

Opposition to racism

ALTHOUGH ANARCHISM AS an idea is completely incompatible with any with any form of racism, the Anarchist movement has not been free of the racism inherent in the societies from which it has come, the most infamous being Bakunin's pan-slavism and anti-German views.

More than this, Anarchism is largely the product of white Europeans who, however committed to the concept of a global emancipation of all oppressed people, were and are limited by their own cultural background, and one of the consequences of this is that the movement has concentrated on class and the state as the prime factors in achieving freedom and equality while other forms of exploitation such as race, but also gender, sexual orientation, disability, age etc are regarded as side issues which will either magically disappear on the abolition of capitalism or are subsumed as just another facet of the class struggle. Many, if not most, Anarchists are conscious of these failings in our movement and while a full social revolution can only come from the combined struggle and theory of all the oppressed, with the aim of furthering our own understanding, here are some notes from the Anarchist movement of today on why we oppose racism, what our analysis of racism is and how we can best fight it.

Why we oppose racism

The idea that people should be treated differently because of physical or genetic differences is so ethically revolting and frankly ludicrous that you might well think it is a waste of time to refute such blind prejudices with cogent arguments. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity and to clear up a few difficulties, here are some key points. Anarchist-communism is a society of all rational beings, the fact there are no substantial differences between so-called racial groups is a diversion, it would not matter to Anarchists if there were and the whole debate on racial science, though doubtless interesting in terms of human biology, is politically useless as an argument for or against racism. The simplistic, anti-racist views of those in power obscure the real reasons for opposing racism. If Jesse Owens had won nothing at the Berlin Olympics he would still have been as entitled to equal treatment with white people and Hitler's National Socialism would still have been as evil and repugnant a doctrine. The problem with racists is not that they have small brains, as in a recent advertising

campaign, but that they have wrong ideas. A second point to make is that cultural differences do not imply political differences. Anarchism recognises cultural differences between groups of people as well as between individuals. If my neighbour likes pop music and I like classical it should have no bearing if we meet together as part of our local community to, say, decide on installing central heating in our block of flats. In a future Anarchist society, groups the world over will have to co-operate on practical issues all the time, this will give them an opportunity to share their cultural backgrounds but not for one to impose it on another. The problem is not of differing cultures but of differing power.

Finally on this subject, Anarchism is distinguished from liberal anti-racism in economics. We do not advocate individual or national inheritance of money or any form of property. There has been much argument over the issue of compensating disadvantaged racial or national groups for exploitation of their ancestors, for example affirmative action on employment in America or compensation to African countries for the effects of the slave trade. The Anarchist response is to demand an immediate redistribution of goods and services worldwide on the basis of need enacted by a global revolution, but this is not the same as giving people what they have a right to or giving back what they have been robbed or cheated of. Even if it were possible to assess correctly all the injustices of the past, an incomprehensibly difficult task, we can do nothing to compensate the dead. More fundamentally we regard the world's wealth as an accumulation of the work and ideas of the whole human race throughout history and as such it should be equally available to all according to their needs. As an example, you could not read this article if paper had not been invented, but no-one can identify all the thousands involved in that process nor should that give, if it were possible, their descendants an exclusive right to the use of paper, because it is the common inheritance of humanity. The mistake of undoing the evils of the past is in perpetuating its divisions while in reality only a few in privileged élites benefit.



The problem for Anarchism is how opposing racism fits in with righting all forms of oppression and exploitation. Anarchism has traditionally seen class as the key element of analysis, not only because it was the key division in the establishment of capitalism in Europe but also because, unlike racial or gender divisions, it is a totally social construct so that people can not only change class but that class itself can be abolished, whereas with race only the exploitative nature, not the concept itself, was to be changed. Equality between races, or any other physical distinction, would therefore logically come with the abolition of class. But this was not seen as being true the other way round, so that there could be a society in which there is no discrimination on grounds of race, which is still hierarchical and exploitative. While there is much truth in this, it is a fact that the vast majority of struggle initiated in favour of the working class, eg social democracy (for example, the Labour Party) and Marxist-Leninism, have proved capable of taking power on behalf of the working class without showing any sign of abolishing inequality. Without conscious effort to that end, it does not follow that an Anarchist revolution would eliminate existing racial prejudices. While the traditional Anarchist emphasis on small-scale community decision-making would have a very

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ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

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RACISM: LAST REFUGE OF THE BOSS CLASS



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Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation

Aims & principles

1. The 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 a 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 can-

not 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 in its overthrow. Trades 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 of 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 ourselves on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united, revolutionary anarchist movement.

of history' and the end of class struggle, the events on the Continent prove that revolutionary change is still very much *not* a thing of the past.

As Labour drops any pretence at 'socialism' and comes out of the closet as a champion of capitalist management, various efforts are being made to recreate Old Labour with moves by Scargill, Militant Labour and other remnants of social democracy, Stalinism and Trotskyism. In other words, they will try to develop structures that keep alive any illusions in electoralism and refor-

mism, and that attempt to co-opt any socially combative movements, to sidetrack social discontent. Revolutionaries must respond with vigour to these moves. Both New Labour and any variants of Old Labour have to be challenged.

As we head for a possible general election this Autumn, the chances that Labour will take over the reins of government seem likely. This Labour administration will carry on with the restructuring of capitalism that will involve further attacks on jobs, services and

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Editorial

1996: Year of struggle?

AS WE ENTER 1996, some signs are pointing to a change in the tempo of struggle. Could the wildcat strikes that have happened, and are happening, in particular in the post and the car industry, be signs that workplace militancy is once again on the increase? And this despite the 'wisdom' pushed by the media, the Conservatives and New Labour that strikes are a thing of the past?

Certainly, the number of wildcat strikes outside the control of the unions backs up our assertions and analysis that workplace struggles must break with the unions. Similarly, social discontent is

shown through riots that broke out in 1995 in Leeds, Luton and Brixton.

The promising signs in Britain are outshone by the scale of social unrest in France and Belgium. Far from being the 'end

Increasing attacks on asylum seekers

AS YOU READ THIS, the effects of the government's Asylum and Immigration Bill should be in full swing. Set to be implemented on 8 January, with further measures to be introduced in autumn, it entails an increase in immigration controls, a dubious list of 'safe' countries of origin and the cutting of all benefits for the majority of asylum seekers.

Tighter controls

The government is increasing visa restrictions. Many refugees, due to circumstances, have to get on a plane without a visa. The government also wants to extend visa requirements for more countries. The bill ends the right to appeal for many and, incidentally, the success rate of appeals has already declined somewhat.

Some 18 months prior to the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Act, 16% of all decisions were refusals. 1994 saw this leap to 75% refusals. According to the Refugee Council, the nature of the refugees' appeals hasn't changed, rather there is a 'culture of disbelief' at the Home Office.

Big Brother

There is an increasing 'Big Brother' tone to the bill reflected in the tightening up of internal immigration controls. Employers will be penalised for not properly checking the immigration status of their employees. Many black, Asian and other groups will be forced to undergo immigration checks in order to get social security, healthcare, enrol their children at school, get a job, a student grant or loan. Aside from being a blatantly racist attack, it means that all sorts of public sector workers and officials will now have an immigration officer role.

The white list

The government's *white list* of 'safe' countries (a motley collection of regimes Britain is

pally with, does business with or has economic interests in) include Nigeria (you know the place, military dictatorship, into executing ecologists and other political opponents with the connivance of companies like Shell), Algeria (where hundreds of thousands have been killed either by the government or by Islamic fundamentalists) and other well-known sanctuaries.

'Safe' third countries

Then there is the idea of the 'safe' third country. In other words, a refugee may be sent to a country they may have passed through on their way here — irrespective of whether that country will return the refugee to their country of origin.

From January, all asylum seekers appealing against initial decisions and all those applying for asylum who are resident in Britain will be denied any welfare benefits.

The DSS estimates 13,000 will immediately lose all benefits (the Refugee Council reckons 40,000 a year will be af-

fected). There will be *no* extenuating circumstances for people with children, pregnant women, the old and the disabled — however, Home Secretary Howard says those from countries undergoing serious political upheavals will be allowed to receive benefit. (NOTE: According to Howard, there are currently no such 'upheaval countries' in the whole world!)

Before January, some landlords were already refusing to rent accommodation to asylum seekers. It seems that those seeking sanctuary will be forced to live in cardboard city with no means of subsistence. In short, vulnerable people (some possibly traumatised) will be forced to undergo all sorts of hardship. In the long term, Britain will be recognised by prospective asylum seekers as a no-go area. Also, blacks, Asians and others will be subjected to increased state checks, regulations and harassment. Such harassment will take place at all levels.

Divides our class

Once again the government is trying to gain some sort of support by using the race card to 'keep the immigrants out'. The lives of the vulnerable and the deaths of people like Joy Gardener mean nothing to the gov-

ernment lowlives in the scramble for the bigot vote. Such racism is intended to divide our class. For us the working class has *no* country, the real 'aliens' are the rich and their politicians (of whatever political party). And let's be honest about it, if refugees irritate governments that British firms, the British government or multinationals do business with, then those refugees have no rights. The Saudi refugee who supposedly 'threatened' arms deals with the Saudi government illustrates this quite clearly.

Resistance

Public sector workers should be organising to refuse to implement and co-operate with their proposed immigration officer role.

But we need to be organising resistance to the whole system on a wider scale.

Demonstration against the Asylum Bill

Called by Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill. 11am Saturday 23 February. Assembles Embankment, London.



The struggle on Merseyside

ACROSS MERSEYSIDE a mounting wave of industrial action and militancy may rekindle radical politics in the city after the long, post-Militant hibernation.

Three growing strikes by dockworkers, social services residential workers and the firefighters threaten to develop into mass action as public services, autoworkers, manufacturing, health and education workers all threaten action over

tion, workers are saying, "enough is enough". Even as we are being attacked more frequently we are also linking up with other workers under attack. A culture of resistance is growing.

The second reason is increas-

assault on the economic position of the working class. Not only wages but the share of the wealth doled out to ordinary people has declined disastrously compared to that being spent on the well-off. This too is creating a culture of resentment and resistance.

In all ways, a better-off private society has profited at the expense of working people and the social economy. Road-building programmes and tax breaks for car users have absorbed money at the expense of public transport.

Fundholding practices in the health sector have brand-new clinics but refuse to purchase necessary treatments from hospitals who then cut back staff and close wards.

Classroom sizes grow inexorably in the state sector while grants given to the middle class to send their children to public schools are increased.

Even so, this massive shift of wealth from the local to the State and from the social economy to the private sector, is not enough for the bosses, who continue to see workers as units of labour to be squeezed and exploited.

