, regardless of class, race or gender, for environmental problems and must all "do our bit for the environment".

Operating in a similar way to nationalism, survivalism masks social differences in an attempt to create a false social unity in the pursuit of shared interests. Through the media we are constantly sent the message that it is our unquestionable duty to be Green. We all have a role to play to ensure the survival of the planet. And what is that

role for the working class? The same old shit - work, consume and vote.

Commodity

For the consumer, ecology itself has been turned into a commodity to be bought from the supermarket shelf. As a marketing tool it makes offers of "10% More!" or "By 2 get 1 free!" pale in comparison to the prospect of saving the planet by buying "Ozone Friendly" hairspray.

At the next general election we can look forward to the spectacle of the major parties trying to prove how Green they are, how the environment is safe only in their hands. It is a sick joke that the same parties will also be arguing that they will be best at competing with other industrialised nations and increasing productivity. There are even those within the Green Party who welcome this Green window-dressing since, they argue, they force the other parties to adopt environmental policies to avoid losing voters to the Green Party.

Apart from the fact that leaving the environment to governments and multinational corporations is "like leaving a child batterer to look after the nursery", voting for Green policies to be carried out by the state is a thoroughly disempowering act which does a lot to bolster the strength of the state and little, if anything, to protect the environment.

The basic purpose of survivalism is to hide the social, political and historical causes of the ecological problem and to

incorporate environmental awareness into its own economic logic.

Explicit

As anarchists, in our propaganda, we should make explicit the real causes of the environmental problems we face. However, we should not argue solely on the basis that revolutionary change is the only alternative to ecological disaster but also talk of what action people can take here and now.

We should also make it clear that for us survival in itself is not enough. We aim for the complete transcendence of capitalist society and all forms of domination and exploitation and for a society in which production is geared toward genuine need and produce freely distributed. In such a society we would be free of the alienating boredom and drudgery of work, competition and consumerism.

RIO AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

"Money is the root of all progress".
John Major

"...environmental protection and a growing economy are inseparable"
George Bush

"...there is a great awareness about the importance of a new contract between man and nature" UN Secretary General, Boutros Ghali

The above quotations demonstrate how the participants of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, the Earth Summit,

responded to the problems of global ecological crisis within the perspective and language of capitalism. What was achieved within this framework?

Agenda 21 This 800-page "agenda" was agreed as a series of guidelines for governments covering a range of issues including waste emissions, recycling and population. There is no legal obligation to follow these guidelines and their implementation is dependent upon financial investment.

Biodiversity The US refused to sign this agreement to protect plant and animal diversity. This is because the agreement would threaten the practices of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) involving biotechnology and "intellectual property". Again, implementation is dependent on finance and further ratification.

Global Warming Although this agreement, signed by 110 countries, is to be enshrined in law, its recommendations are limited by economic rationality, so that, for example, while scientists recommend an immediate 60% reduction in atmospheric pollution, levels need only be reduced to those of 1990 by the year 2000.

Deserts

Other proposals and agreements were made concerning aid, deforestation and desertification but these, like the others, fell within the overall pattern where TNCs kept themselves and their activities, beyond the reach of any regulatory controls (by lobbying richer

nations and through the special access the consortium of top TNCs had got to the Secretary General of the Earth Summit) and where the needs of capitalism triumphed over those of the environment, the poor and the starving.

Is it at all surprising that what the Earth Summit produced was not worth the 20 years it took to organise or the 30 million pieces of paper it was written on? No, environmental protection and a growing economy are not "inseparable" they are entirely incompatible. Unlike the naive and outraged of the green pressure groups, or the left, we do not ask or expect global capitalism to act against its own interests or reform itself.

To understand exactly why capitalism can never be "greened" we need to know exactly how capitalism operates as we approach the end of the 20th century.

Permanent

A permanent feature of capitalism is its need to grow in order to overcome the limitations which force it into periodic crises. This growth takes the form of the creation of new products, new markets, an ever increasing rate of turnover and geographical extension. To achieve this capitalism needs to be highly flexible. In recent years, due to technological advances in transportation (commodities to consumers/consumers to commodities) and communications (global finance markets), this flexibility has enabled international capitalism to establish a

degree of independence from even the most powerful nation states. Its increasing wealth and power is concentrated in around 500 TNCs who account for 80% of all world trade and investment and whose individual budgets are often bigger than those of whole nations.

This is not to deny the power of nation states, particularly the rich and militarised states of the west, but to recognise that ultimately they do not run or control capitalism. The function of the state today is to create and maintain conditions in which capitalism can thrive. This can be seen in the push toward laissez faire and market economies, cuts in public spending, high unemployment and attacks on the power of organised labour.

The rich and militarised state will respond to any perceived threat to this order from "upstart" regimes through the use of sanctions, the support of "rebels" or, as a last resort, direct military intervention. But this should not blind us to the fact that it is the TNCs who call the shots. It is they who have the capacity, regardless of the needs of any individual state, to move a manufacturing base from one part of the world to another where production costs may be cheaper or environmental restrictions evaded.

New World Order

This mode of late capitalism, the New World Order, is responsible for the most savage destruction of the

environment and the ruthless exploitation of millions of human lives, all expendable in the pursuit of profit.

In the debt-ridden nations of the South the International Monetary Fund and World Bank restructure and reschedule loans to debtor countries with "structural adjustment programmes". These programmes force countries to open up to TNCs and adopt export-based economies where the provision of their own food, housing and education is sacrificed to the production of goods for export to bring in the hard currency debts must be repaid in. Cash crops are produced requiring the use of imported and environmentally harmful chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Precious forests are cut down to produce timber products and cleared cattle grazing land to deliver burgers to every High Street in the western world. This deforestation leads to further global warming and the loss of plant and animal species.

In the rest of the world TNCs use planned obsolescence to achieve an ever-increasing turnover rate for their commodities. Commodities are made to break down quickly, cars TVs etc., or become "unfashionable" through the promotion of ever newer and "improved" products.

Deadly

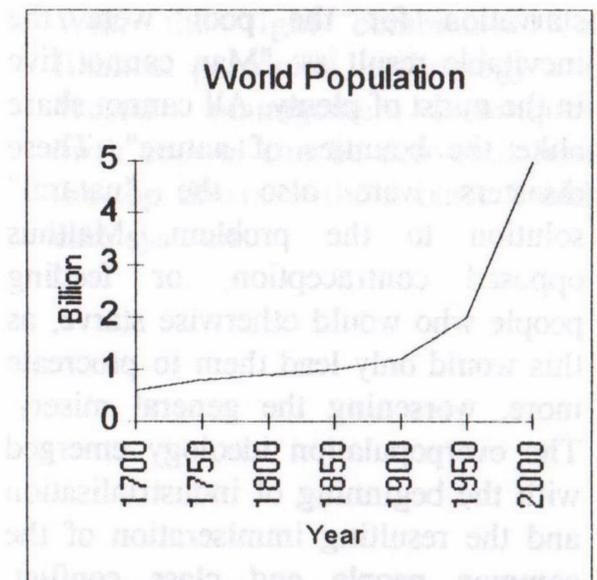
In the New World Order the ruling class work to provide a global stomping ground for a capitalism that is not simply the enemy of ecology, but an enemy which is in the process of

becoming more dangerous and deadly than ever before.

The farce of the Earth Summit should signal to all those seriously committed to protecting the environment the futility of attempting to encourage any government to adopt a green agenda. Such activity is not only naive but dangerous since it encourages the illusion that, even if a green government were elected it would be in a position to oppose the forces of international capitalism.

What we must do is to bring the single issue of ecology into the general terrain of class struggle. This means breaking down the barriers between the mass of exploited humanity globally and going on the offensive. "...Now its between TNCs and citizens to fight it out directly", as eco-feminist Vandana Shiva concluded after the Earth Summit.

OVERPOPULATION - OR A BIT RICH?



Human population has sky-rocketed in the last few centuries - in the nineteenth century the world population more than doubled. Population growth is a result of a decline in the death rate rather than a boom in the birth rate. The birth rate peaked between 1960 and 1965 and has been slowly falling since. The growth in the "developed" countries of the West has been slowly grinding to a halt. As the birth rate slows it will catch up with the declining death rate - this could take up to a century or more in Africa and Asia at present rates, however.

Malthus

Are there too many people for the earth to support? Thomas Malthus (a 19th century clergyman) was the originator and populariser of "overpopulation" theories. He maintained that human population exponentially outstrips food production - that it is always and

everywhere pressing against the available food supply. War, disease and starvation for the poor were the inevitable result as: "Man cannot live in the midst of plenty. All cannot share alike the bounties of nature". These disasters were also the "natural" solution to the problem. Malthus opposed contraception, or feeding people who would otherwise starve, as this would only lead them to procreate more, worsening the general misery. The overpopulation ideology emerged with the beginning of industrialisation and the resulting immiseration of the common people and class conflict. People were driven from their lands and dispossessed of the commons (a traditional source of food in hard times) by wealthy landowners and sheep farmers, and shovelled into the mills and mines. This class brutality was sanctioned by the application of Adam Smith's theories of a self-regulating political economy to "natural law". The surplus of workers kept wages down, which was good for business - this translated into a "surplus" of population. Society was held to consist of Hobbes' "War of all against all". This Social Darwinism, combined with eugenics (the genetic control and "improvement" of breeds) was used to justify colonial conquest and legitimate reactionary immigration policies at the turn of the 20th century. Ultimately it led to the eugenics-based extermination of psychiatric inmates, Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals etc., by the Nazis in their death camps.

Overpopulation theories are currently used by the Development Bank to justify the industrial development of sensitive wilderness areas such as Western Brazil, and economic planners using tirage analysis (a battlefield medical operation where certain of the wounded are left to die so as to concentrate on those with a better chance of survival). Millions of people in Africa and Asia are left to starve in order to restructure capital and pay off the national debts of countries such as Mexico and Chile. Since the Cold War, the American State's strategy to "contain communism", control political developments and resources has been to use population control to prevent nationalist revolt in Africa and Asia. This is done through collaborating with local elites through military aid and the establishment of state-dominated institutions for population control. The US agency for International Development is the biggest single funder of population control activities in the South. The anti-abortion stance of the Reagan administration was a sop to the Right, and was only for domestic consumption. The focus of the present population control establishment is authoritarian and technocratic. Sterilisation, intra-uterine devices, the Pill and other risky forms of fertility control are preferred to traditional methods and barrier techniques. The ideology is based on three tenets:

1. Rapid population growth is the main cause of the South's development problems, particularly

hunger, environmental destruction and political instability. Development i.e. capital accumulation, is the main thing and people are "units".

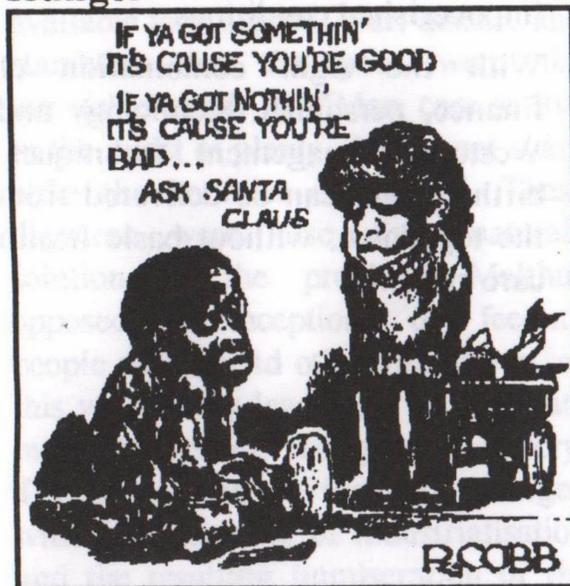
2. People must be persuaded/forced to have fewer children (in Indonesia the Army has forced IUDs on villagers at gunpoint) without

fundamentally improving their impoverished conditions.

3. With the right combination of finance, personnel, technology and Western management techniques, birth control can be delivered from the top down, without basic health care systems.



Hunger



There are 900 million dying of starvation a year in the world, but no global shortage of land. The UN estimates that there is enough land to feed a world population of 14 billion people (more than double the present total of nearly six billion). As in the "developed" North, large landowners control the vast majority of land. In 83 countries, 3% of farmers control 79% of farmland, much of it left unplanned in order to maintain profits. Their yields are also consistently lower than small landowners. Brazil has an area of farmland the size of India left uncultivated while 20 million rural poor are landless; the richest one per cent owns 15 times as much land as the poorest 56% of Brazilian farmers. In Guatemala, 2% of landowners owns 66% of the land, in the Philippines agribusiness producing sugar, cotton and pineapples for export has pushed 12 million peasants into the lowland forests.

Drought in Africa was part of a millenia-long-cycle. Cash crop exploitation, the market economy and taxation have led to starvation rather than drought. During the hunger crisis in the 1970s, ships in Dakar port which brought in supplies of "relief" food, departed with peanuts, cotton, vegetables and meats. Of the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of agricultural goods in Sahel exported during the drought, over 60% went to consumers in Europe and North America, and the rest to elites in African countries. In Bangladesh, often cited as the model for the Malthusian argument, 90% of the land is worked by sharecroppers and labourers. Many starved after the 1974 floods while hoarders stacked up four million tons of rice while the majority were too poor to buy. Multinational companies made over seven billion dollars a year profit from the South in 1990, and probably far more through transfer payments. They use their economic power to force down rice, coffee, sugar, cocoa and cotton prices. Average prices in 1989 were 20% down on those of 1980. This leads to an increase in foreign debt for Southern countries with consequent increased economic hardship for the majority of the poor (higher taxes, inflation, etc.).

Cash crops go to feed the global supermarket, and yield higher profits for international capital to industrialise the planet. Mexican soil and labour supply 50-66% of the US market for many winter and early spring

vegetables. The result is that agriculture for local consumption is squeezed out and the prices of staple foods rise. One third to a half of the total meat production in Central America and the Dominican Republic is exported, mainly to North America. An increase in poverty is accompanied by a rise in cereal production (the main component of the poor's diet). So the "Green Revolution" which it was claimed would feed the hungry has been used by the ruling class to supply the global supermarket.

Resources

One justification for population control is pressure on resources shown by deforestation, desertification, water pollution etc. Yet fewer people do not necessarily consume fewer resources. The industrialised North with about 20% of the world population (1.2 billion people) consumes over 80% of its resources, 70% of the energy, 75% of metals, 85% of wood, 60% of food. These figures obscure the vast disparities of wealth both within the South, and in the North. The world's largest companies control 70% of world trade, 80% of foreign investment and 30% of Gross Domestic Product. Multinationals are also directly

responsible for 40% of the world's greenhouse gases.

Militarism is the most environmentally destructive modern institution. Its cumulative effects far outweigh the effects of population pressures - the Allied bombardment of the Gulf and Saddam Hussein's oil fires for example. War directly damages the land and air, and destroys the environment through destabilising traditional communities, creating refugees who flee and settle on fragile soils which cannot support them. In Africa between 1955-1985 there were over 200 attempted coups, creating over eight million peasant refugees who fled their villages to escape terror in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Sudan and Uganda. In the last 40 years there have been over 125 wars fought in the South (many of them proxy wars for the Superpowers) leaving 22 million dead. Over 60% of global arms go to Africa and Asia; this military spending kills and damages many more through the waste of resources. The American Pentagon produces more toxic waste than the five largest multinational chemical companies combined: a ton of toxic chemicals a minute. A B52 bomber consumes over 13,000 litres of fuel an hour; an armoured division (348 tanks) over two million litres of fuel a day.

Women

An agrarian revolution is required, as part of a social revolution, which must liberate women. Women are the poorest of the poor, the largest group of landless labourers in the world - even in co-ops and land distribution they are frequently excluded. Women produce almost half of the food crops in the world. In Africa they contribute 66% of

level, and industrialisation and urbanisation also hurt women most, destroying their handicrafts and worsening the unjust division of labour with the double day of wage labour and household work. Some 80-90% of low-skilled assembly jobs in Africa and Asia are done by women.

Women's reproductive choice depends on their role in society. Their lack of

burdened and their health undermined. The population question can never be addressed until having fewer children becomes a reasonable option - thus freedom for women from male domination, and an agrarian social revolution reuniting agriculture and nutrition, renewing self-reliance and subsistence, and creating equality. Such

a revolution will overthrow high-tech agribusiness methods such as those of the Green Revolution discussed earlier: part of the problem, not the solution.

This article is indebted to *How Deep is Deep Ecology?*, "Women's Freedom: Key to the Population Question" by George Bradford. Times Change Press pamphlet.

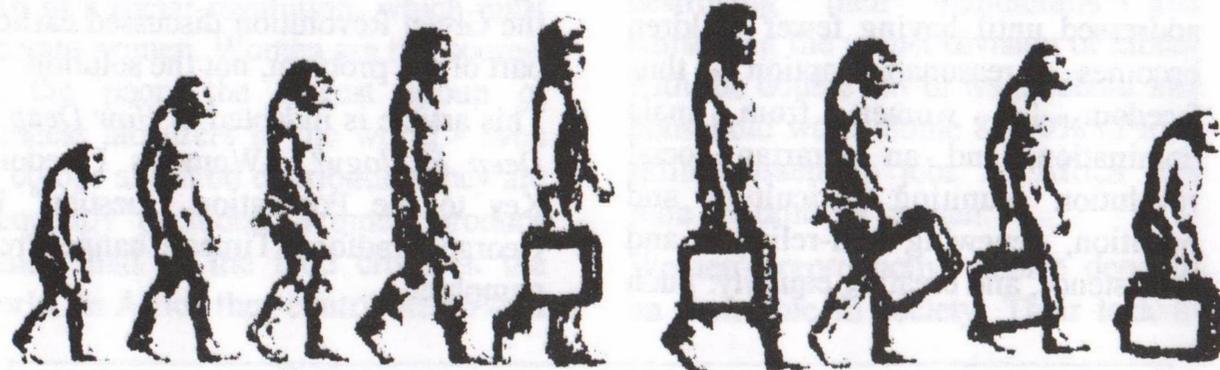


Women are 1/2 of the worlds population, 1/3 of the official workforce do nearly 2/3 of the worlds work hours. Yet they receive 1/10 of the worlds income and own less than 1/100th of the worlds property.

all time spent in traditional agriculture, in Asia they are over half of the agricultural labour force, in Latin America over 40%. Commercial farming has favoured men at every

choice is a direct result of their lack of autonomy, personhood and their economic domination. If women have fewer children they suffer for lack of labour power, if more they are over-

IDEAS AND TECHNOLOGY



DARWIN AND NATURAL SELECTION

Charles Darwin was a geologist and a natural scientist, a student of the history of life. He is famous for his theory of evolution first propounded in 1859 in his book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. There are two main facets to his theory. Firstly, all life on this planet has evolved from a single source by a process of evolution over a period of many millions of years. Secondly, all individual life forms and species are in a ruthless competition to survive. He thought it "natural" that given this competition, a superior being would dispossess an inferior. This "law" of "survival of the fittest" was the process by which evolution occurred.

It was the first part of his theory that attracted all the hostility, because it directly challenges the religious view of creation. The second part, however, was fully in line with the dominant

capitalist ideology of the time, even giving capitalism a "natural law" status. Andrew Carnegie, a leading capitalist of the time, immediately embraced this concept, writing "... the law of competition, be it benign or not, is here; we cannot evade it; no substitutes for it have been found; and while the law may sometimes be hard for the individual, it is best for the race because it ensures the survival of the fittest in every department". Is Darwin correct? Is "survival of the fittest" a "natural law"? Or is it part of an ideological fantasy?

With the advance of 20th century science we now know that Darwin's view of common descent is correct. With the discovery of both genetics and DNA, we see a commonality to all life forms now existing, as well as to all those who have ever existed on this planet. The chemical language of life is identical in all organisms. The same work has also confirmed that each individual organism is unique. Genetic variation and the passing down of those genes to offspring show how the basis

for evolution takes place. But is the process of that evolution a competitive one as Darwin claimed?

Co-evolution

For a long time the process of co-evolution has been known and is seen to be fairly common. For example, when a new species of fly pollinates a new species of orchid, there is no competition between flies. The agent of evolution may be natural selection, but the selector is not a competitor and the birth of a new species is not tantamount to a death sentence for the old. In order for Darwin's theory of "survival of the fittest" to be correct, it must show that any new species develops out of the old one in competition with each other. The extinct species has lost the battle of survival with its superior descendant. This is not the case in the process of co-evolution. Hence a kingpin of Darwin's theory has always been known to be false. Why then has Darwinism been so uncritically accepted?

The ideological construct underlying the concept of "survival of the fittest" is clear; that each new species is better than the one before because it won the struggle for life in direct competition with its predecessor. It is clear that of the present species on earth it is the human being that has been given the status of "highest life form". And within human society, certain groups of humans are given higher status than others. For example, even the title of Darwin's book suggests that some races of human beings are more favoured

than others. This ideology is thus seen clearly as the same old hierarchical world view that the ruling classes have always pushed: the pyramidal structure with the bosses on the top. With the onset of modern capitalism, the religious basis to justify that pyramid became a scientific one. It's "natural law"! This then is why capitalist society has always touted Darwinism and ignored any minor evidence that would contradict it.

Modern scientific knowledge enables us critically to examine the history of life on this planet and see how it "fits" Darwinist logic. It soon becomes clear that it doesn't fit at all! The basis for evolution, if it followed Darwinist "laws", would be a Malthusian pattern of population growth and check. Darwin owed his idea of a spatial limit to the number of species to the number of species to Malthus' idea about the spatial limit to population growth. If the world were following the above logic we would expect to see the following pattern of speciation and extinction: an increase in number of species and then an increased struggle for survival followed by extinction of the "weaker" species. However, this is not the pattern seen. In fact, the most major events in world evolution have seen the exact opposite: extinction and then speciation. These major events are the mass extinctions that we now know to have happened regularly in world history, the most famous being the event that wiped out the dinosaurs 63 million years ago.

Despite the increasing amount of scientific evidence in fields such as geology, the "survival of the fittest" dogma goes unchallenged because of the ideological link between Darwinism and the capitalist façade that dominates our lives. As anarchist communists we should be clear in condemning such "natural laws".

Here is a section of an essay entitled "Spontaneity and Organisation", by Murray Bookchin, that gives a different approach to the idea of evolution.

"Ecology denies that nature can be interpreted from a hierarchical viewpoint. Moreover, it affirms that diversity and spontaneous development are ends in themselves, to be respected in their own right. Formulated in terms of ecology's "ecosystem approach", this means that each form of life has a unique place in the balance of nature and its removal from the ecosystem could imperil the stability of the whole. The natural world, left largely to itself, evolves by colonising the planet with ever more diversified life forms and increasingly complex interrelationships between species in the form of food chains and food webs. Ecology knows no "king of beasts"; all life forms have their place in a biosphere that becomes more and more diversified in the course of biological evolution"

ECOLOGY AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Within the ACF the article "Ecology and Class" has initiated an ongoing

series of articles in Organise! which has attempted to give a class struggle anarchist analysis to the issue of ecology. So far we have examined the related roles of the IMF, World Bank, transnational corporations and the State within capitalism, with its logic of profits, growth and competition, and how this works to produce the current ecological crisis. We have also been developing a critique of the responses to this crisis such as lifestylism, green consumerism, pressure groups and the Green Party.

In concentrating our analysis on the way capitalism is responsible for our environmental degradation and, therefore, the necessity of overthrowing capitalism, are we assuming that the exploitation of the environment would end automatically in a post-revolutionary society? We don't believe that this would necessarily be the case.

It is important to recognise that capitalism is *able* to function *because it uses ideas* within our culture which are shared throughout the social structure. Like racism and sexism, ideas of nature as a threat to be controlled and exploited are deeply ingrained in our attitudes and culture, often unconsciously. These ideas need to be challenged and changed if we are not to reproduce the same antagonisms and power relations in a post-capitalist society. So we need to look at how these ideas have developed historically, whose interests they serve and how we can move beyond them.

Antagonistic

Although the antagonistic relationship between culture and nature can be traced back at *least* as far as the establishment of patriarchal christianity in Western Europe, the idea of this relationship takes on its greatest significance in the philosophy of the 18th century **Enlightenment**. The ideas of the Enlightenment, which were crucial for the development of modern capitalist society, focus on the importance of rational, scientific analysis as a means of liberating "man" from the constraints of superstition, irrationality and nature. Enlightenment thought held that a strange and dangerous world should be analysed, classified and brought within the control of rational, western man. This is the era that saw the first encyclopaedia compiled in which nature was described as "red in tooth and claw". It was also the red which produced the French Revolution and saw the historic rise of bourgeois capitalism.

Within the world-view of bourgeois, educated western man, oppositions were established between his own internal world of *culture* and the menacing "other" of *nature* which must be tamed and brought within the comprehension and service of his interests. So, for example, the colonised people of Africa, America and Asia were represented as being "other", savages, closer to nature, less evolved, irrational and thus incapable of running their own affairs. This served to justify their exploitation by the rational, cultured

man of the West. The working and peasant classes were also seen to be "other" and their behaviour and customs were a threat and hindrance to their use by capital. Football, originally played by huge numbers in the streets, was removed to a specified rectangle of grass surrounded by stands and seats at which huge numbers of working class people could now only *watch* and *pay* to see just 22 men playing the game. The production of alcohol was concentrated in the hands of profit-making concerns and its sale limited to licensed premises at particular hours. Measures such as these were intended to make a wild, hedonistic and irresponsible class into a controlled, sober, consumerist workforce.

Women, who had been "others" for centuries, found this view strongly reinforced by the new bourgeois ideology. Victorian values portrayed women as evil and irrational and as needing to be locked up within the prison of the bourgeois family. Their purpose was to reproduce a willing, happy-to-be-exploited workforce.

The great "other" to Western culture, Nature, was similarly seen as a force to be tamed, reined in and subjugated in the service of the developing urban and industrial needs of a commodity-based society.

Consolidation

This entire process develops and increases its grip on every aspect of life as capitalism consolidated itself in the late 19th and 20th century. More and

more sophisticated techniques of control and surveillance are produced. Military powers and capabilities increase as the nation states of the West exert their control over the rest of the world and fight each other over the plunder. The commodity market becomes globalised through developments in transport and communications. Huge cities emerge while the countryside is turned over to the farming of vast monocultures. All this bears witness to the efforts of bourgeois ideology to establish itself as the single method of social organisation and the single way of understanding the world - as "civilisation" itself.

However, there are voices, including those of the marginalised "others" in society, who argue that since World War II we live in an era in which there is a fundamental crisis in this world-view. How sane and rational is a society that produced the genocide of the holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or that tolerates the mutually assured destruction of the arms race while millions starve? What about the continuing world recession, homelessness and poverty which is provoking social unrest? Most significantly, don't the ecological threats of deforestation, acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer and the poisoning of our air and water call into question the whole idea of growth and "progress"? All these factors symbolise a society which is ill at ease with itself, whose claims to have tamed nature for

the benefit of all and whose vision of the never-ending march of progress of Western civilisation have been seriously undermined.

Symptoms of the loss of confidence in a bright future are in evidence all throughout our culture. The *Terminator* films show a vision of the future in which the world and its population have been half-destroyed in a war between humanity and a military technology which has taken on a life of its own, believing itself to be superior to humanity. While the future looks bleak, people turn to the past and the countryside for comfort and reassurance. Home owners "personalise" their '60s council flats with plastic "oak beams" and leaded windows. The number of museums has doubled in the last two decades with one opening every two weeks. We even have a minister of "heritage".

Autopilot

On the other hand there is capitalism, ever more dependent on fictitious capital. Independent of nation states, it is running on autopilot, oblivious to our human crisis or the threats to the planet and all its life, except, of course, when they can be used as a marketing tool for increasing profits.

How do we, as anarchists, respond to this situation? Obviously proclaiming "the end is nigh!" and thus further encouraging people's pessimism and cynicism about the possibility of real change won't help. We must continue to call for resistance and ultimately a class

uprising to overthrow capitalism and then to create a free communist society. But how can we ensure that the same dangerous values and power relationships are not carried over into the new society? How can we persuade others that things won't turn out just the same or worse than before?

We believe the answer lies in listening to the voices of those "others" that have been marginalised and suppressed by Western civilisation. One of the most useful critiques for this purpose is that developed by some elements of feminism. Many of the ideas already referred to are taken from such feminist thought, some of which have simultaneously developed a critique of the exploitation of women and nature since both are treated in our society as irrational, threatening, in need of taming and objects of exploitation.

As Ynestra King has written, "The hatred of women and the hatred of nature are intimately connected and mutually reinforcing." And as Peggy Kornegger in her essay, *Anarchism: the Feminist Connection* says, "What feminists are dealing with is a mind-fucking process - the male domineering attitude towards the external world, allowing only subject/object relationships. Traditional male politics reduces humans to object status and then dominates and manipulates them for abstract "goals". Women, on the other hand, are trying to develop a consciousness of "other" in all areas. We see subject to subject relationships as not only desirable, but necessary.

Together we are working to expand our empathy and understanding of living things and to identify with entities outside ourselves, rather than objectifying and manipulating them. At this point, a respect for all life is a prerequisite for our survival".

King, in *Toward an Ecological Feminism and a Feminist Ecology* goes on to explain how the lack of diversity in a patriarchal capitalist society is mirrored in the threat to diversity in nature. She writes, "A healthy balanced ecosystem, including human and non-human inhabitants, must maintain diversity ... wiping out of whole species corresponds to reducing human diversity into faceless workers or to homogenisation of tastes and culture through mass consumer markets. Social life and natural life are literally simplified to the inorganic for the convenience of the market society. Therefore we need a decentralised global movement founded on common interests but celebrating diversity and opposing all forms of domination and violence".