This exploitation is aided and abetted both by traditional enemies of the working class and so-called democratic politicians. They refuse to resist short-term attacks like closures, casualisation or cuts in pay or services and actively participate in the long-term shift of resources into the municipal, private and quango sectors. They believe that managing these changes will keep them in a job for life, whatever the consequences. Can this bureaucratic sleight of hand go on forever?

The ACF has a definite opinion about this and we are clear that resistance will keep on growing. The economy is not

productive enough to replace wealth stolen from one pocket and put in someone else's. Nor is this wealth an inexhaustible well the rich can go on dipping into. Already people are dying as hospitals refuse to treat sick people. People realise that public spending on things like transport schemes will not benefit them.

And they are fighting back on principle. Resistance to exploitation and the arrogance of the rich and powerful is becoming general. A culture of resistance is growing and spreading. Our task is first to join with any and all resisting groups both physically (on the demos, in the anti-road camps, in occupations and on the picket lines) and in spirit by making donations, publicising their struggle, fighting to stop anyone taking control and stifling action. Secondly, we need to build effective solidarity in local communities so that isolated workers will be defended by community-based pickets and consumer boycotts. Finally, if resistance is to develop and unite then we must get organised, putting aside particular political differences in favour of unity, solidarity and mutual aid for all workers in struggle.

Dockers locked out

The lockout of 500 dockworkers on Merseyside continues. Initially, 16 workers were told to accept casual contracts or be sacked. Some 80 workers backed them and were themselves sacked. This brought 500 workers out; they were immediately dismissed. Traditionally a determined and strong group of workers, new Tory laws and restrictions on union help threw them into despair, but the strikers have come back fighting. Fortnightly mass

marches are growing steadily, backed by firefighters, residential workers and other dock workers. They are building international links with other workers and adopting the direct action tactics of animal rights, road and street campaigns. Already a highly-successful blockade of the docks has been organised and more mass action and boycotts are being planned. Links between revolutionary groups with our militant history, and determined workers with their backs to the wall, are building a new front against capitalism.

At the same time, residential workers on strike have been stabbed in the back by a Labour Council using Tory laws against the workers as leaders of UNISON ingratiate themselves by sabotaging the strike. The union has co-operated with the bosses to split strikers and bring in scabs. The Council now has enough workers to provide a skeleton service. People in care support the struggle to keep a properly-funded and staffed service. Residents rely on committed staff but the Council plans to use unqualified casuals. Local people have been shafted by Labour yet again. They cry crocodile tears about casualisation on the docks while fighting tooth and nail to introduce casual working into residential care.

The third main focus for industrial militancy is the firefighters, striking over cuts that will endanger lives. Their argument has been proved by the fact that the military tenders brought in can't cope and people are starting to die. The firefighters' struggle is critical. Once again we see the power of the bureaucratic State reaching down to reduce a vital service simply because administrators and bureaucrats are too concerned with themselves and their pay packets to worry about the consequences of cuts for others: the rest of us can burn, starve or kill ourselves

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Postal workers go into action again

WE HAVE MENTIONED the wildcat actions of postal workers several times in the pages of *Organise!* Recent struggles in Scotland and London have again shown that posties are lighting the way in organising actions outside the control of the unions.

In Scotland, a strike that spread to many sorting offices started in Edinburgh in November at Portobello Delivery Office, when Royal Mail attempted to downgrade four jobs to part-time positions. What this means, apart from the end of four full-time positions, is that the remaining full-timers were meant to cover the extra second deliveries (part-timers only do a first delivery). Management have been threatening to down-grade thousands of jobs to part-time. It is a plan high on their agenda, but they have been cautious in implementing it. The strike spread to Dundee and Perth when posties refused to handle mail redirected from Edinburgh. The rest of Edinburgh's postal workers came out in solidarity as well as those in Fife. The following day, Glasgow's postal workers struck. Then followed a strike in Aberdeen's main sorting office.

The walkout at Portobello was unofficial and the Communications Workers Union called on strikers to return to work. The Royal Mail bosses had to admit, via their chief negotiator that: "We've had a great punch on the nose because of this". They had made sure through the courts that they obtained a ruling against the CWU. Lord Dawson demanded that the union submit its rulebook for examination to make sure that the union leaders were using their disciplinary powers to force members to return to work. The court came close to ordering the union to suspend and, if need be, expel members taking action.

Royal Mail had to back down in the face of united action across Scotland from the postal workers. The four full-

time posts were reinstated. What the union got out of it was that management would consult with them nationally before they made any further changes. Translation: Royal Mail and the CWU will work more closely together in attacking jobs and conditions, and any unofficial action could be more easily undermined.

The Scottish postal workers showed struggle is not dead in the workplace. The national paper *The Scotsman* editorialised: "That this [the strike] is an ill-advised move is self-evident. As an unofficial strike, it is, insists the postal workers' union... unsanctioned. It has wisely called on its members to return to work pending talks with Royal mail. They would do well to heed that call; strikes are not the modern way to resolve disputes."

In London in early January, workers at Cricklewood sorting office struck against casualisation. A wildcat strike spread through London. The CWU again attempted to sabotage the struggle, which involved 8,000 workers. Management backed down, though there are



fears that Royal Mail may take action against certain workers. In Milton Keynes 40 posties wildcatted over rota changes. In Abingdon, a threatened strike forced a backdown over casualisation.

Footnote: A postal worker writes to us: "The 'Employee Agenda', the rise in money the government wants from Royal Mail (a further push to privatisation and/or a punishment of Royal Mail bosses for failing to privatise, perhaps) changes in the ways duties are worked out, and the pathetic wage rises over the last five years are bound to lead to much more industrial action in Royal Mail. For posties the future is looking increasingly bleak. For sorters across the country who have been replaced by machines the future has already arrived. Save Posties' jobs! Don't use the last part of the postcode. Letters don't take any more time to arrive, they don't risk getting ruined in the machinery, and it keeps sorters' jobs."

And at Fords...

SOME 700 WORKERS at Ford's Dagenham plant wildcatted over the derisory 3.5% pay offer on 16 November, followed by those at the Ford van factory in Southampton.

This leapfrogged over the unions' (chiefly the TGWU and AEEU) attempts to head off anger in the workforce. As well as the shitty pay offer, car workers in Britain have to work a 39-hour week — the longest in western Europe. The bosses rejected a call put through by

the union for a two-hour reduction — even though the unions are eager to swop this for more productivity deals, in other words work harder and harder. Another wildcat hit the Dagenham plant in early January. Car workers have to start creating liaisons between different plants, linking up all those who work in the car industry, whether for Ford or Vauxhall, and going out to carworkers on the Continent, outside the control of the unions.



Dockers: the struggle continues.

wage claims and cuts. Are we ready to meet the needs of workers? And why is there a new willingness to resist attacks on pay and conditions by the bosses?

The first reason must be that exploitation of workers is now intensifying and forcing its way into previously 'safe' areas like public services. Changes to the balance of power between workers and bosses and to the balance of opinion between public bodies and the wider community have created a situation where bosses can selfishly apply the iron logic of Profit and Efficiency without having to worry too much what either their employees or the public think. Workers are facing more frequent and vicious attacks on their living standards. At the same time, perhaps in despera-

ing awareness of the fundamental shift in power between local communities and the State. This new relationship has been engineered by the Tories as the means to go on taking wealth from the workers and the social economy that they depend on and awarding it, as tax cuts, to the already-wealthy and the private sector they control, use or profit from. Previously, the Tories attacked on a political front: powerful Labour councils, well-organised trade unions, the political power of workers like the miners, 'uncontrollable' elements like ravers and travellers, all were used to persuade people to accept changes to the equation of political power. These political attacks (15 years of them!) were a preparation for a wholesale

Scargill's Socialist Labour Party

The following text was produced for discussion in London ACF. We feel that the points it makes need wider circulation in the movement.

ARTHUR SCARGILL, PRESIDENT of the National Union of Mineworkers, is preparing to build a new Labour Party. He started the campaign to construct this party in the October issue of *The Miner*, the NUM's journal, where he called for a break with the 'new' Party. He followed this up shortly after at a meeting in London, where he gathered together various trade unionists who were members of the Labour Party, the Communist Party of Great Britain, and various Trotskyist groupings. Here he unveiled plans to launch a Socialist Labour Party on 1 May 1996, and the reasons he was doing so. He followed this up with a similar meeting in Glasgow.

Scargill's strategy was summed up in a nine-page document, *Future Strategy for the Left*, where he addressed himself to the changes in the Labour Party that had resulted in the dropping of Clause 4 on common ownership, and the renunciation of any attempt at renationalisation, and at repealing the laws passed against industrial militancy under the guise of controlling the trade unions (which actually reinforced trade union bureaucrats' powers in sabotaging struggle).

He pointed to the concentration of power that was building up around Blair and his immediate circle, pointing to the vetoing of Liz Davis as candidate for Leeds North East as an example of this. He stated this was a sign of a qualitative change in Labour and that socialists could no longer stay in a party that "has been and is being 'politically cleansed'".

Scargill's latest move is just one of many that he has

launched against the working class. Whilst no longer a member of the Communist Party, he remains firmly within the camp of Stalinism and has consistently been a defender of every move of the state capitalist bureaucracy and its satellites, to crush the working class, from the suppression of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, via support for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, to support for military rule in Poland, up to continuing support for the ailing Castroist regime in Cuba.

Plan for coal

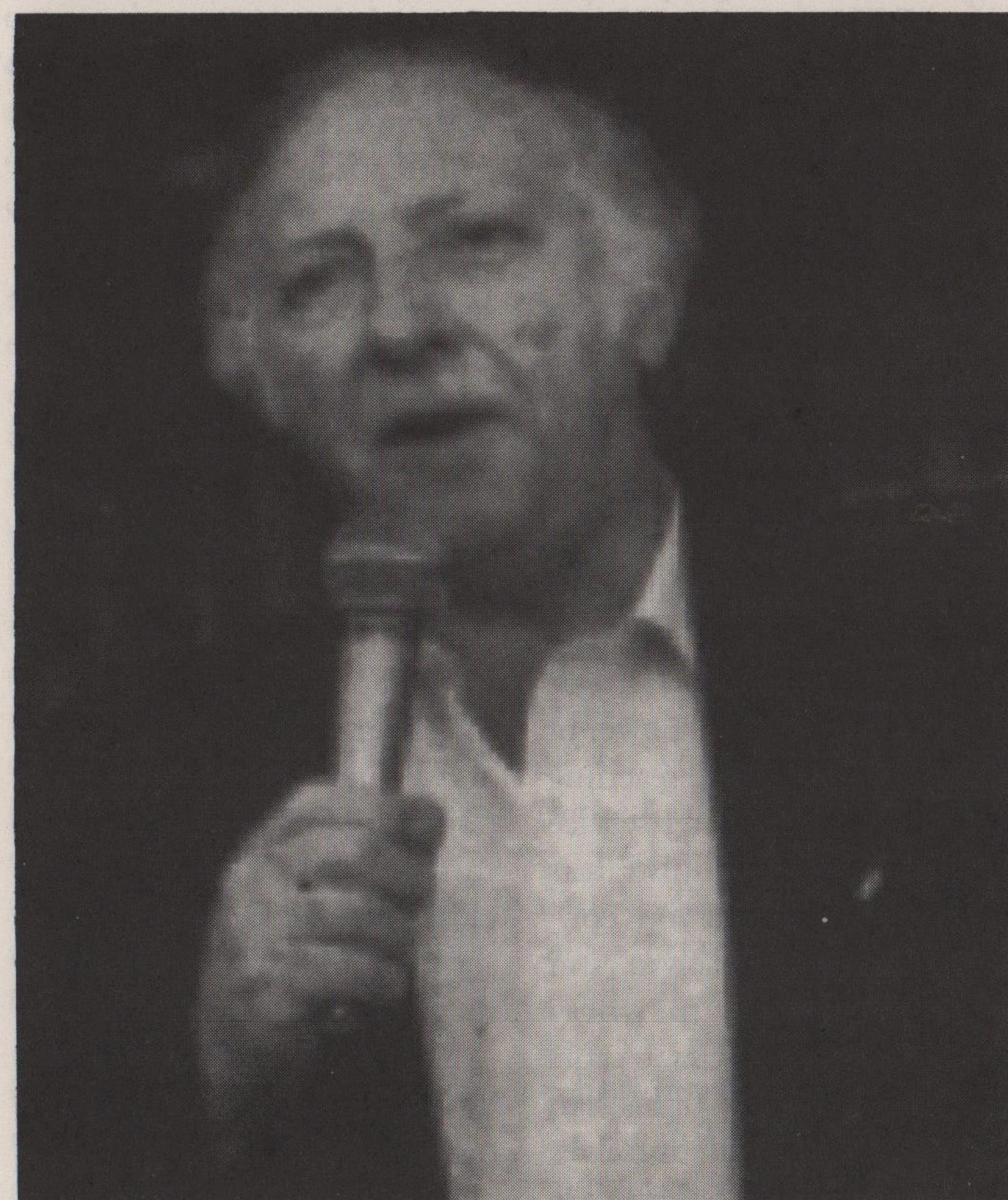
As a leading bureaucrat within the NUM, he has also consistently sabotaged any attempts by the miners to develop their struggles and carry them beyond the clutches of the union bureaucrats. He and other leading NUM officials devised the *Plan for Coal*, which was a deal to be reached with the then Labour Government in 1974. This allowed the Labour Government under first Wilson and then Callaghan to go ahead with pit closures, and to dampen opposition by the miners to them. Again, during the Great Strike of 1984-5, Scargill and his fellow NUM officials used the *Plan for Coal* to keep the actions of the miners firmly under their control. The result was a very serious defeat for our class.

On an organisational level, Scargill is also a dab hand at sabotaging independent working class struggle. Towards the end of the miners' strike, in alliance with Tony Benn and the Campaign Group of so-called 'left' MPs, he set up the Socialist Movement. This was able to call on a layer of Labour

Party activists, many of whom had come into the Party after the 'left' turn orchestrated by Benn — mainly through the grouping organised around the document *Beyond the Fragments* — as well as a number of Trotskyists, quasi-Trotskyists and ex-Trotskyists who joined the Labour party as entrists.

The Socialist Movement was an attempt by Scargill and 'left' social democrats to divert any efforts to break out of the straitjacket of Labourism/trade unionism. The rising anger among many in the mining communities and among other radicalised sections of the working class towards the trade union leaders and the Labour Party was to an extent diverted by the manoeuvres of this grouping. They consistently acted as apologists for Labour and the unions, and they argued that a break with Labour was not possible, and that any activists should remain within Labour. Many of them had carved out niches for them-

selves in the structures of the unions and the Labour Party, within campaigns and in the structures of the local State. Indeed, their allegiance to municipal socialism, both inside the GLC and within the 'left' Labour councils, was a key plank in their platform. Their orientation to the local state gave them some common ground with the Greens (see separate article) and they consistently argued for a Red-Green Alliance. This attempt at an alliance has so far proved to be a failure, although both the Socialist Movement's and the Greens' failing health may yet make this come about. The shipwreck of municipal socialism, with the changes in capitalism internationally helped through by the Conservative attacks of the last 15 years, has disorientated them considerably, and made them swing to the right even more. Their insistence on no break with the Labour Party and their peddling of defeatism was a valu-



able aid to helping the Labour Party make the transformations that were necessary to adapt to the end of welfarism.

Sabotaging struggle

One of the Socialist Movement's (and Scargill's) greatest achievements in sabotaging struggle was the Save Our Pits campaign in 1992. With the threatened closure of 31 pits the NUM and its allies in the Socialist Movement looked to mobilising 'public opinion' and going through the courts. With the help of the TUC it drew in behind it Tory MPs like Winston Churchill, Paddy Ashdown, bishops, and the Confederation of British Industry (see our analysis in *Organise!* 29). Two massive demonstrations organised by Labour and the TUC took place, after which the matter was quietly dropped and the pit closures went ahead at a slightly slower pace. As we said at the time: "The demonstrations and related activity were designed to divert and demoralise. People were meant to feel that they had done their bit, that after all, nothing could be changed, and that after a dreary walk through driving rain, they must go home and accept 'Things as they are'".

Now, however, differences are emerging between Scargill and other elements in the Socialist Movement. Benn and his followers have always argued strenuously against breaking with Labour. Others, like Hilary Wainwright, are opportunistically hedging their bets and saying "not yet". Scargill has seen that large numbers of people, especially young people, have become disenchanted with Labourism and that new social movements have emerged and are about to emerge that are profoundly suspicious of social-democratic politics and are oriented towards direct action. He now needs to develop a new organisation that will sabotage and

divert struggle, because of the depths to which Labour has been discredited. As he wrote in *Future Strategy for the Left*: "The environmental and community activists are doing a good job, but inevitably, their aims are 'single purpose' with no clear political perspective. It is a tragedy that the Labour Party is not at the centre of co-ordinating and organising such campaigns. A Socialist Labour Party would be able to galvanise mass opposition to injustice, inequality and environmental destruction, and build the fight for a Socialist Britain."

Scargill has his eye on similar organisations that have been created on the Continent — above all in Italy, France and Spain — formed out of remnants of Stalinism, Trotskyism and the Greens as well as the fragments of the leftist groups of the '70s like Lotta Continua.

Various Trotskyist groups have expressed their approval of the construction of a Socialist Labour party. Militant Labour welcomed the moves, indeed praising the models already set up on the Continent. Furthermore, they point to the Labour Representation Committee, which was the precursor of the Labour Party, as an example — in other words they want a re-run of the Labour Party. Scargill, however, is skilled at bureaucratic manoeuvres and at early meetings has already put the freeze on Militant Labour. Since then, their enthusiasm has cooled somewhat. Other Trotskyist grouplets — Workers' Power, the Workers' Revolutionary Party (Workers' Press), as well as the Communist Party of Great Britain (Weekly Worker) have also expressed approval, although again this has cooled for similar reasons. They welcome the creation of the Socialist Labour Party for many of the same reasons as Scargill, and because Leninism in general is in severe crisis. They need a new home.

ACF pamphlets in Serbo-Croat

Thanks to the efforts of comrades in Yugoslavia we now have translations of our pamphlets *As We See It* and *The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation* available in Serbo-Croat.

If you know anybody who speaks Serbo-Croat in Britain, or you have contacts in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Slovenia or Macedonia where Serbo-Croat is understood then why not send them copies. They are available for 50p plus post from the London ACF address c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX.

Similarly, we have a Greek translation of *As We See It*. If you can circulate this among the Greek-speaking population here, or if you have contacts in Greece or Cyprus, then why not send for a copy? 50p plus post from London address. (A Portuguese translation of our *Aims and Principles* is also available for 20p plus postage).

Other groups poured scorn on the idea of setting up a Socialist Labour Party. When entrists groups like Socialist Outlook wedded thoroughly to Labourism, this is hardly surprising, but the Socialist Workers' Party, organised outside Labour for many years and pushing a selective, anti-Labour rhetoric (but always calling for a Labour vote at election time) is more interesting. They have denounced the Scargill initiative. They 1) fear a challenge to their recruiting from disenchanted Labourites and from among their own members, many of whom have views very similar to 'old' Labour and 2) as we have said for a long time, they represent an external faction of Labour, and find painful any break with established Labourism. Scargill's old mates in the Stalinist Communist Party of Britain and the daily *Morning Star*, have similarly given the thumbs down, again because they are so closely tied up with Labour and the trade union apparatuses.

It might be that Scargill's initiative runs out of steam very quickly. On the other hand, bearing in mind the desperation of many leftists to create a new organisation to shelter them from the storm, and the Continental examples, the So-

cialist Labour Party may get off the ground. As I said above, a new reformist party is needed to sabotage struggle. Anarchist Communists must now argue strongly against the politics of this manoeuvre, through articles in our press, and through leaflets and spoken contributions at meetings to set up the Socialist Labour Party, as well as at public meetings organised by the ACF and by other revolutionaries.

Footnote: Since this article was written, Scargill has now launched his Party, and made moves to exclude the Trotskyists, above all Militant Labour. Tommy Sheridan, leading light in Scottish Militant Labour, and two other leading members of Militant Labour, walked out of the founding meeting. Militant Labour plan to go ahead with their own project of setting up a Scottish Socialist Alliance, in conjunction with the Stalinist Communist Party of Scotland and the Scottish Socialist Movement. This will fulfill the role that the Socialist Labour Party was meant to fill for Militant Labour, at least in Scotland. It will present candidates at elections, enlarging and amplifying the electoral work that Scottish militant Labour has already done.

King Arthur launches Socialist Labour Party crusade

ACCORDING TO THE millionaire media: "the hard left has been stuffed by Blair", so much so it seems they've left to form their own party.

So we have Arthur Scargill's move to create a Socialist Labour Party, which he obviously hopes would unite disorientated and demoralised Labour left-wingers and other itinerants to formulate a new party based on "class understanding, class commitment and socialist policies" (*New Statesman and Society*, 17.11.95 p7).