What we can take from this analysis is a critique of all power relation and of the urge to control and dominate. We can also begin to recognise the importance of diversity and of a harmonious relationship between culture and nature rather than seeing nature as an "outside" threat to be controlled. These ideas, as well as those from marginalised and suppressed voices, such as those of native peoples, hopefully tell us there is no single

unproblematic way of comprehending the world and that a post-revolutionary society would need to respect difference and diversity in culture and nature, encountering and relating, not dominating and exploiting.

This is not simplistically to dismiss every single aspect of Enlightenment thought or to romanticise non-Western cultures and "woman" as having special access to wisdom and being "closer to nature". The point is to have a critical awareness of Enlightenment thought which enables us to see how capitalism makes use of its emphasis on rationality and science to oppress and exploit. But we must not, consequently, leap in an *anti-rational or anti-science* direction. Neither would we wish to abandon Enlightenment ideas of the desirability of active human struggle, based upon the criticism and analysis of existing conditions, to bring about change.

However, what this analysis of Enlightenment thought and its use by capitalism helps us to do is to focus on how various hierarchical exploitations of class, gender, race and nature are related in the concept of "other" in Western bourgeois ideology. Consequently, we can see that the idea of exploiting nature is not a neutral concept that can be employed by capitalists and revolutionaries alike, but one which can, and will, be used as a model for the exploitation of others by a ruling elite (capitalist or other) which uses claims to rationality and science to maintain and universalise its hierarchical power.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IS THEFT

Biotechnology is the manipulation of living matter by humans to satisfy their needs for food and medicine. It is an ancient practice including crop rotation, crossbreeding and the use of yeasts in brewing and baking, for example. However, biotechnology in a technically advanced capitalist country is no longer a tool to sustain and enhance human existence, but a method of creating and exploiting poverty in under-developed countries, causing immeasurable and irreversible damage to the ecology of the planet and making vast profits for multi-national companies.

Plunder

The use of biotechnology as an instrument of domination and exploitation has its historical roots in the West's great plunder of the rest of the world in the period of colonialism. The colonialists regarded all in their path - land, plants, animals and humans - as their property: commodities and tools for the accumulation of wealth and power.

Plant species, such as tea and cotton, were sought out, transported around the world and grown as vast monocultures on plantations. The native cultures were decimated - cleared from the land, slaughtered, or traded as slaves to work the plantations. All this served to increase the power and wealth of the rich nations of the West while forcing the colonised world into a position of dependence and causing ecological

imbalance in which numerous plant and animal species were lost forever.

Genetics

In the current period of neo-colonialism, where domination is maintained indirectly with the connivance of West-friendly local elites in under-developed countries and the threat of sanctions, biotechnology is used as a means of perfecting and extending the domination of western capitalism.

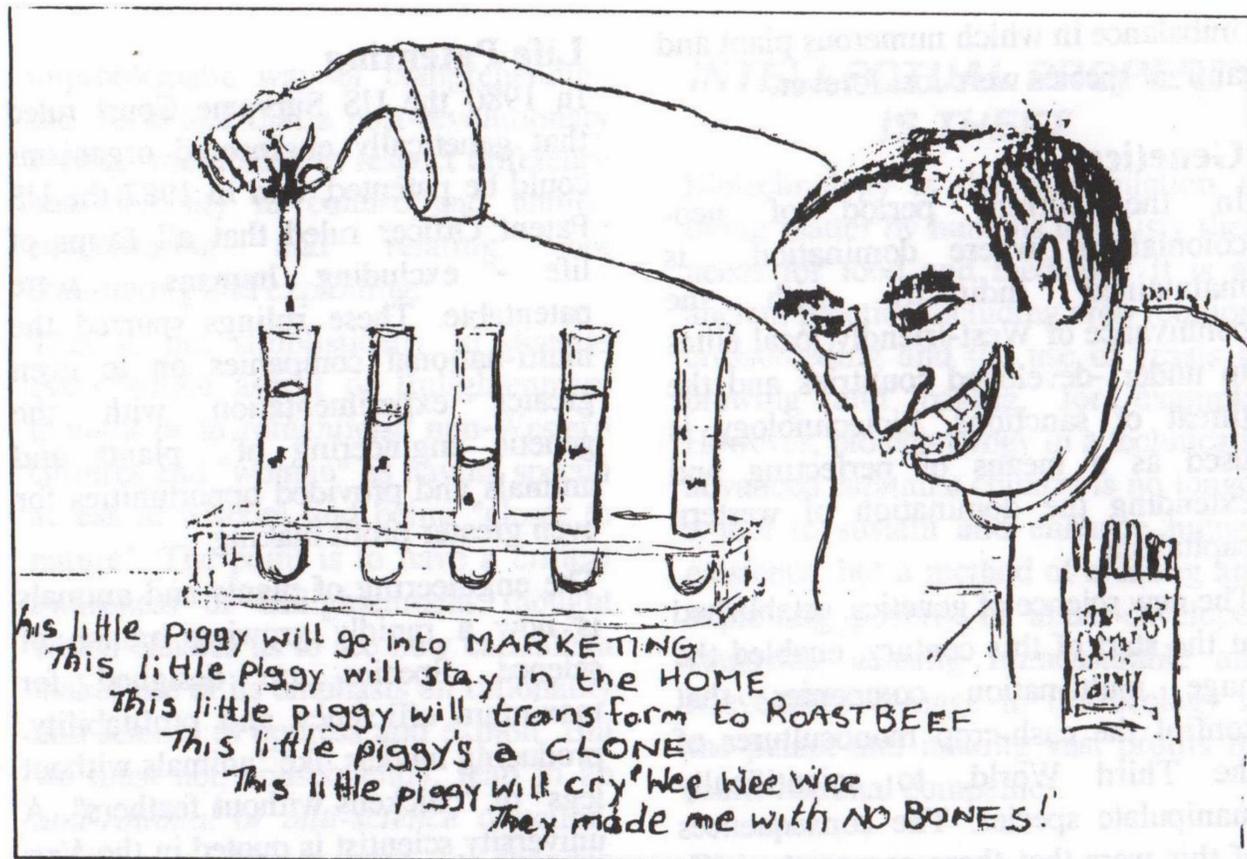
The new science of genetics, established at the start of this century, enabled the huge multi-nation companies that control the cash-crop monocultures of the Third World, to scientifically manipulate species. The consequences of this were that these corporate giants genetically engineered "super breeds" to be grown in vast monocultures, further endangering the diversity of ancient natural varieties and species. Only a few centuries ago 5,000 plants were used as food, today agriculture uses 150. These monocultures, working against the basic ecological principle of diversity, are prone to pests and diseases. Farmers then have to treat these crops with chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers, purchased from, and manufactured by, the same companies - ICI, Ciba-Giegy, etc - responsible for the vulnerable crops, causing further poverty, dependency and damage to the environment.

Life Patenting

In 1980 the US Supreme Court ruled that genetically engineered organisms could be patented, and in 1987 the US Patent Officer ruled that all forms of life - excluding humans - were patentable. These rulings spurred the multi-national companies on to even greater experimentation with the genetic engineering of plants and animals and provided opportunities for even greater profit making.

The engineering of plants and animals is now a rapidly growing branch of science. Species are designed for maximum efficiency and profitability, producing models like "animals without legs" or "chickens without feathers". A university scientist is quoted in the *New Scientist* as saying "I believe it's completely feasible to specifically design an animal for a hamburger".

The farming of wild species taken from Third World countries contributes billions of dollars annually to the US economy for which it gives nothing in return. Yet once the stolen raw materials have been manipulated in the laboratories of the West, they can be patented as "intellectual property", for which royalties must be paid from countries forced to base their economies on the production of cash crops for corporate capitalism.



Already, much modern agriculture involves farming seedless varieties. This means that crops must be bought anew each year instead of being simply replanted. However, powerful lobbies, such as the Intellectual Property Coalition, want even seeded varieties under patent to be "Protected" from resowing, and farmers forced to pay royalties on each generation of crops.

The IPC feels that existing patenting laws are too limited and should be extended with royalties increased. They want to see Third World countries prevented from adapting imported "properties" (although of course it's OK for them to manipulate the raw materials they stole before selling them back). The IPC want these measures backed and enforced by GATT. If that

fails they propose the use of trade threats and sanctions.

A Common Treasury

Biotechnology under capitalism takes evolution into its own hands using the logic of profitability as its guide. It makes life equivalent to property, threatening the stability, diversity and spontaneity of the ecology of our planet that has evolved over millions of years. It erodes the rich variety of species available to us and our freedom to decide how we interact with them. It forces millions into dependence, poverty and starvation through the use of their land for cash crops for export, land that they could use to feed themselves.

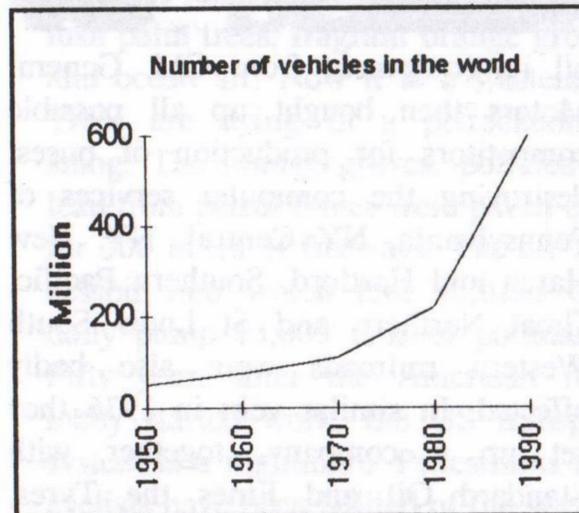
We anarchist communists see through the Green veneer, we see that

capitalism is the enemy of our environment, our autonomy, our freedom. We work for its downfall.

You poor take courage
 You rich take care
 This land was made a common treasury
 For everyone to share

The world Turned Upside Down
 Leon Rosselson

TRANSPORT OR TRAFFIC?



Origins of Traffic System

Nikoli Kondriatev, a Marxist writing in the 1920s posited the Kondriatev cycle which argued that the industrial economy expanded and contracted in waves of about 50 years; peaks in 1817, 1870 and 1914 and troughs around

1745, 1790, 1844 and 1890. Andrew Tylecote suggested that each boom period is associated with the successful emergence of a "new technological style" characterised by a new form of transportation. The end of the 18th century in Britain saw the development of the canal system, the rising boom of 1844-70 the emerging rail network, with the steel and electrical style before the First World War developing in the boom decade after 1918 into Fordism. After the 1930s slump and World War Two, Fordism - the Transnational Oil based economy of cars and motorways, super tankers and aeroplanes - came into its own. These theories suggest that the economy expands until it reaches the limits of its distribution system. Slumps tend to be caused by glut - the inability to shift (rather than produce) goods. One promising way out of recession is therefore to reach a larger market by developing new transport systems.

Whatever the validity of this theory, the ruling class are often ruthless in their elimination of old transport systems in order to introduce new ones. No sooner had the British canal system been introduced, at great expense, than it was judged obsolete. The new rail companies, flush with investors' money, bought up canals and took them down; within a few decades the canal system was moribund and Britain was covered in railways.



Road Lobby

The Road Lobby is made up of companies who profit from cars, lorries and the raw materials, fuel and infrastructure they need. Worldwide they are responsible for destroying more human-scale, environmentally friendly forms of transport with huge consequences for community, health and environment. Why? Because they are less profitable: one bus does the work of 35 cars, a tram that of 60, a train that of 1,000 cars or 150 lorries.

In 1925, the General Motors Corporation set about systematically destroying non-motor transport systems in America. They bought up the largest manufacturer of urban and inter-urban buses in America. In 1926 they helped set up the Motor Transit Corporation (Greyhound) which agreed to purchase

all its equipment from GM. General Motors then bought up all possible competitors for production of buses, destroying the commuter services of Pennsylvania, NY Central, NY. New Haven and Hartford. Southern Pacific, Great Northern and St Louis South Western railroads were also badly affected. In similar vein in 1936 they set up a company, together with Standard Oil and Fines the Tyres, which bought up US train companies and closed them down. By 1956 over 100 electric surface rail systems in 45 cities had been acquired and closed down. In cities, the only way that a new market for the buses could be created was for GM to finance the conversion of its electrical tramway systems to motor buses. This was done by setting up the United Cities Motor Transit Company in 1932. Tramways were

bought, converted to buses and then sold off to local companies which were compelled to buy General Motors equipment exclusively. This continued rapidly until 1935 when the American Transit Association exposed GM's chicanery. Company executives and employees "independently" set up another holding company with other car and oil companies, National City Lines, in 1936. Local companies now had to agree to buy only new equipment which used fuel oil and GM/Standard Oil products and Firestone Tyres exclusively.

Before the motorisation of California by GM, Los Angeles was a beautiful city of lush palm trees, fragrant orange groves and ocean air. Now it is a wasteland. Trees are dying in a petrochemical smog. The orange groves, polluted by lead from petrol fumes were paved over for 300 miles of freeways. The air is a cesspit into which four million cars daily pump 13,000 tons of pollutants. Fifty years after the American road lobby started work, the US transport system is a nightmare. Pedestrians and cyclists have been bullied of the streets, railways have almost vanished and half the lead area of most cities consists of roads and parking lots. The road lobby bankrolls many politicians to vote against clean air and fuel efficiency, making American cars the most wasteful in the western world.

In Britain, the road lobby is represented by the British Road Federation, founded in the 1930s to "combat the sinister and distorted propaganda of the railways to

enslave British Industry". It is a coalition of car makers such as Ford, motor organisations (AA, RAC), roadbuilders (Taylor Woodrow, McAlpine), oil companies (BP, Texaco), lorry operators (TIT, Freight Transport Association) and diverse others (e.g. Tate & Lyle Sugars, Bulmers Cider Ltd, National Farmers Union). They are all united by the prospect of economic growth, which they maintain is linked to the health of the motor industry and "reducing transport costs" (Department of Transport). In Britain the (Labour) government started the demolition of the railway system. It was bought and nationalised after the Second World War. Some 46% of the track was torn up and much of the rest run down. The road lobby is now in the vanguard of privatising the railways, which will decimate what remains of a once comprehensive transport system. Member firms of the RTF are presently planning bids for rail privatisation which will be an asset-stripping bonanza to dwarf that of the buses. There will be prime development sites in city centres, "weird" rural services will probably be made the responsibility of local government, then councils will be starved of cash so they have to cut services (and take the flack). The strategy of the road lobby is to continually up their demands. If the road is a single lane, dual it. If dualled give it three lanes. If somewhere doesn't have a by-pass, give it one. If there is one to the south, give it one to the north. If it has an M25, build another.

If it already has a north-south motorway (as in East Anglia), add another.