Yet even among the 'hard' left, such as the SWP, there is very little support for Scargill. The SWP's calls to vote Labour 'without illusions' are becoming even more tired and contradictory as Blair romps towards victory (with right-wingers like Lord McAlpine saying: "I don't think you could put a razor-blade between Blair and Major"), with the grudging support of 'most' Labour members who don't want to appear 'divisive'.

Yet what would a Socialist Labour Party have to offer? More of the same it appears, or rather Clause Four with knobs on. So Scargill's 'common ownership' still means nationalisation — state ownership, not ownership by the working class. Anarchists have consistently argued against both nationalisation and privatisation, arguing against rule by cut-throat capitalist bosses and bureaucratic Soviet-style apparatchik bosses. We can watch 'new' Labour out-Tory the Tories with increasing rhetoric on tax cuts for the middle classes, scapegoating of dole 'scroungers' and 'free' market bullshit that satisfy even the most ardent right wing nutcases. But what about old/new Labour? Scargill seems to have broken from the usual Trot/Stalinist

line by saying: "Labour have moved irrevocably to the right", whereas the 'official' line is still ranting about 'defeating' the Tories. Anarchists argue that the 'watered-down' social democracy of the parliamentary 'left' and the boring dogma of Trot/Stalinists are equally bankrupt. They have consistently exposed the inadequacies of the Labour Party, which only introduced welfare reforms in 1945 for fear of popular revolution. Tony Blair shows comparisons with American-style party politics, with the only party being the property party and its two wings the Democrats and the Republicans. In this situation, Arthur's new/old 'Socialist' Labour Party looks unlikely even to appear, or, if it does, likely to sink without trace after an election disaster. Anarchists argue that even a 'socialist' Labour Party would act as a brake on independent working class struggle. We need to continue to build a credible revolutionary alternative outside and against the mythmakers of both parliamentary politics and the narrow dogmatists of the left. As Errico Malatesta put it over a hundred years ago: "We struggle for anarchy, and for socialism, because we believe that anarchy and socialism must be realised immediately, that is to say that in the revolutionary act we must drive government away, abolish property and entrust public services, which in this context will include all social life, to the spontaneous, free, not official, not authorised efforts of all interested parties and of all willing helpers."

New Pamphlet!

London ACF are proud to announce the appearance of a new pamphlet in the Stormy Petrel series: Malatesta's *Anarchism and Violence*. Complete with a new introduction by an ACF member, this important document in the history of anarchist theory refutes the common misrepresentation of anarchism as mindless destruction, while restating the need for revolution to create a free and equal society.

Copies of this pamphlet, and the previous Stormy Petrel — *The Friends of Durruti* — are available from ACF (London), c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1, at 75p including postage.

The Friends of Durruti were a much misunderstood group who attempted to defend and extend the Spanish Revolution of 1936. Included are an historical introduction from an ACF member and two political statements from the Friends themselves.

Next from Stormy Petrel, pamphlets on Italian Factory Councils 1920-21 and the Hungarian Revolution 1956.

The Greens

ALONGSIDE THE ATTEMPTS of any 'Socialist Labour Party' to sabotage and head off struggles, we have to look at the manoeuvres by another form of social-democracy to do the same.

The Green Party has never achieved the electoral success it had in 1989 in the European elections when it got 15% of the vote. In the European elections last year it polled only 2%. Membership has dropped to 4,000 and one third of the 200 branches are moribund or on the verge of collapse.

The electoralism of the Greens has proved to be a failure. Nevertheless, they hope to continue in the same vein by attempting to win over sections of activists involved in the anti-roads and anti-Criminal Justice Act movements to ensnare them in the trap of electoralism and green reformism. Further, they hope to reinforce the 'non-violent' tendencies within these movements by a proposed Green roadshow which will include workshops on 'non-violent direct action'.

They still have their eyes on building bases in the structures of the local state — the municipal councils — where they already have a number of seats.

They have placed emphasis on this through their concentration on implementing Local Agenda 21, which came out of the Earth Summit in Rio and laid down requirements for the local State to develop plans for sustainable development. Also, they hope to pick up people who are disillusioned with Labour — although obviously they will be competing with Scargill's outfit in this.

Whether they will be able to exert much influence in the new movements remains to be seen, and indeed some of the Green Party activists might themselves be affected by attitudes towards political parties within these movements. Indeed, if new radicalised movements of struggle develop within both the workplace and community, then some of the radical fringe of the Greens may be won to revolutionary positions. Anarchist communists need to help this come about by developing a dialogue with this radical fringe.

Urgent appeal from Greece

Violent repression of the Greek Anarchist and Anti-Authoritarian Movement

WE, THE GREEK Anarchist and Anti-Authoritarian Movement, are calling on all comrades internationally to take action in support of us.

Over the last few weeks, the state, police, courts and media have stepped up their campaign of violent repression against our movement, resulting in the arrest, frame-up and imprisonment of many of our comrades here in Thessaloniki and Athens. The media have remained silent about the treatment of our comrades, but are only too pleased to report the response we give to that treatment. The occasional riot. We have only ourselves to publicise the repression taking place and urge all comrades internationally to publicise our case.



Anarchist prisoner K Kalaremas is on hunger strike (since 11.10.95) to protest about his frame-up for armed robbery of a bank. The only evidence against him was his co-accused (Angelidis), who named him under intense 'interrogation', and a bank employee who was brought to the police station to identify him. The police raided Kalaremas's flat and found no evidence. Kalaremas is presently seriously ill in a prison hospital. Many other comrades are also rotting in prison cells because of state frame-ups.

14 November (Thessaloniki).

150 Anarchists attempt to march in support of the political prisoners (specifically Kalaremas), but the riot police (SPG) start clubbing the demonstrators, arresting four and holding them (see later).

After this attack by police, the demonstrators occupy the theology department at the university and call for support for the occupation through the anti-authoritarian radio stations 'Radio Utopia' and 'Radio Kivotosu'. Support arrives and demonstrators begin to gather outside the building with a PA system, handing out leaflets informing the public about what is going on. The police attack the demonstrators, who run, and eventually the police are repelled by demonstrators waiting in the university grounds with molotov cocktails. [NOTE: Since the polytechnic uprising in 1973 against the regime, in which many were killed, the police have been banned from entering university premises.]

The police then surround the area, stopping everyone entering and questioning them. It is obvious that the forces of the state have decided to repress any attempt by anarchists and anti-authoritarians to demonstrate/distribute propaganda.

A student march organised for 16 November is warned by the police that if they don't distinguish themselves from the "subversive elements and don't stop shouting insulting slogans at the police, their demo will be attacked". The theology squatters intended to end their occupation on the 16th to coincide with the court appearance of

the four arrested on the 14th, but also to join the student demonstration. The left-wing student demonstration decides to comply with the police demands, and walks some 100 yards behind the theology squatters.

November 17, the traditional polytechnic uprising commemoration takes place with a huge show of strength from the Anarchists who have by far the biggest contingent of the Thessaloniki march (over 1000). Despite provocation by the riot police, the anarchists have decided not to respond, to show the public and the left that they are not just what the media portray: '10 masked men'.

November 18, the court case starts of the four arrested on the attempted demo. It is clear from the beginning the case is stage managed. The attorney is the same person who signed the orders to attack the demonstration on the 14th. The president of the courts is the chief of police in the powerful Toumba district of Thessaloniki (headquarters of Thessaloniki police). All suggestions by the defence (fines, suspension) are rejected. The case continues on Monday 20th. Two of the accused, Paris Sofos and Ilias Hutzilyadis, are sentenced to three and a half years, Yiannis Anagnosou (who was given six stitches in the head after the demo) to two and a half years. Sofia Kiritsi, brought from the hospital to the court after injuries to her head and neck, still awaits her sentence. All these people had done was to attempt to walk on the road. All were charged with swearing at authority, resistance against authority, stance against authority by co-ordinated action. As the supporters of the

accused leave the court room, the riot police surround them and start clubbing and kicking them. They attempt to arrest one person, unsuccessfully.

On 23 November we organise a well-attended march of around 1500 people against state repression and for the re-

Continued on p12

The authorities will not stop our resistance

- We aim to take to the streets and show our faces as often as possible and expose state repression through various means — counter-information, publishing, financial support.
- We will continue to fight state terrorism.
- We will resist the evolution of neo-liberalism.
- We will resist media lies.
- We will resist the lifting of university asylum.
- We demand immediate liberation of all social fighters.
- We will not take this lying down, we will face up to them.
- We support all international comrades in their struggle, but we urge them to join their hearts to ours and show support by exposing this fascist repression of our movement, by picketing, occupying Greek embassies or businesses.

Let them know they cannot repress, torture and imprison us in silence. Fax us with your support: Radio Utopia 031207043, Radio Kiroto 031245962.

HOT AUTUMN — France shows the way!

THE NEW GOVERNMENT in power in France led by Chirac and Juppe decided that the time was ripe to institute massive attacks on welfare benefits, the transport system and jobs and conditions.



Their precipitate attack after barely six months in power was sparked by their need to prepare for European monetary union — the single currency — by the end of 1997. There was a massive budget deficit of 63 billion francs, which Juppe wanted to cut by ten per cent. At the same time, he wanted to

"We are the spark that sets light to the plain."

Railworker

halve the huge social security debt. This was in the context of a sluggish economy, where the magic phrase 'economic recovery' was a non-starter. The tightness of the timescale in which to accomplish these cuts, plus a gross underestimation of the combativity of French workers, which the new regime felt had been thoroughly demoralised and demobilised by years of Socialist government, made the Chirac-Juppe administration make a full frontal attack. This should be compared to the attacks on the British working class, where different sections were taken on one at a time and where cuts to benefits, transport, the health service etc,

were taken over a protracted period of time.

The Juppe plan's main core was an attack on social security. A new one per cent tax on wages would pay the social security debts, there would be a freeze in child benefit, there would be an increased contribution to social security out of wages, as well as workers having to work two and a half years before they were entitled to pension rights. In addition, there would be £400 million cut from health spending, huge rail cuts (in a country well serviced by national, regional and local lines) as well as further attacks on railworkers through cuts in pension and retirement payments and conditions.

Explosion

The explosion of working class anger was almost immediate. In France only about five per cent of the workforce is in unions, the main three being the union centrals of the CFDT, the CGT, and FO. The CFDT is controlled by Socialists, the CGT by the Stalinists of the Communist Party, and FO by Socialists, Gaullists and the Trotskyist organisation of

Pierre Lambert, with its links to Freemasonry! The FO has a stake in social security as this is run by boards in which the unions, but in particular FO, have a dominating influence.

So the power of the unions to control the mass of the working class is much more limited than in Britain. And many members of unions have few illusions in the union leaders.

The agitation in the working class was preceded by agitation among the students in September and October. The condition of student life has deteriorated more and more over the last few years, with rising rents and a decreasing number of teachers. The number of working class youth among the students, on the other hand, has increased considerably. Occupations spread through the country, set off by a three-week strike of students at Rouen and demonstrations of

than 100,000 took place on 21 November all over France. Among demands put forward were equal rights for foreign students, and there was a call to participate in the public sector strikers' demonstration of 24 November. Radical slogans began to emerge among 400 'ordinary' students who attended this demonstration, with 'Police everywhere, Justice nowhere!' and 'The sole solution, revolution!' Faced with growing radicalisation, the different student unions of UNEF and UNEF-ID made common cause to maintain their control, radicalising their own slogans with calls for 'Universities open to workers' children, university closed to private interests'. Other signs of radicalisation on 21 November were when 300 Quimperle students boarded a train for the Paris demo, refusing to pay their fares. Thrown off the train, they blocked the track, and the

authorities were forced to let them ride.

Strength

The strength of this movement forced university authorities and student union bureaucrats to make local deals. All of this was to be eclipsed by the movement of the working class. Already on 10 October a general strike in the public sector had brought out 500,000 demonstrators throughout France.

"People are talking to each other, laughing together... like during a festival."

Marching striker in Paris

The CFDT and other smaller unions accepted the attacks on pensions. In the talks that the government had with its 'social partners', the unions, on social security, only the CGT was opposed. The FO was promised that it would retain control of the boards, and so maintain one of its chief power bases. On 15 November the Juppe Plan was unveiled in Parliament, and was hailed by Nicole Notat, a CFDT leader. The following day a section of the Socialist Party led by Rocard and Lang voiced their approval of the Plan. The anger of the workers forced an about-face in the FO, and the CGT to call for the day of action on the 24th. This brought out between 500,000 and one million people all over France — in particular in Toulouse, Bordeaux, Marseille, Nantes and Rennes. In Paris, Notat's limousine was attacked by members of her own union. The unions continued to sabotage the movement by their old trick of calling demonstrations on different days or in different parts of town from each other. The railworkers called for a continuance of the strike, and

universities at Nantes and Tours were occupied.

On the fifth day of the rail strike, which was almost total, more demos took place. 50,000 came out in Paris. The government said it was not backing down.

Strikes spread

By 30 November the strikes had spread. The bus and tube workers were out in Paris, and bus workers struck in other parts of France. In the Post, half the sorting offices were closed down, with 60% on strike. There was strong support for a strike among power workers. The day of action on this date mobilised 300,000 in the streets. In Nantes, Paris and Montpellier there were clashes with the police. In Marseille, several thousand unemployed headed the demo, followed by a joint railworker-student banner. By 3 December, 80 out of 130 sorting offices were out on strike.

At the Renault car factories, the CGT sabotaged action by arguing against 'premature action'. Several hundred railworkers from Sotteville-les-Rouen had marched to the Renault factory at Cleon to argue for the carworkers to join the strike movement. If successful at these symbolic large factories, this could have brought out large sections of workers in the private sector.

A call for unlimited strike action was raised in telecommunications on 4 December, and workers prepared to strike in the tax offices and in education. On the following day, a million people demonstrated in the streets country-wide. The striking power workers put many towns on 'night supply' (Brest, Grenoble, Clermont, Carcassonne, Mulhouse, Bayonne, Charleville) — in other words, a much limited supply of electricity.

By now the Juppe administration was beginning to make 'concessions' agreeing to meet

the union leaders. Notat accepted, the others under massive pressure from the base were forced to refuse. Again, on 7 December, one million demonstrated. Huge demos took place in places that had never seen the like — Caen, Rouen, Bayonne and Limoges.

In Toulouse, the demos took on the atmosphere of a festival — on 12 December after two demos that had taken place that day, the main railway station was turned into a huge stage by the occupying railworkers in alliance with students and teachers. More than 2,000 participated, with free music concerts and drink supplied. The same day a 'festival of the oppressed' took place in a 'popular' neighbourhood, where all those in struggle were invited, on the initiative of a squatters' group and an Act-Up (AIDS action) group. The fire-fighters were called out to put out a bonfire and refused to act. The police then attacked the festival viciously. On the 15th a hundred homeless occupied a large building in the city. The following day the riot police attacked a demo outside the town hall. Two hours of fighting took place in which the po-

"A time of strikes, a time of dreams."

Placard on 16 December demo

lice bombarded the crowd with tear gas canisters, breaking windows and setting fire to a flat.

Coal miners in Feyming-Merlebach fought pitched battles with the police on 7 December. Clashes with the police also took place in Montpellier and Nantes. On the same day private sector workers also became more noticeable among the demonstrators. The following day, in many towns 'walls of money' — huge barriers built out of brick and cut up rail track — were built around many public buildings by the demonstrators.

By 10 December, Juppe, in meeting with the unions, had to agree to retreat on the attacks on pensions. The strike spread through the hospitals. In Brittany, many private sector workers joined the demonstrations.

On 12 December, more than two million demonstrated in the streets throughout France! 130,000 in Marseille (never before seen!), 100,000 in Toulouse, 150,000 in Paris. More and more private sector workers joined the demos as well as peasants, in particular those in the Confédération Paysanne.

On 13-14 December, the media talked about strikers beginning to return to work. This was in the main untrue, though railworkers at Reims and Strasbourg vote for a return. On the other hand, in certain large towns, the movement increases in strength, with the dustmen joining the railworkers at the front of the action.

By 15 December Juppe was forced to climb down over the attacks on railworkers. But less than 10% of railworkers voted to return. The workers in pub-

lic transport, the power workers, the posties, remained the pillars of strength of the strike movement.

On 16 December, the last big demonstrations of this phase took place. One and a half million on the streets, as the return to work began to take place. But no feeling of despair in the demonstrations, which habitually marks the end of great strikes.

Railworkers' assemblies

The railworkers took extended strike action over this period of agitation, staying out between the days of action when other workers came out. Every day, mass assemblies of railworkers took place, either in the depots, on the platforms, or on track. They were solid, paralysing, with the help of bus and tube workers, the entire transport system. But differences in the ranks were to prove a weakness. Those more skilled and better paid, a labour aristocracy with sectional interests, began to argue for a return to work.

About 50,000 demonstrators gather in the centre of Bordeaux.



When the mass strike movement did begin to filter back to work, it did so in an orderly fashion. No major defeat had been inflicted, and indeed everything is still up for grabs in the new year.

Unfortunately, the unions, including the Stalinist-controlled CGT, did their best to stop the strike spreading to the private sector. The strike, outside the railworkers, was not really continuous among other public sector workers, who only came out on the days of action. So, once the Juppe administration had made concessions to the spearhead of the movement, the way was open to defuse the actions. Another fault was that illusions in the union leaders made the railworkers think that they would effectively spread the strike to other sectors!

One noticeable factor was the emerging feelings of class identity, and the mounting individual and collective insolence to authority. Also noticeable was the liberatory feelings of festivity in the actions and demonstrations, often translated into actual street festivals as at Toulouse (see above) and Limoges.

The visionary and utopian slogans and demands that were characteristic of the 1968 events in France were not so

pronounced, but they were beginning to re-emerge. Where mass assemblies took place, they were open to all strikers from other industries and jobs. The unemployed organised themselves in blocks on the demos, putting forward their own particular issues.

The actions have galvanised and enthused the entirety of the anarchist and libertarian revolutionary movement in France. Indeed, it has attracted the interest and enthusiasm of the working class throughout Europe. This was translated into action in Belgium, as massive transport and airline strikes took place. The media in Britain, including the 'liberal' media like *The Guardian*, has done its utmost to ignore, denigrate and wilfully misrepresent the actions. They know that these events prove that the class struggle is far from dead.

Aftermath

Since the new year break, a number of struggles have erupted. The riot police attacked transport workers in Marseilles. In early January the bus depots that had been occupied for five weeks were stormed by the CRS special riot cops. Those still remaining under occupation were defended by hospital workers and stu-

dents and unemployed youth, who marched to the defence of the bus workers, and successfully resisted eviction. Some 500 gas and electricity workers continued in occupation of the building that supplies these

"Insurrection."

Heading on a poster in the strike HQ at Paris-Nord railway station

services to the whole area. A mass of power workers also smashed down doors in the gas and electricity head offices, blocking the entrances with vans — this in the context of a continuing transport strike in Marseilles. In Caen the riot squad evicted occupying postal workers from their sorting office.

Now Chirac and Juppe are talking about how they understand the discontent in the country, saying they will create 250,000 jobs for young people! These false promises do not distract attention from the fact that they are continuing with their plans for cuts in public spending, and their ceiling on wages for all public sector workers. They are delaying the planned tax on wages to pay for the social security deficit.

As we go to press, more large demos are planned and simmering discontent continues. Railworkers in Rouen put forward the proposal that all transport to a forthcoming demonstration in Paris (backed by a one-day strike) should be free. For their part, students are preparing for another day of action on 16 January.

There is an excellent dossier on the French events in the January issue of *Courant Alternatif*, monthly of the Organisation Communiste Libertaire. If you understand French, then send for a copy from OCL/Egrevore B.P. 1213 51058 Reims cedex, France. Enclose an international money order for 25 francs made out to 'La Galère'.

GREEK APPEAL

Continued from p9

lease of the prisoners. Although the riot police line the sides of the march, we manage to distribute thousands of leaflets and generally receive a positive response from the public. The leaflet calls on all those who daily face repression and exploitation to rise against their oppressors, because if we do not now, the hand of the state will squeeze us tighter. The police do not attack this march.

University asylum

November 17, on the commemoration of the polytechnic uprising, the TV cameras are placed in a central position to record faces with the protection of the police. They do not expose the police violence on the day.

Some 1700 people are forced to take refuge in the polytechnic, to escape the use of chemicals used on the demonstrators. The police continue their attack, surrounding the building and refusing entry to doctors and ambulances wishing to attend the injured inside. Those inside the building try to negotiate peacefully to leave (children were also inside). They are refused. According to the head of the university, the police want to break the 1974 asylum. During the night, negotiations take place between the head of the university and the ministry of police. No-one wants to take responsibility for breaking the asylum.

At 8am the police violently break the curfew arresting 504 people, placing them into categories: under-age, students, workers. Some 136 people are charged, followed by house raids, including the building which holds the anarchist archive which the police took with them.

On the day of the arrests over 1000 people marched in Athens.

Hong Kong — new masters for old

WHEN HONG KONG reverts into the hands of the Chinese government in 1997, this will not so much be a blow for British colonial interests, but a victory for that new superpower — the international capitalist class.