Traffic lobbyists and planners now talk of the need for "infrastructure" rather than roads, a co-ordinated distribution system using different technologies: "a single network, lined by markets, technology and organisation, which produce a single output: mobility for the citizen and the economy". (The European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) which includes Fiat, Volvo, Daimler-Benz, MAN, Petrofina, Total, Shell, BP, Pirelli and Plessey),

Railways are now back in favour - if they are high speed, such as TGV/part of "multi-modal integration". Governments agree about the "need" for infrastructure. Clinton has promised to spend \$80 billion on renovating America's roads, creating a new high speed rail network linking US cities and developing new technology to expand capacity. Similarly the European Commission is pledged to "the establishment and development of trans-European networks, in particular in the sectors of transport".

The forecast is for the doubling of most forms of transport. In the EC nearly five times as much freight is carried by road as by rail, 12 times as many passengers as by rail. The bulk will therefore be roads. "Intra-modal integration" consequently means different forms of transport will act more efficiently as tributaries and distributors for each other.

Infrastructure is not confined to the industrialised world. In order to meet

the demands of International Capital, many governments are pumping borrowed money into infrastructure schemes. Most are centred on roads e.g. Amazonia (which has the most extensive national water transport network in the world) is being rapidly covered by roads, as is the Congo Basin. The pan American highway, stretching from Patagonia to Alaska is nearly complete. There are plans to link Alaska to Siberia. If these schemes are completed, the majority of the earth's land mass will have become one continent, with motorists able to drive from Buenos Aires to Cape Town, via New York and Moscow. For the South this will mean further rounds of enclosure, more colonisation with the displacement of people and the disruption of local economies, the sacking of the environment and the dubious benefits of consumer goods.

The improvement of infrastructure in the West is part of the move from manufacturing to service/distribution economies. Goods are shunted ever faster over ever greater distances. As transport costs decrease, competing firms will venture further and further, selling identical products in each other's territory. Manufacturers will look further afield to find the cheapest supplier of components. Workers will commute ever further to work. The result will be less an improvement in the quantity of commodities available and more an increase in travel and traffic. People will have to travel further

to work, shop, visit relatives and holiday in less spoilt resorts.

Even the European Commission has admitted the axiom that more roads leads to more traffic: "infrastructure planning should not necessarily seek to promote an increase in capacity, since in certain instances this might boost transport demand and in the long-term exacerbate the problem, particularly in the case of road transport". EC Green Paper.

This damaging slip was withdrawn from the subsequent White Paper. The ERT claim: "The benefits are often widespread while the costs are typically borne locally...technocratic designs...which ride roughshod over the legitimate concerns of others, will simply founder on the obstacles of local resistance...Environmental objections, while important, cannot be simply granted a power of veto...The increasingly efficient organisation of those arguing for environmental citizens' rights must be matched by a more efficient organisation of the advocates of change, adaptation and growth".

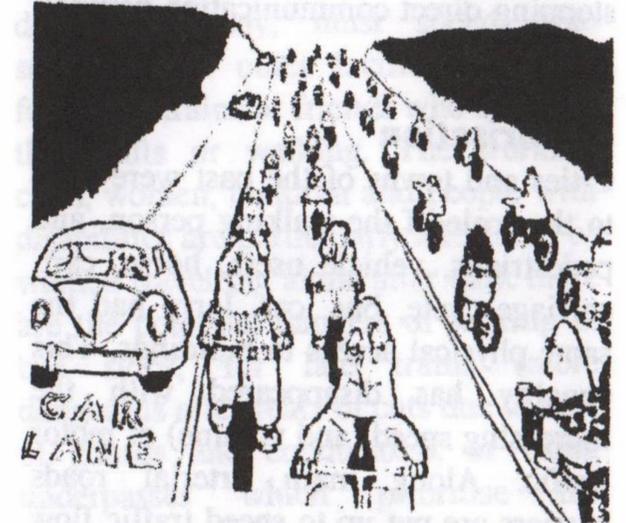
Operation Roadblock

A national rota of 100 people per day for a mobilisation against the building of the M11 Link. Contact No M11 Link Campaign, Arch 211, Grove Green Road, London E11 4AJ or phone 0181-558 2638 or fax 0181-539 7569.

CARMAGEDDON

Capitalism wants motor traffic for profit for the road lobby and for the rapid movement of goods and people (as either workers or consumers). "Mobility madness" also derives from the need of the business people to commute within and between the zones of power in each city to make business decisions. Cars also promise individuals freedom of movement and are important status and identity symbols.

Freedom



Cars promise individuals the freedom to go where they want when they want. This is particularly attractive to young people eager to escape the straitjacket of the family. This is a bourgeois freedom however, achieved (if at all) at the expense of others as part of the "war of all against all". Other drivers are obstacles and restrictions to the individual's inalienable right of movement. In practice of course, the net result is more congestion and delays for motorists, increased pedestrian danger and fear (particularly for vulnerable

groups such as women and children), and further noise and air pollution. This "freedom" is also empty because the effect of the accompanying tarmac, concrete and pollution is to "make everywhere like everywhere else". Additionally, as Aufheben point out, the individual's inalienable right of freedom of (motor) movement is enforced and guaranteed by the State (through traffic laws and road construction). The car has everything to say about (for) its owner in terms of identity and status while simultaneously stopping direct communication between people.

Motorisation

Cities and towns of the past were built to the scale of the walking person, and pedestrians, vehicle users, horse, cart, carriage cycle, bus, car, lorry had the same physical access to buildings. This equality has disappeared with the increasing speed (and volume) of motor traffic. Along main arterial roads barriers are put up to speed traffic flow and prevent pedestrians from crossing and motorists from parking; car users and bus passengers can no longer use local shops. The next stage is that a hypermarket opens elsewhere killing off small shops and forcing pedestrians and bus users to shop there or go to the more expensive shop on their estate (with the monopoly of local trade). Arterial roads have two functions - to take people in and out of cities, and to be the lifeblood of all the towns along their route, providing shops, schools, pubs etc. This latter function is lost as

the barriers turn arteries into freeways and towns along the route become blighted and die. Cities become compartmentalised, area by area. At the core a hostile city centre defended by an urban motorway, its inhabitants gone. It is surrounded by a series of enclosed camps hemmed in by arteries which have become freeways. People can only enter or leave the city at controlled exit points to go to work. The whole is physically connected but without clear communication points and with no social contact. Further out a series of scattered isolated encampments cluster the ring road. Workers commute to the city centre from the outer suburb, and others travel out to ring road factories. Cities devoid of life with traffic endlessly circulating around ring roads. The poor from different areas never meet, leading totally separate existences. Thousands of people live in their own niche within areas, many isolated and atomised in their own homes.

Health

Exhaust fumes (carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons) are a major contributor to global warming and acid rain, and cause much ill health and environmental damage. The average car pollutes more than two billion cubic meters of air in its life. In Britain emissions from car exhausts have increased 73% since 1981; a 1993 government study found 19 million people in Britain were exposed to pollution exceeding EC guidelines.

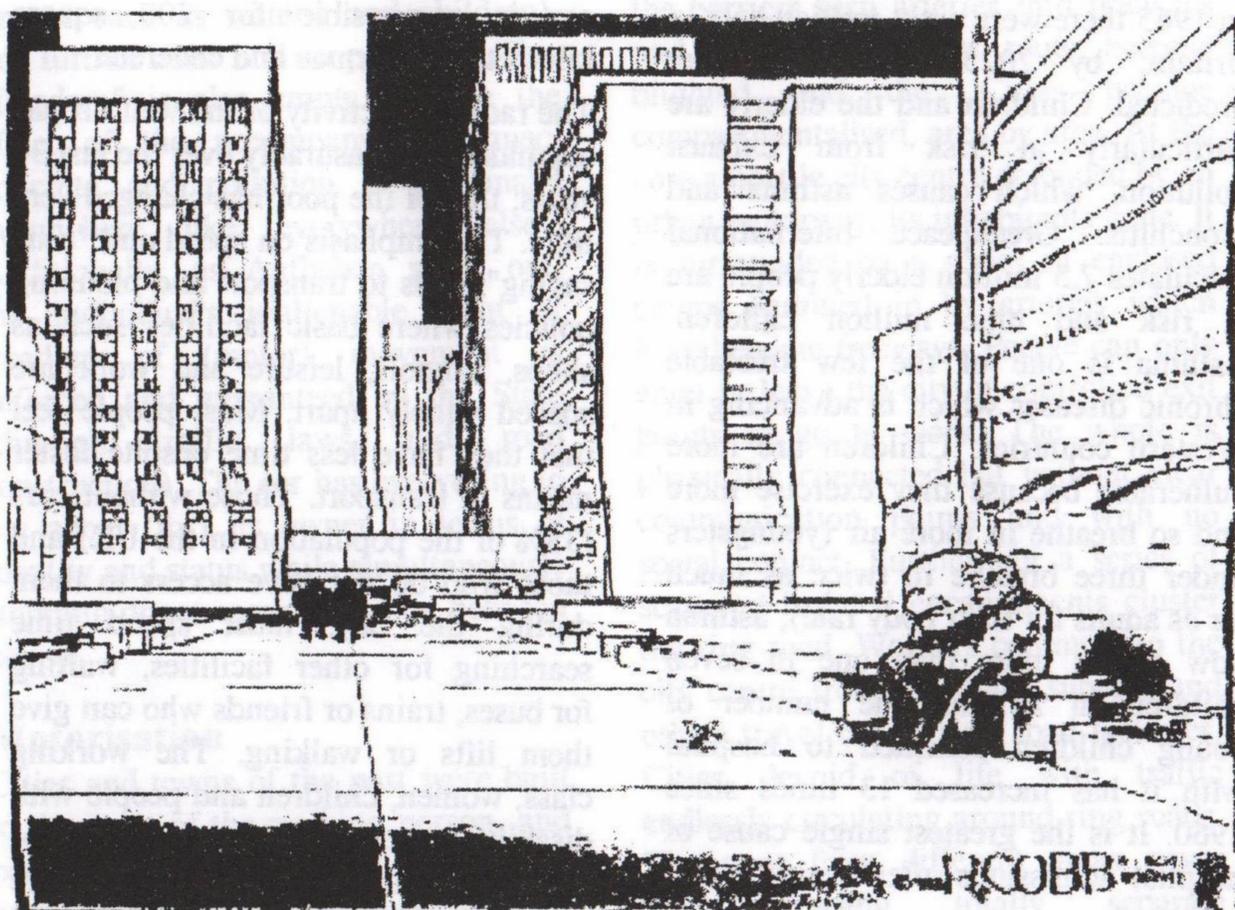
In 1965 there were eight million cars in Britain; by 2025 36 million are predicted. Children and the elderly are particularly at risk from exhaust pollution, which causes asthma and bronchitis. Greenpeace International calculates 7.5 million elderly people are at risk and nine million children. Asthma is one of the few treatable chronic diseases which is advancing in Western countries. Children are more vulnerable because they exercise more and so breathe in more air (youngsters under three breathe in twice as much air as adults for their body rate); asthma now affects more than one in seven children in Britain; the number of young children admitted to hospital with it has increased 13 times since 1960. It is the greatest single cause of hospital admissions after heart disease and strokes.

Space

Speed consumes distance: forms of transport occupy space, and the faster they are, the more space they need. A car travelling 40 kilometres an hour (kph) requires more than three times as much space as one travelling at 10kph; a single person driving a car at 10kph needs six times as much space as a cyclist travelling at the same speed. Germany's cars (including driving and parking) commandeer 3700 square kilometres of space, 60% more than that occupied by housing. Each German

car is responsible for 200 square kilometres of tarmac and concrete.

The radius of activity of the well off has expanded immeasurably over the last 30 years; that of the poor has changed very little. The emphasis on speed and "time saving" leads to transport and planning policies where basic facilities such as shops, schools, leisure and work are spaced widely apart. Most people feel that they have less time despite faster means of transport. Those without cars (35% of the population in the UK) and those who do not have access to them during the day, must spend time searching for other facilities, waiting for buses, trains or friends who can give them lifts or walking. The working class, women, children and people with disabilities are particularly affected. For women travelling alone after dark there are the potential dangers of waiting at bus stops, for late trains (more dangerous after years of cuts due to lack of guards and conductors), or using underpasses which prioritise the motorist at the expense of the pedestrian. Women are also more likely to have the main responsibility for children in hostile urban environments (including escorting duties necessitated by the danger from traffic). In Britain women spend thousands of hours escorting children, at a cost of £10 billion a year (using Department of Transport cost benefit criteria).



Community

Ordinary but diverse contact is important to people's well being. Traffic affects the number of friends and acquaintances that people have - the more the traffic, the less the contacts. Streets with light traffic (around 2000 vehicles a year) have close knit communities where residents make full use of the street - sitting and chatting on front steps, children using pavements for play and teenagers and adults hanging out and chatting on the street.

With medium traffic flow (about 8000 vehicles a year) there is a decline in street use, though friendliness and involvement remain. With heavy traffic

flow (over 16,000 vehicles a year) the street is used solely as a corridor between the sanctuary of individual homes and the outside world. There is no feeling of community and residents keep to themselves, i.e. isolation and alienation. In this process the street is the first to go.

Motorists view pedestrians, cyclists and children playing in the street as intruding on their space. As the volume (and speed) of traffic increases, their attitude becomes more ruthless. People's use of the pavement is the next to go, due to the noise, air pollution and vibration caused. The street loses its attraction to people - children abandon their play space (and adults keep them

inside), and adults drive rather than walk.

With heavy traffic residents abandon their front gardens and front rooms in a retreat from vibration and noise. Finally people become "traffic refugees" and abandon their homes, moving to quieter areas. Poorer people are left behind, trapped and condemned to blight.

The refugees are replaced by more poor people - those who can't afford to buy or rent elsewhere. The street is now deserted and alienation leads to greater anti-social crime. As thefts and assaults increase, people take refuge in cars, putting another twist on the downward spiral.

PEDESTRIAN PROBLEM

The Road Safety Myth

Until the 1930s road safety was seen as a problem caused by motorists. Private car drivers were a minority - more mileage was covered, and more journeys made, by bike. In 1935, after agitation by cycling organisations, rail unions and the newly-formed Pedestrian Association for Road Safety, legislation such as the driving test was brought in to control the danger. Road safety ideas were brought in, centred around education, engineering and enforcement. Ever since "road safety" has been the territory of professionals such as road safety officers, road and vehicle engineers, traffic police, doctors, lawyers and the Department of Transport. The road safety lobby (RSC) has succeeded in suppressing the earlier

anger and hostility against motorisation by legitimising the danger it creates. Generally people's anger following an "accident" to a pedestrian is directed on the behaviour of a deviant minority (e.g. speeding drivers) rather than car use in general. The lobby maintain (with the support of official figures) that accidents - injuries and deaths - have decreased and so roads are "safer". The official accident figures are too low however: accidents are under-reported (due to police and hospital methodology, for reasons of insurance claims etc). The majority of accidents (80-95%) are excluded from these statistics on the grounds that they are "damage only". Accidents have also decreased because vulnerable road users have stayed out of the way as danger has increased. Between 1955 and 1990 the chances of 10-14 year olds being killed on the roads nearly doubled; a half of male deaths for 15-19 year olds are from motor vehicles. The DoT makes the reduction of perceived risk secondary to casualty reduction in order to continue with its programme of motorisation: reducing the safety of the environment for the pedestrian. It implies that no one is responsible, and that "unforeseen circumstances" are to blame.