The territory has its colonial origins in the second quarter of the 19th century, in the Opium Wars. British traders made vast profits by selling opium to the Chinese people, making drug addicts of thousands of them. The Chinese government demanded more control over the trade, and in 1841 the British army seized the trading posts of Hong Kong Island and the surrounding territories. Settlement of the conflict resulted in an agreement to return the land in 1997. Then, one section of the ruling class will honour its pledge to another.

The British have turned the territory into a colonial and capitalist haven, and today it serves Western needs in the profitable Far Eastern markets. Imperial China, in the meantime, was overturned by Maoist politics and economics. But modern China has changed again. Its rulers have come to realise how capitalist concessions can benefit its dominant class. It has established Special Economic Zones where state-managed capitalism flourishes. These zones are closed areas to which selected and vetted business people and workers are invited to profit from the experiment, but from which the ordinary, discontented and unemployed Chinese are excluded.

Business

Hong Kong, in 1997, will become one of these zones, except that the experiment will be opened up to involve the international business community, both those Western and Far Eastern businesses already making profits there, and *nouveau riche* Chinese investors. Thus, its government will change, but not its dominant élite. Indeed, the British government, through negotiations concerning the handover, has been careful to ensure the continuing prosperity of its business friends, and it is in Chinese interests to accommodate them.

The actual losers will be the working class of Hong Kong. The appalling Chinese record on 'human rights' is well known to the Hong Kong Chinese. The 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre of dis-



Justice Woo points out advancing Peoples' Army to Chris Patten.

sident students in Beijing resulted in huge demonstrations in Hong Kong. In part these were pro-democracy and anti-Chinese government, but in part they were also a result of fear and anger at the way the British were happy to sell out the Hong Kong population to this regime. Thus there is fear amongst those who have opposed China that they will be singled out for persecution after 1997. But the Chinese government does not torture and murder only its high profile political opponents. Hong Kong Chinese who have visited relatives in China have witnessed executions in Chinese market places of 'criminals' guilty of relatively minor crimes and public order offences. Such things are hidden from Western officials and tourists of course, but send a clear message to the working class of the colony as to how those who threaten the new regime will be treated.

Although the Hong Kong Chinese are terrified of what 1997 will bring, they are not content with their current situation. Of the 6,000,000 residents of the colony, many thousands live below the poverty line. The cost of living is extremely high. The rent on a tiny flat in the island's bleak estates of tower blocks is commonly as much as HK\$10,000 (£1000) a month. Consequently, three generations, including married couples and their children, commonly live together, many people to a room, sleeping and eating in shifts for lack of space. Many other old people, most of

whom don't qualify for any decent standard of welfare or social care, become what are known as 'cage men'. They live in a hostel, sharing a room with several other people, each of them in a cage, containing their bed, into which they lock themselves for fear of attack by other residents (which, given the stress, is common). Many others are entirely homeless.

Left stranded

There will be no way out of this sort of situation as 1997 approaches. After Tiananmen Square, the British promised to issue 250,000 family passports to allay fears about the hand over. Of course, without there needing to be any official policy on the matter, only those able to afford to make the trip, the wealthier middle class, would be able to leave (the flight alone costs around £700 per person). In December 1995 it was reported that the figure is likely to be nearer 145,000 passports. Working class people will be left stranded, and dissenters and criminals face the Chinese judicial machine. Indeed, those already in Hong Kong jails face the very realistic possibility that they will be executed in 1997 rather than be allowed to burden the Chinese state.

The Hong Kong Chinese make up about 98% of the colony's population. Of the remainder, only a handful are ex-patriots wealthy enough to inhabit huge residences in the Islands mountains (one of

Dany the (washed-out, washed-up) Red

DANY COHN-BENDIT, an important student activist in the May 1968 events at Nanterre, (then member of the Nanterre Anarchist Group and influenced by the Anarchist Communist journal *Noir et Rouge*) and now a leading light in the German Greens and deputy mayor of Frankfurt, denounced the events, saying that "Reform of the health insurance system is necessary and has been necessary for 10 or 15 years". An enthusiast of the European single currency, his attitude can be compared to that of many French workers who have expressed contempt for the bosses' monetary moves. The clown went on to say: "Now, I have more trust in institutions. I'm older, and the institutions have changed, too." No Dany, they haven't changed. They're just as oppressive and exploitative as ever. You're the one who has.

them being the usual absent governor Chris Patten). The rest are mostly non-Chinese immigrants who suffer the worst economic and social conditions of all. Many of these are Filipinos who have migrated there through economic desperation and take badly-paid jobs without either security or employment rights. Hong Kong is dotted with building sites, as property developers hurry to make the most of the exiting opportunities offered by 1997 and throw up sky-scraper after sky-scraper.

Cheap immigrant labour is hired to work the sites. The workers climb rickety, cheap bamboo scaffolding which extends for several stories and typically defies even the lowest of safety standards. As harnesses would slow the work down, deaths from falls are common. Young Filipino women come too, and work as low-paid nannies to Hong Kong Chinese middle class families. Typically they sleep in rooms big enough only for a small mattress and are forced to accept abuse from their employers. As if this were not bad enough, these immigrants will have no place in 1997. The Chinese government has made it clear that the non-Chinese working class will have no legal status and will be forcibly repatriated.

Another minority group facing persecution are the Vietnamese 'boat-people' who fill detention camps in the Hong Kong territory. Many have been there for years in atrocious conditions, but prefer this to the political persecution they face at home. Riots broke out in the camps in 1994/5 as the British began to fulfil their promise to the Chinese government to deport all the Vietnamese before 1997. They are made unwelcome in Hong Kong, but have nowhere else they can safely go. Their plight was highlighted in 1995 by a break-out from one of the camps in which men escaped to a nearby town, got hold of basic hygiene equipment like toothbrushes and toothpaste, and then actually re-entered the camp in order to give them to their families.

'Freedom'

The British government is using the working class of Hong Kong to suit its own domestic needs. In 1995 Chris Patten announced plans to issue 3,000,000 passports to the Hong Kong Chinese, that is, to 50% of the population. In Hong Kong it was quickly realised that the promise was insincere, and what a cynical game this was. The 'plans' could be used to create an immigration storm in Britain, to deflect

attention from governmental and social crisis here, for these potential immigrants could be portrayed as threatening jobs. It would also strengthen the government's hand against opponents to 1997, because it would be appearing to threaten the Chinese into making concessions. Not least, it would appear in Hong Kong that the governor was attempting to do his best for those for whose welfare he was responsible. The 'plans' were soon dropped, however, as the Hong Kong Chinese saw that it was British governmental interests and not

their own which were being upheld. Those who will get passports will therefore be Far-Eastern business people who will maintain their interests in Hong Kong after 1997 but who can live in the 'freedom' of Britain. Their shared ethnicity with the Hong Kong Chinese working class is an irrelevance, as is any notion that the colony is reverting to its 'rightful owners'. In 1997 the working class of Hong Kong will exchange one set of masters for another.

Illegal work: The racial holocaust

TRY TO IMAGINE the hidden holocaust within these statistics: 300,000 prostituted children in Thailand, half of them HIV positive; 20 million bonded labourers, many in debt slavery after the third generation; 750,000 child carpetworkers in South Asia, many considered slaves under international law; 4500 abused overseas domestic workers, kicked, starved and sexually assaulted behind the doors of the rich.

Many of these people are exploited because they are culturally or ethnically 'inferior' to the dominant class — they are subjugated, bought, brutalised by mafia-type gangsters, generals and profiteers throughout the world. Capitalism has always had as a main feature the severe exploitation of workers through sweated labour. This form of labour is only possible where workers are isolated by culture, language or illegal status and was suffered by immigrant workers in the US in the 19th century (for example) as much as by Bengali women in the textile industry today.

Throughout its history racism has justified and been intensified by such exploitation. There are four main types of exploitative labour threatening the working class. They are slavery, debt bondage, child labour and prostitution, and servile marriage. How extensive is such exploitation and what is the reality of exploitation?

Slavery is a common and traditional feature of many African societies. In Mauritania for instance, the dominant Maures keep slaves from both the black ethnic groups and Black Maures, the officially-free descendants of slaves who form the majority population. Culture, tradition, poverty, illiteracy, and the lack of strong

indigenous resistance perpetuate the trade in slaves and child abduction into slavery. Often, religion sanctions slavery. In South India, children are 'dedicated' to a god and afterwards can be bought by the temple



priests who then have the right to their sexual favours or immediately sell them into prostitution. Where culture, ancient tradition and religion combine, it becomes impossible for people to avoid or resist such slavery and every hand is turned against them if they flee or protest.

Only when they cease to have an economic or sexual value do they regain their freedom. But this only leads to a less intense but still murderous form of exploitation. As the drought in the Sahara spreads, masters are freeing slaves they cannot afford, but they are forced into rural and urban slums where a relentless struggle for life goes on. Even as free people their names and traditions mark them and they are subject to severe discrimination in education, social life and work, without demo-

cratic or civil rights they remain subject to exploitation by masters, landholders and moneylenders all their lives. Possibly worse are the countries where an armed and oppressive regime (for instance China) imprisons political prisoners and protesters and uses them as forced labour in enterprises owned by members of the ruling class. As 'criminals' stripped of all rights, hidden in rural farms and factories, their exploited labour fuels the economic advance of developing countries and entrenches a culture of repression.

Exploitation

Probably the worst form of exploitation because it is both widespread and vicious is debt bondage. Debt bondage is where a person pledges their labour in return for a loan. Millions of people worldwide are forced into debt as a result of bad harvests or price slumps (themselves a consequence of capitalism) and then intimidated by local mafias into selling themselves for their children. Often illiterate, not only are such people paid a pittance, but the employer charges extortionate rates for accommodation, food or 'services' so that the debt goes on growing. This vicious system is often sanctioned by religious law and tradition (for instance in Pakistan and India where 16m are in debt bondage) but is often fuelled by racism and profit (for instance in Brazil where poor farm workers are recruited into labour camps by the promise of good pay, are cheated and imprisoned by armed guards until they work off their debt or escape. The exploiters target the poorest members of oppressed and minority communities and many millions of people are born into debt bondage. Capitalism first causes poverty and then creates the conditions in which governments and the boss class can sanction and profit from such exploited labour.

Servile marriage is another form of mass exploitation. Women are forced into early marriages, become the exclusive property of their husband, and are then threatened with violence by the husband, his family or society at large should they try to leave. In such a situation, the labour of millions of women is a commodity that the husband exploits either domestically (where the woman must prove herself a 'good person' by unremitting labour) or outside the family (in sweatshop factories or as domestic labour for rich patrons). The employer knows that social custom will sanction his exploitation. In numerous cultures, the family of the woman feels

disgrace if she flees her situation and will not take her back. It is not uncommon for both families to approve the murder of such wretches and the law to sanction the act or apply a small fine. Her social worth is solely defined by her subservience and willingness to be exploited. Millions of women suffer health problems, physical and sexual abuse, violence and murder because they are seen as property, commodities with a right to life only so long as they remain socially valuable.

Child labour and prostitution are now reaching epidemic proportions and will intensify as a result of the removal of trade barriers following the Uruguay GATT agreements this year. Moral outrage and fear of competition from sweated labour is beginning to affect the agendas of world leaders, but the scale of the problem and the mobility of capital will inevitably result in only partial solutions. The worst exploitation is of the children of marginalised groups such as former slave groups, indigenous people, migrants or untouchables. Such oppressed people provide a valuable source of cheap, compliant labour. Again, India, Pakistan and Nepal are areas where up to 800,000 children work in the carpet industry alone. Many children begin work at the age of six and seven, suffer damage to their eyesight and lungs and are physically isolated from their families and society at large. They receive very low wages and often have to pay for food and lodging or their parents are charged massive interest on loans advanced to them. In Indonesia, with its murderous regime, the ILO (International Labour Organisation) estimates 6.5m children between seven and 15 are at work, a figure that excludes child domestic labour. So much for the 'economic miracle' of Pacific Rim countries.

Prostituted children is where the greed and sexual egoism caused by capitalism combine to create a sick trade in gratification. In just four countries in SE Asia it is estimated that there are 150,000 child prostitutes, most of them working in brothels and clubs serving tourists from Europe, Australasia, Japan and North America — so-called civilised nations. Governments frequently turn a blind eye to a trade that keeps rural populations with large families from mass poverty and encourages tourism. The physical and psychological damage to these children is ignored, especially as self-mutilation, servility and excessive fear of authority is no threat to the future of their control.

Such exploitation is not far away, the exclusive burden of illiterate minorities



under repressive regimes. Racism is a means towards capitalist exploitation. Wherever there is capitalism, such systems will appear and, if unchecked by libertarian forces, spread. For instance, a police raid in Los Angeles discovered an illegal garment factory where 72 Thai workers had been held against their will in a compound surrounded by razor wire and forced to work an 18-hour day for two dollars an hour. Nearer to home, two 13-year-olds in Manchester were conned by the offer of good wages into sneaking out of school and working for a local telesales company. Ten minutes late one morning, they were sacked, marched to the door and turfed out without being paid a penny. So far, neither local unions, the police, courts, Council or any of the other so-called civilised protections against child exploitation have brought the company to book.

In order to power their economic expansion and go on satisfying the West's demand for cheaper and cheaper goods, the ruling classes and bosses of majority world countries will go on intensifying their exploitation of workers and rural peoples. They will use racial and religious differences, social degradation and repressive laws to sanction and perpetuate slavery and illegal work. Such exploitation is carried out by the entrepreneurs of the middle and lower classes but sanctioned by the ruling classes. The economic benefit it brings is the bond that ties them together, but it is the ruling classes who ultimately benefit. As long as such people act as the gaolers for millions of enslaved, prostituted and indentured workers, there can be no escape from the holocaust, no freedom from a misery stretching far into the past and looming in our future.

Art as a weapon: artists and anarchism

This is the second part of an article that appeared in *Organise!* 40.

ALTHOUGH ANARCHIST ARTISTS have come from a variety of countries and artistic schools, the anarchist aesthetic which unites them has three major characteristics, succinctly described by Michael Scrivener:

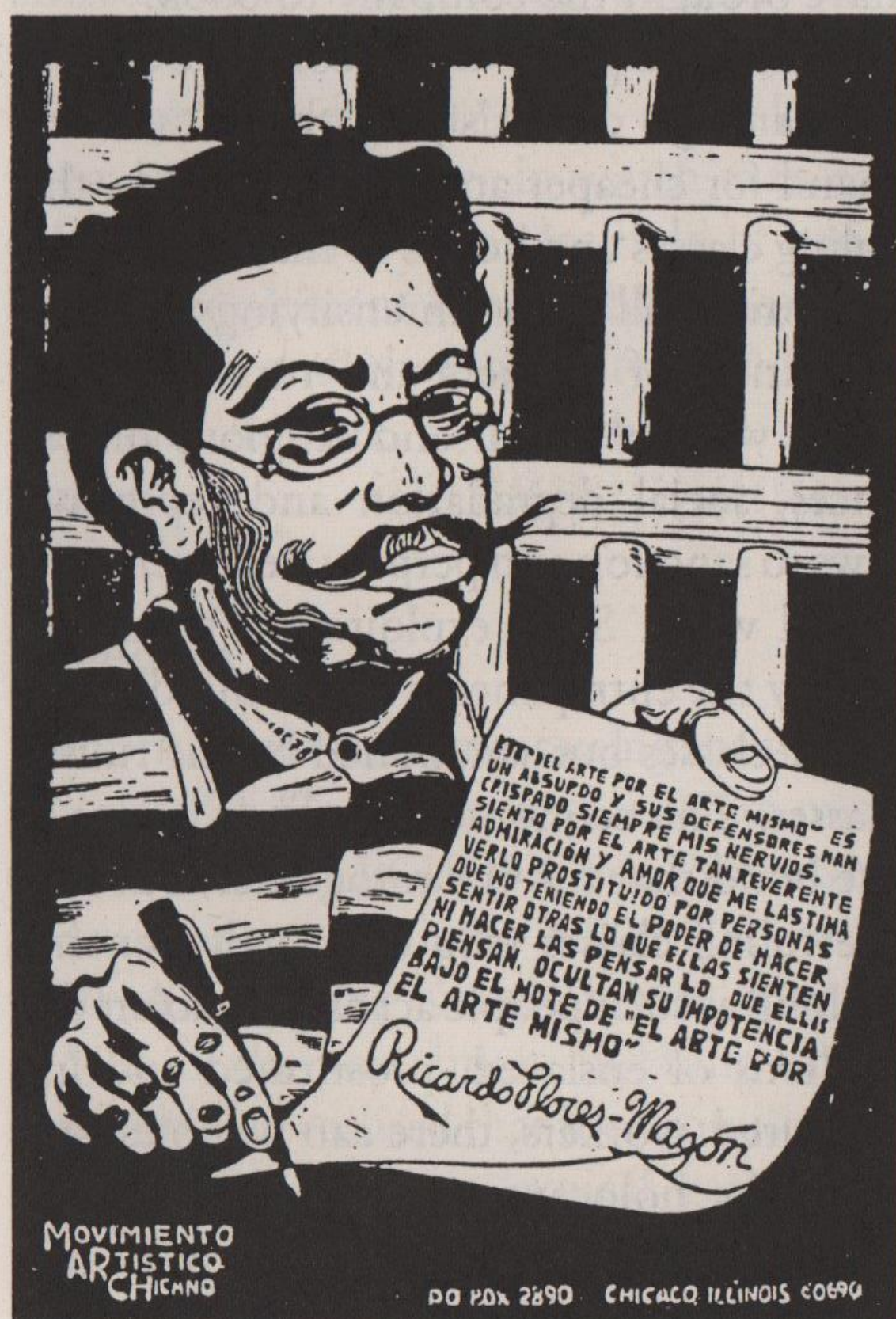
"(1) an uncompromising insistence upon total freedom for the artist, and an avant-garde contempt for conservative art; (2) a critique of elitist, alienated art and a visionary alternative in which art becomes integrated with everyday life; (3) art as social change — that is since art is an experience, it is a way to define and redefine human needs, altering social-political structures accordingly."

(Michael Scrivener:

An Introduction to Anarchist Aesthetic)

The catalyst for the continuing alliance between art and anarchism has frequently been provided by the anarchist periodicals. In France, *La Révolte* and *Les Temps Nouveaux*, both edited by anarcho-communist Jean Grave, *Père Peinard*, an anarchist weekly written entirely in slang, and edited by anarcho-syndicalist Emile Pouget, and *La Feuille*, edited by the flamboyant Zo d'Axa, all succeeded in attracting the most innovative, class conscious artists, including Maximilien Luce, Paul Signac, Grandjourn, Kupka and others. In Germany,

Ricardo Flores-Magon, *Linoblock* by Carlos Cortes, 1978.



Franz Pfemfert's *Die Aktion* combined revolutionary expressionist art and literature with the revolutionary writings of Muhsam and Bakunin, and a strong anti-militarist sentiment, to produce one of the most influential, political art magazines of the 20th century. Among many artists who illustrated *Die Aktion* was Franz Seiwart, who provided graphics to Ret Marut for use in the clandestine *Ziegelbrenner*. Marut edited *Die Ziegelbrenner* while hiding from the Freikorps, having narrowly escaped execution for his role in the Munich Republic of Councils, 1919, and is better known for the novels he wrote as B Traven.

In the Netherlands, Bakunin's biographer Arthur Muller Lehning edited *I-10 Internazionale Revue*, which treated art, science and philosophy as key factors in the evolution of all political and economic situations. Informed by Lehning's anarchist background *I-10* provided the artistic avant-garde of the late 1920s with a vehicle for international communication, attracting contributors such as Walter Benjamin, Piet Mondrian, Kathe Kollwitz, Kandinsky, Kurt Schwitters, El Lissitzky and Malevich. Other editorial collective members included architect JJP Oud, and Hungarian artist Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Lehning summarised the policy of the review:

"The charter and meaning of this magazine are not set forth by any dogma stating what a new culture shall or will be, but rather a illustration of how each expression of contemporary life becomes aware of its own choices."

(*I-10*, issue no 13, 1928)

It is interesting to note Malevich's continuing connection with the anarchist press, as during the Russian Revolution he originally wrote about his artistic theories for the anarchist press, until the Bolsheviks closed down the anarchist papers.

In London, the anarchist magazine *Liberty*, edited by the tailor, James Tochatti, and its contemporary *The Torch*, edited by the young Rossetti sisters, Olivia and Helen, briefly forged a working alliance with some of the more socially-aware artists of Victorian England. Walter Crane designed the Liberty Press logo and contributed a poster design depicting the Haymarket martyrs to *Liberty*. GF Watts also contributed illustrations to *Liberty*, while the young Lucien Pissarro provided a series of graphics to *The Torch*.