Because of their pro-car bias, many "road safety" measures in fact produce the opposite effect - "Everything that supposedly produces more danger in fact produces more safety... and everything that is supposed to produce more safety produces more

danger...Better roads, better sight lines, fewer bends and blind corners, less traffic; better lighting, better weather conditions...make greater danger...because every "non-restrictive" safety measure, however admirable by itself, is treated by drivers as an opportunity for more speeding, so that the net amount of danger is increased".

The RSL method is to use excessive detail; divide and rule (e.g. talk separately of "pedestrian safety", "cycle safety" and "the older road user" and portray an illusion of objectivity to obscure the central facts of danger on the road. Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is an increasingly popular lobby method. The official text on CBA for road casualties is *The value of life and safety: a search for a consensus estimate*. There cannot and should not be a monetary value on life, and life and safety are not only different, but often mutually opposed. The real cost of motorisation is at least £30 billion more than motorists pay. CBA costing includes congestion, accidents, road-building and maintenance; it excludes the loss of revenue to public transport, stress, air pollution, noise, children's escort time, and space (taken up on roads, in garages etc). CBA is only used to give a pseudo-scientific gloss to Department of Transport (DoT) places. The health disbenefits of mass car use (asthma, bronchitis, cancers, coronary problems, stress, social isolation, global warming etc) probably dwarf the numbers injured and killed on roads; they are not included in RS research

and discussion. The rules of the game are biased against those most affected, who are also of course the worst off. CBA considers people as consumers, individuals whose power is determined by their income, rather than as political subjects. Although speed is a major cause of accidents, and creates worse injuries and a greater likelihood of death, the DoT regards speed reduction as bad. For them it creates frustrated motorists who act "aggressively and irresponsibly". Pedestrians too:

"May take liberties with slow-moving traffic that they would not take with faster traffic. A mother who would never dream of wheeling her pushchair across an urban freeway may be tempted to do just that in a city street".

What a cheek - a pedestrian trying to cross the road!

The department's national campaign in the winter of 1989 was a typical exercise in blaming the vulnerable, those on the receiving end of "accidents", rather than those responsible. Cyclists and pedestrians not wearing reflective or fluorescent clothing were "dimwits" - equally responsible for accidents as those in charge of powerful and dangerous machinery. There is little evidence that such "aids to consciousness" are beneficial. Also ignored is the evidence of voluntary tests and police surveys, which show that between one and two million motorists would fail the existing eyesight test. New findings also suggest that 20% of drivers suffer from night blindness. Similarly, Texaco's "Care on

the Road" campaign (1992) tried to shift responsibility for "being seen" further away from drivers onto children; and BP Oil's recent campaign to get them young was called "Living with Traffic" (sic). Yet the evidence of children's behaviour in traffic suggest that it is they who anticipate danger and behave responsibly, not the drivers.

The DoT's motor bias leads it to stand truth on its head maintaining for example that:

"Travelling by car or bus is safer than walking"

Safer for whom? In 1990, three other road users were killed in accidents involving pedestrians; 1,014 pedestrians were killed by cars. Those who are the most vulnerable to danger are the least dangerous themselves. The introduction of compulsory seat belt legislation played a central role in legitimising the road safety lobby - yet evidence suggest it led to a lower level of care by motorists and therefore more danger for the vulnerable. In the two years following compulsion, pedestrian fatalities increased 14%; cyclist fatalities by 40% and rear seat passenger facilities by 27%.

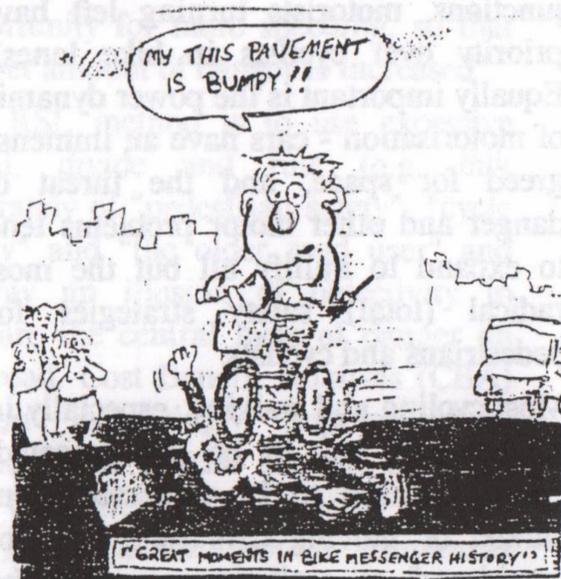
Safety: False Solutions

Segregation is one method; it aims to reduce danger to vulnerable road users by minimising the possibilities of confrontation with motorists. This means footways and pedestrianisation for walkers; bike paths and lanes for cyclists (ironically, motorways in Britain started as a means of

segregating the motor danger posed by cars). Experience shows however, that the only road-user groups to gain substantially from segregation are car and lorry drivers. This is because of the motor bias of the DoT (e.g. although most accidents to cyclists occur at junctions, motorists turning left have priority over cyclists in bike lanes). Equally important is the power dynamic of motorisation - cars have an immense greed for space, and the threat of danger and other motor problems tend to expand to nullify all but the most radical (total) safety strategies for pedestrians and cyclists.

Most cycling and walking, especially in rural areas, has to be unsegregated. Footways need to be protected from parked or moving cars (one third of "accidents" to walkers occur on the pavement). This can only be done by continuous barriers which prevent convenient crossing for those on foot. Footway space is constantly under threat/disappearing. Subways are rightly hated for their real and perceived danger. Visibility and surveillance are usually poor, and they are often badly maintained. Their steps are a particular problem for children and their carers, the elderly and people with disabilities. Even where they are well lit and populated (e.g. Birmingham City Centre) they put people in an unsatisfactory subterranean environment. Foot-bridges suffer similar disadvantages with the addition of "heights". Pedestrian areas can be found in most central urban

areas. They are a form of segregation for walkers. There are however, problems of access for the disabled and they can generate additional traffic in adjoining areas. These inner city areas are also atypical of most areas where people walk.



For cyclists, there is insufficient space for continuous cycle tracks or lanes. Junctions are dangerous (as noted earlier) and they have an inferior status: often blocked by cars, and badly maintained - making them worse than nothing. The post-war British new towns, such as Stevenage and Peterborough, have a segregated network of cycle and pedestrian paths. This is inappropriate to older towns and rural areas where distances are too long to walk, the environment is isolating and dangerous, and there are obstacles to public transport and other problems caused by motorisation. Even an extensive programme of cycle routes such as the GLC's proposed 1,000 mile network of the 1980-'s would have left

93% of London's roads without cycle routes, all with homes, shops, workplaces and other destinations on them.

Off road routes (e.g. Bath-Bristol pedestrian and cycle path) have been built on old railway sites, canal towpaths, bridleways and forest roads. They are very limited in availability and prone to appropriation by more space-hungry and powerful forms of transport. Cycle routes using side streets are also very limited in scope.

Traffic calming is another approach. It developed from pedestrianisation, environmental areas and the Dutch "woonervon" ("play streets" where the footway/road boundary is dissolved). Road humps, traffic islands and footway extensions are used to restrict speed; extend space for walkers/cyclists, children's play etc; and create a more human environment. Most roads are not traffic-calmed however, even where it is fashionable. Officially, 80% of urban roads could be, but only a tiny minority are likely to be treated (and the effectiveness of TC is questionable). The average cost is £40,000 per square kilometre, i.e. £4.8 billion, which would take 57 years to complete. Limited TC can provide car parking space and be used as a bargaining counter or palliative by the road lobby. It cannot tackle the motor danger posed by rural roads. There is also the problem that danger could increase as motorists emerge from traffic-calmed areas, relax and increase their speed.

Problem of Power

We can see that "road safety" is a road lobby smokescreen to divert people from addressing the root of the problem - power. The power dynamic of motorisation with its social effects of fear, retreat and isolation, ill-health, injury and death; the power of the road lobby (large sections of the ruling class - the state, media, road safety lobby, oil/car/construction companies etc). The road lobby causes the motorisation problem, then defines how it is discussed through the "road safety" myth - thus its "solutions" prevail: keep pedestrians and cyclists out of the way, build "safer cars" (safer for drivers, more dangerous for everyone else), and build more roads.

Cyclist Direct Action. "Critical Mass" last Friday of every month. Meet 5.45 pm outside NFT, South Bank (Waterloo BR and tube) Organised by CHARM (Cyclists Have a Right to Move).

A ROAD TOO FAR

Green Cars

There is no such thing as a clean car. Vehicles based on an internal combustion engine inevitably emit pollutants. This puts the achievement of lead-free petrol in perspective, as does the length of time it took to secure such a limited, non-car-threatening objective.

Traffic fumes are a major contributor to the greenhouse gases which produce global warming. Cars and light vans

produce 18% of global carbon dioxide emissions (with more produced by their manufacture), nitrous oxide (which contributes to surface and tropospheric ozone) and carbon monoxide. A proportion of nitrogen oxides turn to nitric acid and fall as acid rain. They react with other chemicals in sunlight to form petrochemical smogs containing ozone which destroys millions of dollars of crops in America and elsewhere. The nitrogen oxides in smog irritate the mucous membranes in the nose, with serious adverse effects on health, particularly for people with respiratory problems. Benzene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are implicated in causing cancer.

Catalytic converters are supposed to reduce emissions of these dangerous pollutants. However, converters don't work when cold and therefore have no effect on the start of the journey when most pollutants are emitted. Converters are widely used in Los Angeles which is one of the smog capitals of the world.

Similarly, there are a number of problems with alternative fuels. Liquid hydrogen needs electricity to freeze it and has storage and safety problems. Like electric vehicles it needs an expensive fuel which usually produces carbon dioxide in its generation. Alternative sources of electricity are expensive. Super "technical fixes" such as hydrogen fuel cells and cold fusion are very expensive and distant prospects. If and when they are introduced they will displace existing

car technologies to the de-developed world, as has happened with tobacco.

Even if a genuine green car is developed, it doesn't tackle the many other adverse effects of cars, such as the waste of space and resources, the danger element and the effects on street life and community.

Public Transport

Cars cannot be universal. Even putting aside the large-scale social effects of isolation, ill-health, environmental damage and injury and death, there is insufficient space for the roads and parking that widespread car ownership would entail. We already have extensive problems with cars, despite 35% of the population not even having a car for reasons of age, disability or lack of money.

The erosion of public transport in Britain (and elsewhere) is a basic consequence of mass car use. In the 1960s and 1970s, one third of the 17,000 miles of railtrack were axed and 40% of the stations were closed. Mass car use sabotages public transport through the allocation of funding, competition for space and loss of ideological support. The passenger revenue from buses in 1988 was £2.58 billion and that from trains was £2.19 billion. Of that, only 20% was government subsidy. Government subsidies for public transport have been cut back more and more, resulting in fewer staff and less spent on new equipment. This has serious implications for safety. For example,

BR has rejected the ATP automatic signalling system that was promised after the Clapham rail disaster.

Other effects include older stock (less efficient, more dangerous), fewer routes, and higher fares. All of these factors (together with the heavy road bias of the Department of Transport) conspire to cause fewer passengers for a progressively worse service, thereby justifying further cuts in government subsidies and higher fares, causing a vicious downward spiral. Privatisation will mean more of the same. The Budget announced a £300 million cut in the rail subsidy for 1995 with a further £235 million cut in 1996. Hundreds of workers are losing their jobs and many more are threatened with privatisation; profitability will be the sole consideration, despite government assurances to the contrary, and up to half the rail network could disappear.

Cars compete with buses for space and slow them down. They are far more wasteful of space than buses, tubes and trains. One bus or coach carries on average the passenger equivalent of 22 cars, taking up a seventh of the space. Of people going to work in central London by road, between 50-200% more go by car than by bus: 130,000 cars rather than 3,000 buses. Mass car use has impeded the possibility of an adequate public transport system. Consequently, there is a lack of imagination about what such a system could be. Ideas for improvements could include: locating more stops near homes, making the system cleaner,

more regular and safer and providing greater access for people with disabilities and children.

Anti-roads movement

What are the origins of the current, radical movement? In the 1970s Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace International involved many green activists with their populist-activist environmentalism. By the 1980s this had degenerated into professional lobbying by the few, with most people being reduced to members/supporters who raised or gave money. This void was filled by the setting up of an Earth First! (EF!) group in Britain: a radical ecology grouping committed to direct action and grassroots organisation (see Organise! nos. 26 and 28 for analysis of EF! in America). Over here, internal differences over public image, the use of violence, for of organisation etc, led to the setting up of the underground Earth Liberation Front (ELF).

In Britain EF! was influenced by its American parent, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament/Greenham Common campaign and the Animal Rights movement. From these it inherited radical liberalism and militant moralism as well as the tactics of collective direct action, lobbying, publicity, stunts and non-violent civil disobedience.

The movement has adopted non-violence as a principle (rather than as a tactic). The justification is that it gives a good media image, thus winning over public opinion and creating a moral

stance in contrast to the materialist immorality of the roadbuilders. The media are not neutral, however, but they are part of the State, largely owned by millionaire (or billionaire) capitalists such as Murdoch, the late unlamented Maxwell, Conrad Black etc. It defines the terms of political debate (e.g. security forces/terrorists, peace-keeping forces, deserving poor/scroungers etc) and peddles the line of the State. When it takes another line, this usually reflects divisions within the ruling class over strategy e.g. Murdoch's recent conversion to Blair's Labour Party after years of labour bashing. As Aufheben point out, public opinion in this context is conceived of as homogenous and passive opposition, needing a bland, acceptable image of opposition. However, the public support for the 1984-85 miners' strike and the anti-poll tax movement, despite the negative media image which portrayed these struggles as violent, contradict this view. The logic of principled non-violence is that there is no difference between the violence of the system (starvation, poverty, wage slavery, war etc) and the violence employed by people resisting it. This argument could also be extended to violence against property, i.e. it is morally wrong to cut fences or sabotage construction equipment.

Strategy

Thankfully the anti-roads movement, particularly the M11 campaign, has not taken this line and has a fine record of sabotage. The rationale behind the

movement's strategy and tactics is that their resistance is expensive to the road-builders and that this extra cost will create a new political climate where the Government refuses to underwrite the road-builders. Interestingly, the latest development (at the time of writing) is that Tarmac Construction is trying to recover the extra costs arising from the Twyford Down (M3) resistance from the Department of Transport, who in turn are suing 76 of the protesters for £31.9 million damage. This "raise the cost" strategy failed to stop Cruise missiles at Greenham Common, but on a global level it was pivotal in the downfall of the USSR, with America using the arms race as a means of bankrupting the Soviet regime.

A further argument used against violent tactics is that they would give the police an excuse to wade in, but recent struggles (poll tax, Criminal Justice Bill etc) show that the police do not need an excuse to use violence. They are violent when they want to be. The question of whether or not to use violence should therefore not be one of principle but one of tactics. The entire State apparatus with its army, courts, prisons etc is based on violence. Capitalist exploitation is a violent attack on our freedom and well-being. It seems highly unlikely that we can overcome their power without any use of violence. However, it is equally wrong to have violence as a principle of action. As Emma Goldman said, "The more the violence, the less the revolution." Therefore, the decision of whether or

not to use violence should depend on what tactics will best achieve our ends, whilst attempting to minimise violence.

Legitimacy

The other strand of principled, non-violent, civil disobedience is accepting the legitimacy of the State. The flip-side of the "democratic rights" of protesters that many in the anti-roads movement talk about is the "duties" of citizens to obey the laws of the "democratically-elected" government and to respect private property. However, we have to recognise that the government is not a government of the people and that it, and the laws it passes, represent the interests of the ruling class against us. The private property they are concerned about is the property of the ruling class. Therefore it is a mistake to speak about "our rights" in a system that is not ours in any sense.

The Future

The government plans to finance its motorway expansion programme through electronic tolling (aiming to raise £700 million). Tolls are currently charged on a third of European motorways. In August the Tory-controlled Transport Select Committee rejected the idea as illegal and liable to cause thousands of extra injuries and increased environmental damage through drivers using trunk roads more to avoid payment. Although this is a short-term defeat it foreshadows far advanced plans of the State and the electronics/motor industry. An example of this is the Prometheus project

(Programme for European Traffic with Highest Efficiency and Unprecedented Safety) which involves the majority of European car manufacturers. Technology is already far developed for tolling, electronic monitoring and control of vehicle speeds as a way of reducing traffic jams, increasing traffic flows and of course increasing revenue and profits for the State and private capital.

However, despite its ambitions, the government has been forced into a number of other defeats and climbdowns through a combination of factors. The increased militancy of the anti-roads movement, the inadequacy of the public transport system, increased awareness of health problems caused by car pollution and pressure on the Department of Transport's large budget at a time of public spending cuts have all combined to make the government rethink, especially with the forthcoming general election (1996-97) and 12 Tory MPs in marginal seats facing hostility to unpopular road schemes.

Although the Twyford Down and M11 battles were lost, the scheme to demolish Oxleas Wood has been put on ice and six more schemes were postponed in late December 1994. This is on top of the cut of one third in the national road-building programme announced last summer. If rail privatisation goes ahead it will mean massive cuts in the rail network of up to

a half, extensive redundancies (which have already started) and higher fares.

Links

This is a battle that can be won, particularly because it is unpopular and the government is in the run-up to a general election. It is vital that anti-road campaigners, transport workers and those threatened by road schemes build links. Revolutionaries should be working to build and support this process. Ultimately, a community-based, accessible and green public transport system can only be built as part of a revolutionary transformation. Its components will include popular planning involving all the communities affected, minimising the need for transport through increased local self-reliance, a service that is free and accessible to all, minimal pollution and disturbance to the environment and community and compatibility with a thriving street life of walkers and cyclists.

NOTE: We are indebted to Aufheben no. 3 for their excellent analysis of the anti-roads movement.

Aufheben (£2.00 + p&p) c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY

GREEN POLITICS

League harassed for approving road plans
Experts raise air pollution threshold
World losing three species every hour
Emissions up to 300 times UK city limits
Why water companies' spending
ECO WORRIERS

IS LIFESTYLISM ENOUGH?

Lifestylism is the theory that major social change will only come about through people as individuals changing the way that they live and relate to other individuals.

I am examining and criticising lifestylism as a political philosophy, rather than its content. It is vital for revolutionaries to examine and change the way that they live - for example to tackle racism and sexism in themselves and others; those who don't speak with a corpse in their mouths. The point is that on its own this is not enough.

Theory

Lifestylism is an individualistic theory: society is made up of individuals who have real choices about how they live; for example whether they do waged work or not (and what job they do), whether they live communally, pay rent, squat etc. If enough people make the right moral or ethical choices and act upon them, reform or major social change will occur.

Many people look critically at what food they buy and eat, for reasons of health, ecology, animal liberation and social justice. They boycott "Third World" cash crops such as tea, coffee and sugar in favour of "non-exploiting" home produce, buy free-range, organic wholefoods rather than food that is factory farmed/chemically treated - refined or adulterated, adopt vegetarian or vegan diets rather than meat or dairy ones.

In the wider areas of consumption, lifestylists boycott "bad" companies connected with things such as Apartheid, Vivisection or the Arms Trade; Similarly they favour small shops and co-operatives ("small is beautiful" to supermarkets and hierarchical businesses. Through environmental concern they buy green products that claim to be ecologically friendly, and try to re-cycle what they use (paper, cans, bottles etc).

Pacifists are opposed to violence, particularly the existence of the military and the criminal waste of the arms trade. Peaceful methods are the means

to an end; a peaceful society. All behaviour is subject to individual choice. So, for example, police on pickets and demonstrations should be treated as individuals who "can be nice to you if you're nice to them". For a number of pacifists all violence is equally bad (whether committed by oppressors or oppressed) - so it was wrong for pickets to defend themselves at Orgreave. Similarly, some pacifists argue against using peaceful force - for example a non-violent workplace occupation - because it is violent to impose your will on other people.

Collective Action

Campaigning against "bad companies" implies that there are good companies. The reality is that production for profit inevitably means the domination and exploitation of people, useless unhealthy production and the domination of nature and hence pollution and destruction. Big companies are only worse than small ones because they are bigger. In a class society worker/consumer co-ops are only a milder form of exploitation.

The fundamental flaw of lifestylism as a political theory is its individualistic basis. As anarchist communists we see individual freedom as vital but the guarantee of freedom of the individual is freedom of the collective.

We live in a class society which is organised for the wealth and power of an elite, the Ruling Class (Bosses, Landlords, Judges, Politicians, Top Military, Police and Civil Servants).

The majority of people - the Working Class - have no real choice about how they live. They are forced to do boring, useless (and unhealthy) work for a boss, the drudgery of full-time housework and childcare, or the poverty and harassment of "living" on welfare benefits.

The people who decide what is produced and how, are not workers or consumers but those who own the means of production (land, factories etc) - bosses and landlords. Their sole motivation is profit i.e. domination and exploitation. Organised consumer campaigns can have an effect, if allied to workers' action - e.g. boycotting production of goods during a strike.

What is needed is local and national organisation and collective direct action ending in the working class seizing the means of production and creating structures where everyone has a direct say about all aspects of society (historically - workplace and neighbourhood councils, street committees etc). Only in such a classless society - Anarchist Communism - will we have production for use in a world human community which also is in harmony with nature.

INTRODUCTION TO THE US GREEN ANARCHISTS

Murray Bookchin is an important contemporary thinker, founder of the Social Ecology movement. Lately his ideas have shifted from green anarchist-communism to the radical liberalism of

Confederal Municipalism - "a belief in taking state power at a local level and using that power to transform society from the bottom up". Here is a report from an ACF member who visited America.

In the United States and Canada there are two main co-ordinating groupings of the Bookchinist current: the Left Green Network and the Youth Greens.

The Left Green Network has existed for about three years and has about 300 "members". They have a magazine called *Left Green Notes - A Magazine of Radical Ecology* which is printed about every two months. They also have a theoretical bulletin called *Regeneration*, and a 24 page draft programme. The network was initiated in the North East (or New England) quarter of the United States most especially from Vermont where Murray Bookchin's Institute for Social Ecology is based. The ISE is part of a college at which Bookchin is a professor. Many of the older LGN activists seem to have come out of the anti-nuclear struggles of the seventies, and have since either studied or taught at the ISE.

The Left Green Network has yearly continental conferences and in between regional conferences. There are six regions; NE, SE, NW, SW, Midwest and Far West. The conference I went to was the first regional conference of the Farwest LGN. The LGN is run by a co-ordinating council which includes two delegates from each region, two from the Youth Greens and two from the "People of colour" Caucus. The LGN

has a strange relationship with the Green Party, many left greens seeing themselves as the left-wing of that party, some see themselves as autonomous.

Dominant

A dominant idea within the former is confederal municipalism. They really believe that their town councillors will be accountable and recallable to local people.

The Youth Greens are a younger and more radical offshoot from the Greens. They are more anarchistic. For example, they are against the electoral politics of the Green Party and are close to the *Love and Rage* newspaper network. They are probably very student based since all their meetings have taken place on college campuses, and sometimes their theory is quite academic. The YG and the LGN have a separate history and identity, but most Youth Greens are also members of the Left Greens. One issue of their own magazine *Free Society*, included in which was a discussion on whether they should change their name to the "autonomous greens" or to the "eco-anarchist network". Together with the LGN they produced a magazine called *Ecology, Anarchism and Green Politics* as a one off for a big student ecology conference. The Youth Greens have called for and taken part in radical Earth Day actions each year.

Politically the Youth Greens see themselves as "following in the tradition of the Paris Commune, the

Spanish Anarchists of the late 1800's and early 1900's May '68 France, and the thoughts of Hegel, Marx, Kropotkin, The Frankfurt School, Feminism, the New Left, the Situationists and Social Ecology..." Their six political principles adopted at their first conference in May '89 were "1) Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Liberation; 2) Social Ecofeminism; 3) Anti-Capitalism; 4) Oppositional politics; 5) Revolutionary Dual Power and Radical Municipalism; and 6) Democratic Decentralism."

Class

On Anti-Capitalism they state, "...we define Green as explicitly anti-capitalist. Both historical experience and theoretical analysis indicate that capitalism and ecology cannot coexist. The profit motive inherent in capitalism does not allow for truly effective ecological regulations or environmental protection. The priority is profit, not the land or the people. As Greens we will not compromise with capitalism..." Nowhere in their writings is there any discussion or even mention of class!!!

On the state, "...We do not believe that the present system can be reformed. It is partly for this reason that we reject the authority of the state, and seek an entire restructuring of society - although some of us think that the state may play a role in a period of transition to a stateless society..." Note their principles do not include anti-statism. It is probable that there is a trotskyite minority within the Youth Greens

blocking this. It also shows in the refusal to attack Leninism, "...The question of Youth Green in relation to the democratic-centralist cadre group is still an open one and there are now three counter-proposals in existence".

Their confusion on the issue of the state carries over into their rejection of the national electoral system. Presumably they, like the Left Green Network, see the local electoral system and the local state as somehow distinct from the national one. They state, "We advocate government based upon direct democracy, whenever possible and accountable representation when direct democracy is not possible. An accountable representation would involve citizens meeting to discuss issues, then sending delegates to a larger body, who have mandated positions from the base..." Fortunately in practice the Youth Greens seem to avoid electoralism and emphasise extra-parliamentary activity.

Militant

Their ideas on Revolutionary Dual Power are influenced by the German Autonomists and include both militant street demonstrations and "...Working in communities to establish counter-institutions with a goal of creating a dual power in opposition to capital and the state. Such projects include community cafes, restaurants, bookstores, squats and community gardens.

The most recent Youth Green conference was in Eugene, Oregon, last

summer. From the review of the meeting it seems that the YGs have shrunk in number with many activists going off into different projects, e.g. *Love and Rage* or the LGN. There also seems to be a realisation that to continue they must change their title, both to allow it to become mixed age and to clarify their position to the Greens. But there are two main factions on this. The first want to ditch the word Greens as well. They see "...That the Greens are hopelessly middle class and will never be more than mild mannered reformers..." They correctly view the Greens as being tied to statist and electoral strategies that have no relevance to the revolutionary project. This faction wants to change the name to the Ecological Anarchist Network. The other faction argues that they should stay in the Greens and work with them to develop a revolutionary consciousness and agenda. This faction wants the name changed to the Autonomous Green Network. The Youth Greens have not yet split. The issue will be debated again at this year's conference. But I hope they do split. For the sake of theoretical clarity the anarchist Greens need to break from the stifling confines of the official Green movement. And to get away from any trot hangers on.

Bizarre

The Left Green Network's seemingly progressive and radical ideas are being used as a cover to drag anti-authoritarians into the electoral circus. It is bizarre that they have joined the

Love and Rage project's anti-presidential election boycott, but they do have a bizarre ideology. Confederal Municipalism puts forward the nonsensical idea that the local state is good but that the national state is bad; this needs to be repudiated as merely another face of the same old leftist garbage. We've had enough leftist states to know they all stink the same.

The following are the most up to date addresses for these groups:

Left Green Network, POB 366, Iowa City, IA 52244

Left Green Notes, 825 East Roosevelt, #178, Lombard, IL, 60148

Regeneration, WD Press, POB 24115, St Louis, MO 63130

Free Society/Youth Greens, POB 7293, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MONKEY WRENCHERS

The politics and history of Earth First!

Earth First! has become famous in the last few years as a radical environmental activist group that espouses sabotage and direct action to protect the "wilderness". In reality **Earth First!** is a cover name taken by a variety of radical North American environmentalists (some individuals and some groups) who share the desire to defend "nature". **Earth First!** is thus not a singular group with a shared political outlook and a common structure, rather it is a movement,

containing a spectrum of opinions, and completely autonomous activity.

But there are common threads to the political make-up of the people within **EF!** and this movement does have a definable political history. There is also a newspaper published eight times a year, called, not unsurprisingly, **Earth First!** The paper qualifies itself as "... a forum for the no-compromise environmental movement". It is a 40-page tabloid consisting of an eclectic mix of news, campaigns, action reports, letters, upcoming events, politics, poetry and humour. The overwhelming emphasis is on action, and there is little in-depth theory. Over 5,000 copies are distributed each issue.

Two interesting books that discuss the formation, underlying political outlook and growth of the **Earth First!** movement; from an insider's perspective, are *Green Rage* by Christopher Manes and the sections by Dave Foreman in the book *Defending the Earth* in which he argues with social ecologist Murray Bookchin. It is from these books that I trace the early history of **EF!**

Radical Action!

Earth First! was formed in the Spring of 1980 by five disgruntled mainstream environmentalists. They left behind paid positions in such groups as the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth, in order to found a

more radical, activist based group. They saw a two-fold purpose, firstly they saw the necessity for more radical action and secondly they thought the mainstream environmental organisations would benefit and appear moderate by having a more radical wing.

These five were all white, male, 25-35 years old and shared an admiration for characters in Ed Abbey's novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. Politically these characters can be described as "Rednecks for the Wilderness". In class terms it was much more working class than most of the rest of the environmental movement, especially its upper echelons. The political background of the five included both libertarian right (Dave Foreman) and libertarian left (Mike Roselle), but shared a "rugged individualism".

All rejected the bureaucratic hierarchical structure of the reformist mainstream and sought to build a movement of grass-roots activists. Emphasis was put on action for the environment; any political, social or economic questions were seen as side-issues that would water down the ecological agenda. This political confusion was to lead **Earth First!** into the swamp of "Deep Ecology" from which it has yet to fully pull itself out.



Deep Ecology!

The basis of Deep Ecology is the total and unconditional right of "nature" to exist without human interference. Essentially a radical liberal approach. But it does have a sinister twist. Humans are seen as somehow separate from "nature", and it is humans that are destroying "nature". Deep Ecology has no social analysis whatsoever. Hence it is not human society or capitalism that is to blame just humans. This led to some EF!ers making absurd comments like "AIDS is good because it kills humans".

The focus of Deep Ecology has been on the preservation and extension of "wilderness". This is the Natural environment in its pure complete state. No time is given to any other aspect of the global environment. The places where we live are clearly not "natural" and hence not a concern. The stupidity of all this really is amazing.

To all their critics Deep Ecologists have a standard answer. Anyone who suggests the necessity of a *social critique* to understand human society and its relationship to the environment is seen as anthropocentric. That is putting humans above and in control of "nature".

The above description of Deep Ecology is oversimplified. Like much of "Ghetto Anarchism" every person you meet has a different perception of what it means. Any analysis of the social characteristics of many of these people would probably show the same moralism, liberalism rebelliousness and individualism that plagues the anarchist scene everywhere. Some Earth Firsters! have now moved far towards a more social critique and yet still call themselves Deep Ecologists.

Growth!

From its small beginnings EF! grew fast. The *Earth First!* newsletter reached 1500 subscribers within its first year. The media happily covered the first of EF!'s many media stunts; the "cracking" of Glen Canyon Dam. EF! had popular appeal. Its dynamic, humorous, action-orientated and rebellious image appealed particularly to young people. "Deep Ecology" also found fertile soil within white North American youth. Any remnants of class or political consciousness have long ago been bulldozed out of the American Psyche.

Geographically EF! spread from its Southwest birthplace, in the deserts of

Arizona and New Mexico, to the rest of the Western United States and Canada. In particular to the Rocky Mountain states of Montana, Wyoming and Colorado; and the Western seaboard states of California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. The Western states are the most recently colonised of the North American Continent, hence the only states to have significant wilderness areas left. Even so, EF! has now spread eastward as well.

By the mid-80s various factions within EF! were becoming discernible. The "old guard" centred around Dave Foreman still controlled the EF! paper. The "ecotopians" in NW California who saw an environmental utopia (on the Western seaboard) coming about through a radical green state. And more interestingly the anarcho-environmentalists such as the Wahsington-state-based "Alien Nation". This group advocated opposition to capitalism and its consumer culture. With a clearer revolutionary stance on opposition to the mainstream reformist environmentalists, they have gone on to produce the anarcho-EF! paper *Live wild or die*.

Rows!

By 1987 these factions within EF! were beginning to argue. Initially over the rigid control the "Foremanistas" held over the journal. This faction was refusing to print critical letters/articles from other groups. The dispute soon

escalated into a political battle between the more redneck "old guard" and the younger "anarchists". The "old guard" defended the racist, nationalist, misanthropic bigotry of many of the leading figures, e.g. Ed Abbey, Dave Foreman and Chris Manes. The anarchists found it unacceptable. For a good account of this see *Alien-Nation's* article "A glimpse of the July 4th EF! Gathering", printed in the Fall 1987 *Fifth Estate*.

But the internal disputes were neither coherent nor very developed ideologically. All sides still stuck to Deep Ecology. The disputes would coalesce around more "practical" issues. For example at the 1988 Gathering one faction rallied around the US Flag, the other burnt it. This caused much controversy around the issues of symbolism and rebelliousness but didn't lead into a debate about nationalism or capitalism. (Even today many EF!ers still see themselves as patriots).

At the same time as the internal disputes, EF! came under attack from the outside. Firstly direct physical attack from the state, followed by a barrage of academic ideological criticism from the left. Of note in particular is the attack on EF! by Murray Bookchin, one of the leading US radical ecologists. In a similar vein was George Bradford's attack in *Fifth Estate*. Both of these put the boot into Deep Ecology and the bigoted politics of the then EF! leadership. Unfortunately both critiques came from outside EF! and by failing to recognise

EF!'s diversity came across as attacking EF! as a whole, adding further to EF!'s paranoid "bunker mentality".

Repression!

As the level of state repression against EF! intensified this paranoia grew. In May '89 an FBI entrapment operation put four leading Arizona activists in jail. An FBI agent had infiltrated Arizona EF! and talked people into bombing power lines. Of course it was a set-up. A year later the car in which two leading Californian EF!ers were driving was blown up. These are just the two most serious acts of harassment and repression by the FBI, there have been many others in what seems an FBI "Cointelpro". (This term was used in the seventies to describe the FBI COUNTER INTELIGENCE Program which was used to destroy and discredit the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement).

Splits!

The internal political dispute within EF! came to a head at the Summer '90 Gathering. The "Old Guard" lost its control of the EF! (One person I spoke to gave me the impression that many of the more working-class "redneck" types also left at this point as the more articulate ex-student drop-outs took over. I don't know how true this is). The control of the paper was now given to an open, rotating collective to be based in Montana. It was now much more open to printing all sides of an argument.

An certainly arguments did continue because EF! was still a very diverse organisation. Some of these include for and against hunting, animal rights and violence. But the most interesting came from the Californian "Ecotopians", who were arguing for more of a "party line" approach within the journal. Probably correct in some ways e.g. keeping out letters containing vicious personal attacks. But the majority wanted and retained the open "movement" style paper. Despite these internal divisions the journal seems to have improved in quality and circulation since 1993.

Redwood Summer!

Summer 1990 saw another turnabout in the activities of EF! The Northern Californian EF!ers (the Ecotopians) organised a series of mass actions and publicity stunts to protect some of the last of the Redwood Forest from being copped down. For the first time EF! made links with the workers in the logging industry and tried to develop a joint approach against the timber multinationals. Some EF!ers began to "make links with the syndicalist IWW union. This project was only partly successful but it did show a healthier awareness of social reality than most previous EF! campaigns.

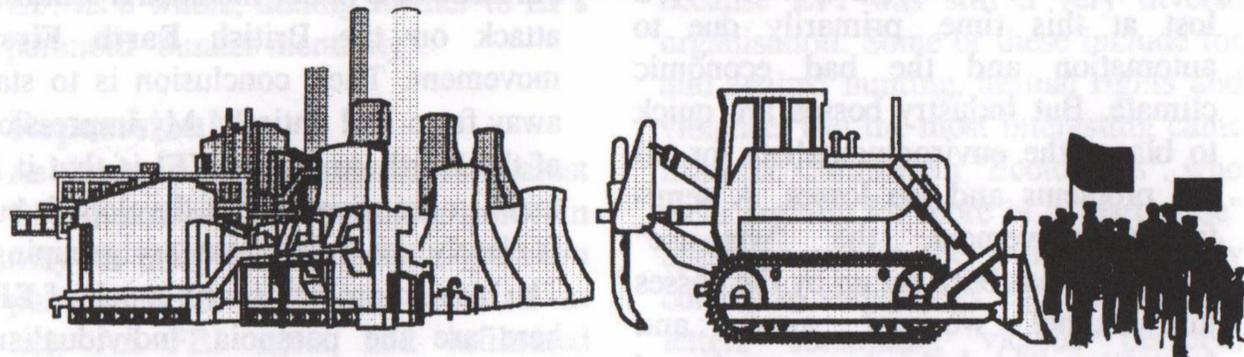
The underlying individualism and moralism of much of EF! has led them away from social activism. Redwood Summer was a unique turnaround; particularly valuable at a time of deep economic crisis. Many tens of

thousands of resource industry jobs (forestry, mining, fishing etc.) are being lost at this time, primarily due to automation and the bad economic climate. But industry bosses are quick to blame the environmentalists for all the problems and job losses. A semi-fascist movement, the "wise-use" movement has been set up by the bosses to channel workers' anger and frustration. This has led to a number of violent attacks against environmentalists. Clearly many more campaigns such as Redwood Summer are needed.

Conclusion!

An issue of *Wildcat* included a scathing attack on the British Earth First! movement. Their conclusion is to stay away from EF! entirely. My impression of the North American EF! is that it is much more diverse and developed, but is clearly not a revolutionary grouping. The biggest problems with much of EF! here are the paranoia, individualism and attachment to Deep Ecology. My conclusion would be to maintain a positive scepticism, to support and defend their actions while criticising the politics.

ECOLOGY AND CLASS



ECOLOGY AND CLASS

Many people are now aware of the massive worldwide problem of the environmental pollution and destruction.

Rainforests such as Amazonia (home to native peoples and thousands of unique animal and plant species, and an important source of oxygen and absorber of carbon dioxide) are being decimated. Large areas of land are being turned into desert. There is an increasing number of "natural" disasters such as droughts, floods and earthquakes affecting ever more people. Pollution is causing dangerous climatic changes such as the global warming from the Greenhouse Effect.

Acid rain, poisoning of the sea and drinking water, increasing cancers from industrial radiation, the list is endless. But what are the causes and solutions, and what is the relationship of ecology to the class struggle?

Ecology is THE science of living things and their relationship to the

environment in which they live. There are three central ecological principles:

(1) All life on Earth is interdependent.

For example plants provide the air we breathe and food we eat (directly, or indirectly as meat from other animals who eat plants). Animal shit and dead bodies enrich the soil that plants grow in.

(2) Plants and animals naturally achieve balance with each other through dynamic equilibrium

For example when there is a big increase in the population of field mice (upsetting the balance between species), it is followed by an increase in the population of creatures that eat them, such as owls and foxes, until a new balance is achieved.

(3) Unity in diversity

The more species there are in a natural environment, the more stable it is. Conversely the less species there are, the more unstable it is.

All of these principles have been radically undermined by the environmental crisis.

People are acting in many different ways to try and green society - as consumers, dissident shareholders, in mainstream/green parties, in green pressure groups. Green ideas are trendy and topical: even companies and governments are getting in on the act. What is the effect of all this talk and action?

Governments of the industrialised countries signed a treaty in 1987, the Montreal Protocol, agreeing to halve the production of CFC's (Choloro-Fluro-Carbons which damage the ozone layer, causing global warming) by the year 2000. It's been estimated however that a reduction of 85% is needed to enable the ozone layer to repair itself. Acid Rain is being similarly "tackled" - too little, too slowly and never tackling the root cause.

Lead free petrol supposedly makes cars OK, but they are still major polluters and profoundly anti-social (killing 6000 people a year in Britain and injuring 40,000). Thatcher's belated conversion to environmentalism (for example her condemnation of the Greenhouse Effect resulting from fossil fuels) is little more than a subterfuge for the expansion of Nuclear Power which lessens the reliance on coal, undesirable because of the power and militancy of the miners.

Protocol



CONSUME!

Companies are making an increasing number and ranges of "environmentally-friendly" and "healthy" products such as bleaches and detergents, unadulterated food. These products are invariably more expensive (and so can only be afforded by the better off) and they are also often the "acceptable face" of big companies who continue to make the same old junk in large quantities. Big firms such as Shell spend millions of pounds on advertising and PR, letting us know how green they are - reclaiming the land after they've used it, putting their pipelines underground, and giving money to green projects, yet they continue (with governments) to be the environmental terrorists.

Consumerism (alienated buying-to-be-happy) is part of the problem. Capitalism wants us to spend all of our "free" time (when we're not working-to-

live of busy with domestic drudgery) buying "leisure". Although green products are preferable they are not the answer: they're an individual solution to a social problem - who controls what is produced and how. As individuals the majority of us - the working class - have no control over our lives. We certainly don't exercise any social say or control through what we do or don't buy (or as dissident shareholders). Organised consumer boycotts linked to workers action can have a significant effect, however.

Rural

The green policies and promises of the mainstream political parties are so much populist window-dressing. Green Parties are superficially more attractive. They have some radical policies such as decentralism, federalism and opposition to leaders. But if they achieve power, they will (like the main-stream parties or Bolsheviks (be running the state, the rule of the few which is the root of the problem. They will also - inevitably - be corrupted by power as illustrated by the German Green Party. One of their central rules was that no one could be a spokesperson for more than two years, yet this was vehemently opposed by the first generation of non-leaders such as Petra Kelly when their time was up. In Britain the Green Party (though still in opposition) has refused to support mass non-payment of the poll tax because it won't support illegal action. The "radical" Greater London Council of Ken Livingstone showed the same lessons: you cannot impose radical

policies and people power from above: people must collectively take power for themselves, outside of and against political parties.

Green pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace International do some good practical work (particularly the local groups) but are flawed by their "apolitical" stance (which means that they accept the state and capitalism) and their single issue politics. Where they do undertake direct action (e.g. Greenpeace International) it is carried out by an elite of activists on behalf of "The Green Movement"; still part of a representational rather than anarchist politics.

Social problems do not exist as single issues, so they can't be tackled as such. Greenpeace's initial anti-fur-trapping campaign brought them into conflict with Native Peoples because they failed to distinguish between subsistence activity and the big business trapping of the major fur companies. For years CND refused to oppose nuclear power, even though it is inextricably linked to nuclear weapons.

Some green activists lack of calls analysis has led them to the misanthropic conclusion that people in general are (equally) responsible for the ecological crisis. This means that the Earth would be better off without people and has led (for example) to the American direct action group "Earth First" stating that AIDS is a good thing because it kills off so many people, and to racist outbursts about the detrimental

effects of Third World "overpopulation".

What is striking about pollution and environmental destruction is the scale of it, and the fact that most of it results from routine, daily practice rather than "accidents" or "disasters" such as Bhopal, Soveso, Chernobyl or the Exxon Valdez Alaskan oil spill.

To take the example of agriculture. In the "developed" world, it is mostly large-scale industrialised agribusiness. The emphasis is on growing single crops in huge fields - monoculture - an unstable ecosystem. The crops are much more vulnerable to pests, necessitating chemical pesticides. Chemical fertilisers are used to obtain (short term) high yields, in the long term these deplete the soil of nutrients and yields fall. Pesticides kill both pests and the creatures that prey on them, and poison food and drinking water.

Factory farming - concentration camps for animals - is morally indefensible and produces unhealthy meat, eggs and milk. There is massive, government-subsidised over-production leading to examples such as the famous butter mountains and wine lakes. This food is fed back to animals (producing delights such as B.S.E - "Mad cows disease") or destroyed - more economic than selling it cheaply or giving it to people who need it. Farmers are also paid to keep good land fallow.

Poorest

In Africa and Asia the rural population live on the poorest land. They are

forced to grow cash crops for export, although their primary need is to feed themselves: 15 million children die every year from malnutrition. In Brazil the IMF (International Monetary Fund) is insisting that the huge \$120 billion debt is paid by reducing imports and maximising exports. This has inevitably led to the worsened rape of Amazonia through increasing the output of primary products such as minerals, meat, coffee, cocoa and hardwoods.

Living on the worst land, these growing populations overcultivate, deforest and overuse it, making themselves more prone to "natural" disasters such as floods and droughts. This land is also the most dangerous: the poor live on shanty towns of flood-prone river basins or foreshores, or in huts of heavy mud brick on steep hills.

Mass pollution and environmental destruction is the inevitable consequence of a system based on dominating the rest of nature (and therefore exploiting and destroying it). This domination has its roots in the domination of people - class society, where power and wealth is in the hands of a few, the ruling class, who oppress and exploit the working class majority, and the related oppressions of racism and sexism. Production is for profit not need. It is the ruling class who decide what is produced and how - peasants don't choose to live on the worst land, or row cash crops, individual consumers can't stop pollution through buying, boycotting or voting.

Technology

It is important to examine technology (the machines and tools used by society and the relations between them implied by their use). Existing technology is rarely neutral - it has been developed under and by capitalism for profit (exploitation) and social-economic control. It is therefore not just a question of control - a nuclear power station controlled by the workers and community would still be unhealthy and oppressive. VDUs monitor whether and how fast their operators are working, production lines force people to do boring repetitive tasks at an inhuman pace (that of machines).

The ruling class is constantly modifying technology developing new machines, tools and techniques in response to working class struggles: containerisation (enabling goods to be equally transferable between ship, rail and roads) was developed in response to the power and organisation of the dockers.

Technologies which are potentially more liberating are suppressed. Successive British governments have put massive funds into nuclear power, tiny amounts into research and development of renewable energy resources such as wind, solar, tidal and geothermal energy. This paltry funding has been deliberately chopped about so that research into each renewable energy never progressed too far.

Large scale industry necessitates large scale centralised energy production form fossil fuels (Coal, Oil, and Gas)

and nuclear power, with the consequent waste, acid rain, radiation and global warming. Renewable energy could equally be used.

We need to develop a technology which extends human capabilities, can be controlled by the community and is friendly to the environment as part of the struggle for a free anarchist-communist society. A genuine alternative technology can only be developed on a significant scale in a new society.

There are a number of examples of workers taking ecological action. In the 1970s a number of groups of Australian workers instituted Green Bans, through which they boycotted ecologically destructive projects. Builders, Seafarers, Transport and Railworkers, and Dockers boycotted all work connected with the nuclear industry, the Franklin River project - flooding the Tasmanian National Park (including Aboriginal land) for a large Hydro-electric project: a victory. Similarly workers blacked Amax's attempts to drill and mine for oil and diamonds and other minerals of aboriginal land at Noonkanbah. They also actively supported the militant occupation of the site by aboriginal people.

In Britain the boycott of dumping Nuclear Waste at sea by rank and file seafarers forced the government to abandon the policy in the 1980's.

In Brazil, rubber tappers forged an alliance with native peoples and environmentalists to oppose massive deforestation of the Amazon rainforest

by big landowners and business interests. Their success led to the murder of union activist Chico Mendes by hired assassins in December 1988, but the struggle continues.

Mass direct action by communities (occupations, sabotage and pitched battles with police) has prevented Nuclear power stations and reprocessing facilities being built at Plogoff in France, and Whyll and Wackersdorff in Germany. In Britain communities mobilised in 1987 to end government plans to dump nuclear waste at 4 sites. In Thailand in the early 1980's 100,000 people rioted to destroy a 70m steel factory.

Is Technology Neutral?

THIS IS A vital question for revolutionaries: if technology is neutral, then a successful revolution will solve the problems caused by the operation of existing technologies, such as the oppressiveness of workplaces, the danger, pollution and social dislocation of traffic and the environmental destruction of industry and agriculture. Damage to the environment as a result of social and economic development is not new. In pre-Christian times vast forests were reduced to plains by human agriculture, for example. What is new is the global scale of the routine, daily damage to air (pollution), land (poisoning & loss of soil), and water (pollution & drought).

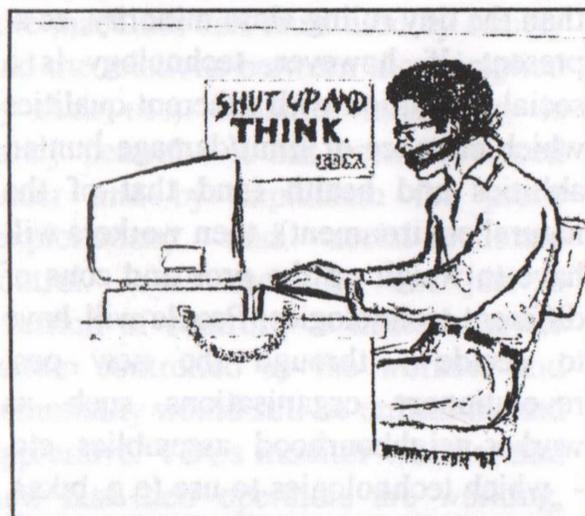
Following the revolution, the working class worldwide, having seized control of workplaces, land and streets, would

direct current technology to benefit the vast majority (the working class) rather than the tiny ruling class minority, as at present. If, however, technology is a social institution with inherent qualities which enhance or limit/damage human abilities and health (and that of the natural environment), then workers will have to weigh up the pros and cons of different technologies. People will have to decide - through the new post revolutionary organisations such as worker-neighbourhood assemblies etc. - which technologies to use (e.g. bikes, trams), which to adapt/limit (small scale-local solar and wind power) and which to discard (cars and nuclear fission-fusion). Technology consists of the tools and machines used by society and the relations between them implied by their use. It is not neutral: the social relations of production (boss/worker) are reflected in machines and tools, which interact with, and reinforce social patterns e.g. the 'transport poor' resulting from cars and class society. Similarly, the hierarchical regimentation of workers, although it appearing to be a necessity resulting from production technology, is built into technology as a reflection of the social division of labour.

Control

Technological innovation has been used to increase efficiency and maximise profits, and to maintain and optimise the control of bosses over workers (both in and outside the workplace). Where profit and control come into conflict, control is usually prioritised, as a loss

of control puts profit, and ultimately the boss class itself, at risk.



Present day technological society dates from the industrial revolution and the new science of the 17th century. The old idea of the world as animistic (alive) and organic had broken down. It was replaced by a new abstract science and a new model for ruling class order: the machine. Order was the predictable behaviour of each part within a rationally determined system of laws. Power came from active human intervention. Order and power came together to make up control - rational control over nature, society and self i.e. the domination, exploitation and destruction of people and the natural environment.

The factory system and capitalist production was the result of the class relations of society as well as technical and economic factors. The new division of society into capitalist and working classes had begun with the rise of a new merchant class long before major advances in productive technology. At the same time, new ideas about the

“importance of work” emerged. Previously, poverty was seen as an unavoidable evil, and the poor as objects of pity. Now poverty was a sin, and poor people were victims of their own actions.

Management Necessity

Machines were rarely the reason for setting up the new factories, which were a managerial, not a technical necessity. Those required in the early years of the industrial revolution both replaced hand labour and also compelled the introduction of production into factories: Arkwright's Water Frame (1768), Crompton's Mule (1774), Cartwright's Power Loom (1784) and Watt's Steam Engine (1785). Samuel Smiles (author of 'Self Help', precursor of Thatcherism) stated that manufacturers did not adopt many of the 'most potent' self-acting tools and machines until they were forced to do so by strikes. In the early 18th century strikes in factories in Midlands towns led the owners to commission a firm of machinists to construct a self-acting mule at a cost of £13,000 to avoid conceding higher wages. The dreaded new machine, patented in 1830, was christened "The Iron Man" by the machinists. The factory based organisation of the weaving industry for example, did not develop directly from a more efficient base. Many of the new machines were expensive, and were only developed and introduced after the weavers had been concentrated into the factories, following great resistance. New technology was used to suppress

militant workers. For example the length of spinning mules was increased to reduce the number of workers required, displacing adult spinners and increasing the number of their assistants. This weakened the factory apprentice system, and the strength and organisation of the spinners. These changes were made despite being very costly - the factory layout often had to be replanned. There was huge resistance to the new technology, and consequently a very high failure rate amongst the early industrialists. The successful ones were usually the best managers such as Arkwright, and often performed several of the capitalist roles: inventor, innovator, manager. Much of the worker resistance took the form of machine -breaking. For some workers it became part of the general class struggle - an established way of pressurising the bosses, direct action which stimulated worker solidarity. The wrecking of coal mines during widespread rioting in Northumberland in 1740 and frame breaking in the East Midlands hosiery trade are examples. Other workers, particularly the Luddites, opposed both the new machines and the new social relations of production they created. Machines threatened employment and the relative freedom, dignity and kinship of the craft worker. There was also widespread support from other classes such as farmers who were threatened by the new agricultural machinery. Between 1811 and 1813 the government was forced to deploy over 12,000 troops to tackle the Luddites, a

larger force than Wellington's army in Spain. The Lancashire machine wreckers of 1778 and 1780 spared spinning jennies of 24 spindles or less (which were suitable for domestic production) and destroyed larger ones which were only applicable in factories. Machine breakers won many local conflicts e.g. in Norfolk they succeeded in keeping up wages for a number of years. Wrecking destroyed John Kay's house in 1753, Hargreave's spinning jennies in 1768, Arkwright's mills in 1776. During the widespread spinners strikes of 1818 shuttles were locked in chapels and workshops in Manchester, Barnsley, Bolton and other towns. The Luddites were eventually defeated by the gathering political momentum of industrial capitalism, supported by strong military forces and technological advance which changed the composition of the labour force. "A new generation had [now] grown up which was inured to the discipline and precision of the mill".

Today

The neutrality of science and technology is a myth. Science is used to legitimate power, technology to justify social control. The myth is wheeled out when technology comes under fire e.g. for causing industrial pollution / traffic congestion. Inadequate policies or under-developed technology are blamed rather than the technology itself, such as cars. The solution is the "technical fix" - more of the same; the irony is that the problems which technology is best able to solve are

those which have been isolated from their social environment. The ideology of industrialisation maintains that modernisation, and technological and social development are the same. It is used to justify the pursuit of economic growth with the emphasis on wealth generation, rather than its distribution. Similarly

society is described in purely operational terms in order to mask the inequalities of wealth and power. This ideology is used to suppress the potentialities for individual-social emancipation offered by particular machines such as wind power technology (i.e. small scale, for local use and community controlled), and to legitimate their use in ways which are socially and environmentally exploitative (large scale wind farms under state/private control supplying the National Grid). Technological innovation is used politically, but presented in neutral technical/scientific terms such as

“increased efficiency” e.g. the introduction of assembly line production techniques into the construction industry; as a “technical solution” to social needs such as the development of a new transport system or as economic “rationalisation” of out of date technologies e.g. the introduction of new print technology by Rupert ‘Digger’ Murdoch at Wapping which led to the printers’ strike of 1986/7. “Stability” is achieved by displacing militant workers e.g. containerisation which was brought in

to break the power of dockworkers. “Work improvement” schemes such as job enrichment allow workers a say in minor decisions to divert them from key areas such as pay and productivity. Innovation is also used as a threat to blackmail sections of the workforce into particular tasks e.g. employers often threaten machine workers that if their demands for equal pay with men are met, they will be replaced by machines.

Science is equally culpable in maintaining and reinforcing the status quo. In the 1880’s Frederick Winslow Taylor invented “scientific management” or Taylorism: the principles that machine designers applied to tools were applied to manual labour to increase “efficiency” i.e. control, productivity, exploitation and profit. Taylor’s research has since been shown to be wholly unscientific. His timed study tasks were made on an atypical Stakhanovite worker chosen for his large size, great strength and general stupidity. The approach was based on treating workers as unthinking and unfeeling machines. Lenin and the Bolsheviks enthusiastically took up Taylorism in post-revolutionary Russia, Lenin describing it as,

“a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the

greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing the mechanical motions of

work.....we must systematically try it out and adapt it to our own ends.”

The Bolsheviks, evident belief in the neutrality of technology was one of the factors leading to the abortion of the Russian Revolution which is often overlooked. The job enrichment ideas which superseded Taylorism are equally unscientific. They resulted from the recognition that capitalism could not afford to ignore the physical and mental needs of the worker.

Outside politics?

The objectivity of the scientific method is used to mask the problems created by advanced technology and to legitimise the policies of the ruling class. The Roskill Commission was set up in 1969 to look at the siting of a third London airport. The masses of ‘expert evidence’ showed that it was less socially damaging to fly loud aircraft over working class rather than middle class areas because of the different effects on property values. Technological programmes are presented as outside the area of political debate, so only technical objections are allowed. Official inquiries into the siting of Motorways and Nuclear Power Stations can discuss where they will cause the least environmental and social disturbance, but not whether they are needed in the first place or whose interests they serve. Similarly, the trend is to present politics as a purely technical activity, assessing political programmes for their achievement in terms of economic performance. This approach goes hand in hand with the idea of “the death of ideology/end of history”.

Alternative Technology

In the 1960’s and ‘70’s criticism of the dominant technological forms led to the idea and (necessarily) limited development of “alternative technology”. Its characteristics are minimal use of non-renewable resources; minimal environmental interference, support for regional/local self reliance, and elimination of the alienation and exploitation of labour. Examples included energy production from “soft”, renewable resources such as solar, wave and wind power. A genuine alternative technology can only be developed on a significant scale after a revolution however, as vested interests (and the lack of power-money of A.T proponents) would not allow it. This is illustrated by the British State’s deliberate sabotage of pioneering soft energy technologies over the last 2 decades, particularly wave power. A tiny amount of money has been allocated (a few million pounds in contrast to the billions allocated to Nuclear Power). This funding has then been arbitrarily cut or swapped between projects so they “fail”.

Class

Ecological issues and class struggle are inextricably linked. The struggle for a green society where people live in harmony with the rest of nature therefore goes hand in hand with the struggle for a society free from human domination. Capitalism cannot be reformed - it is built on the domination of nature, and of people.

We need to take direct control of every aspect of our lives through social revolution: collectively seizing control of the land, workplaces and streets, and sharing decisions, work and wealth -

deciding what is produced and how, dissolving the divisions between home, work and play, people and the rest of the nature.

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION

Aims and Principles

1. Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

2. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class.

Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as political level.

3. We believe that fighting racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-

communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class women and black people as cross-class movements hide real class differences and achieve little for them. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class.

The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

5. As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

6. It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without the use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7. Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow. Trade unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of

unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation for the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but

active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this

end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation.

We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method.

We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

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