Walter Crane's connections with the an-

archist movement are usually ignored by his biographers, but were in fact central to his concept of socialism. Not only did he contribute to *Liberty*, but also to *Freedom*, and to the anarchist-influenced *Commonweal*, the newspaper of the Socialist League. In 1896 he made an unsuccessful attempt to have the anarchists accepted by the Second International. Immediately after the Haymarket incident he wrote a poem on the *Suppression of Free Speech in Chicago*. Crane wrote another poem *Freedom in America* expressing his disgust at the travesty of justice in the Haymarket trial, and attended the protest on Bloody Sunday which was attacked by the police. He narrowly escaped injury and arrest. On a subsequent trip to America, Crane spoke at a commemoration meeting in honour of the Chicago anarchists, appearing on the platform with Benjamin Tucker. Attacked by the press for his stand, he wrote in his own defense in the *Boston Herald*:

"Anarchism simply means a plea for a life of voluntary association, of free individual development — the freedom only bounded by respect for the freedom of others."

Artistically his most interesting contribution to the anarchist cause was the cover for the prospectus of the International Socialist School run by Louise Michel while she was in London. The guiding committee of this school included Kropotkin, William Morris and Malatesta.

Many of the artists involved in the anarchist movement took their involvement well past contributing the occasional illustration, often at considerable personal risk. Maximilien Luce, for example, was placed on trial for his anarchist beliefs and activity in the Trial of Thirty, which took place in 1894 in the wake of several bombings by Parisian anarchists. Luce and most of the others were acquitted, but the incident is recorded in *Mazas*, an album of lithographs depicting life for the imprisoned anarchists awaiting trial in the infamous Mazas jail. In the same year, the Italian divisionist painter Plino Nomellini was placed on trial in Genoa, with several other Italian anarchists including Luigi Galleani, for conspiring to overthrow the state.

Another artist, Aristide Delannoy, was imprisoned for his anarchist art. Delannoy was a prolific contributor to anarchist periodicals, ranging from the satirical *L'Assiette au Beurre*, to the revolutionary *Les*

Temps Nouveaux. Together with the journalist Victor Meric, Delannoy produced *Les Hommes du Jour*, and, in the 3 October 1908 issue, portrayed General d'Amade, occupier of Morocco, as a bloodstained butcher standing amidst his colonial victims. This illustration cost Delannoy a 3,000 franc fine and a one-year prison sentence. Public pressure, including mass protest meetings addressed by Anatole France, eventually forced a pardon. On his release, he was soon in trouble again, this time for a series of anti-militarist drawings. But the months in La Sante prison had aggravated a hereditary lung condition, and he died on 5 April 1911, aged just 37.

The basis of involvement by artists in the anarchist movement has been summarised by the Italian artist Enrico Baj, in an interview with *A-Rivista Anarchica*:

"There is one driving force of an artist that always has a basis in anarchism; that is, the desire for freedom and the rebellion against the dictates of conformity in art. We can say that every artist has a certain degree of the anarchist spirit and, in me, it is perhaps the greater because I have considered my ideas deeply and I have cultivated this sensation which, for other painters, is only superficial. In order to invent one must break the bonds that bind us to pre-determined formulae. The most important thing is not to passively submit but to understand what is happening around us. I believe that an artist must build and signify his own freedom."

Baj's anti-militarist collages have been both controversial and internationally acclaimed, but he is best known for the series of works on the police murder of Giuseppe Pinelli. "The Funeral of the Anarchist Pinelli" was the subject of censorship in 1972. Earlier works were also the subject of censorship and right-wing attacks in both Italy and Brazil. Among Baj's recent work was the vivid depiction of liberty and authority for the poster advertising the anarchist gathering in Venice in 1984.

One-time merchant sailor, Flavio Constantini, has, like fellow Italian Baj, depicted the murder of Pinelli. The stark simplicity of the image of Pinelli's broken body, contrasting sharply with the artist's more ornate and brightly-coloured depictions of other scenes from anarchist history. Constantini's work has appeared in numerous international anarchist publications and a second edition of illustrations, *The Art of Anarchy*, has been published by Black Flag to raise funds for the Anarchist Black Cross. In a short, autobiographical

article published in the now-defunct *Wildcat*, Constantini writes of "an isolated but insistent voice, an ancient Utopia", which presents an alternative to capitalism and communist authoritarianism. "I have tried" he writes, "within the scope of my own possibilities, to publicise this uncompromising alternative".

In France, several innovative artists are associated with the anarchist movement, including cartoonist/illustrators Cabu and Tardi. The exciting graphic artist Luciano Loicono has been a member of the French Anarchist Federation for many years, contributing to their publications, including *Le Monde Libertaire* and *Magazine Libertaire*. Luciano's single most powerful work, was a poster he designed in the immediate aftermath of a police raid on Radio Libertaire. The police smashed the transmission equipment, hoping to put the radio off air. Within 24 hours more than 5,000 took to the Paris streets in protest, many of them carrying Luciano's posters, which also covered the Paris walls, depicting a young woman with a padlock through her lips, symbolising the brutal denial of speech.

Among the contemporary artists who link their art with revolution is the American avant-garde artist Carlos Cortes. Cortes has produced exciting posters of anarchist heroes like Ricardo Flores Magon and Joe Hill, but is also involved in struggles through the IWW and Chicano groups. His posters and graphics are flyposted at night, protesting about police brutality, racism and social injustice, and articulate the fear and anger of the repressed.

As anarchists, our concern cannot just be with past or present, but also with the future. Our central concern must be to democratise artistic creation. Posters, comics, postcards, magazine illustrations and other forms of art have helped to spread and democratise the consumption of art, but as a movement we have yet to put Herbert Read's idea of "every person a special kind of artist" into practice. We should attempt to organise workshops to explain techniques and methods, and establish collectively-run resource centres in each community. If, however, these are to avoid the degeneration experienced by the arts lab movement, they must have closer links with the social needs of the community and with the revolutionary movement. We must also begin to redefine what we mean by 'artist', so that the artist ceases to be a person apart. We all need to develop the artist's skills and vision.

The third and final part of this article will appear in next issue of *Organise!*

RACISM

Continued from back page

real danger of leaving global differences in wealth unchanged from that of capitalism.

The struggle against racism does not preclude a simultaneous equality in all other forms of social relations, in fact it logically requires it. Overcoming racism is not a separate issue or a first step in achieving an Anarchist-communist society, but an integral part of the process. How large a part depends on how much states and bosses exploit people on racial lines and how well we stop them subverting the struggle with liberal myths of 'equality before the law' and token 'success' stories of individuals making good under capitalism. As with any form of oppression people of colour can only be secure in their freedom if everyone else is. This is where the struggle against racism may provide a keystone of libertarian theory, for racism is little more than the inverse side of social solidarity. Identifying this natural sense of solidarity with exclusion of others gives racism its strength, but in fighting it we can acquire the tools of a co-operative social interaction.

As materialists we believe that the struggle for freedom comes out of the real experience of people fighting their oppressors and developing an alternative society from the process of doing so. This means that the prime move must come from each oppressed group itself. For racism in Britain this involves the non-white population organising according to their own understanding and experience, but with the support of those who are oppressed in other ways. This is not simply a union of different groups working together to make themselves more effective, but a recognition that individuals face many forms of oppression simultaneously and just as each of these can only be fought by joining together with others who suffer in the same way, the whole edifice of tyranny can only be overcome by joining together all oppressed groups. No basis of struggle is intrinsically more important than another in achieving this, the important thing is to form from them a unity of theory and practice. Just to finish, this piece has been long on theory and lacking in practical ideas as to combating racism in everyday life, which is just as important to the Anarchist position, and we hope to deal with this in detail soon. In the meantime, if this article is too heavy, feel free to bop some white supremacist on the head with it.

MERSEYSIDE

Continued from p4

from despair! Merseyside ACF calls for the sacking of all fire chiefs and organisation of the fire service under the control of the firefighters and this should be the position of all groups opposing cuts.

These acts of treachery confirm the ACF's analysis: most struggles are isolated and side tracked by Labour and the unions. And, if New Labour wins power, will anything change? Unions will only be allowed to exist as long as they have no power.

We need an independent workers' movement to fight all capitalist institutions including the Labour Party and the unions. Only then can we start to have any real power over our own lives.

EDITORIAL

Continued from p2

conditions, as well as an emphasis on Law and Order. The Blair administration will be a staunch supporter of the strong State, as the social discontent that is simmering begins to boil over.

New opportunities have opened up for Anarchist and libertarian revolutionaries. Not since the late '60s have the conditions looked so good for the growth of our movement. Yet it remains pitifully small. We must open up new forums for debate within the movement on how we can take effective and united action, and on how we can make our propaganda and our activities as widespread and as coordinated as possible. Whilst recognising our differences, we must now look for ways that we can reach unity in action. To remain within our own little groups and to refuse to engage in dialogue would be throw away the new opportunities that are now presenting themselves.

Ainriail, issue no. 1, 30p from The Frontline Collective, PO Box 102, Galway, Ireland.

Ainriail (which means Anarchy in Irish Gaelic) is the bulletin of the Frontline Collective, a class struggle anarchist group in Galway, Ireland. The lead article, which concerns the six county 'Peace Process', argues for a class perspective against a nationalist one and calls for the building of a "Fighting working class movement... to make sure we don't have a repeat of the past 25 years, which have left us no closer to a real solution". Included are articles on anti-traveller bigotry (a serious problem in Ireland), the new Criminal Justice Bill (Irish version) and recent anarchist activities down Galway way.

Although *Ainriail* is a welcome edition to the Irish and international class struggle anarchist media, we would be interested in the group's perspective on the building of a revolutionary organisation on a national and international basis. *Mass Subversion* — for libertarian communism. No 1. from PO Box 298, Whangaparaoa, New Zealand.

Welcome to the first edition of *Mass Subversion*. This magazine is very close to the politics of the ACF and contains articles on nationalism, on the new set-up in South Africa and the sovereignty issue in New Zealand (which we intend to reprint) As *Mass Subversion* says: "The poison that is nationalism is cynically used not only by the established States but also by the national liberation movements. Just as the established State will use 'love of one's country' as a powerful component to protect the interests of its boss class against those of a foreign boss class, so also do the rising boss-class-to-be of the national liberation movements use 'love of the people' to clothe their power struggle. In either case, working class blood is spilt in the services of one faction of the

boss class against another. Libertarian communists refuse to take the side of any of the bosses and we expose these machinations of death and dead-ends for what they are."

Organise! congratulates *Mass Subversion* and hopes many more issues appear and that it can be a instrument in helping build a libertarian communist movement in New Zealand and internationally. A couple of NZ dollars by IMO should obtain this mag for you.

Bad: The Autobiography of James Carr. Pelagian Press. £5.95.

This is not a book for the weak stomached, being the story of one black man's struggle against brutalisation at the hands of the state and the US prison system. It pulls no punches and makes no excuses. Carr was not an archetypical 'political' prisoner and people looking for a black and white tale of Good Vs. Evil will find parts of this book... unsettling.

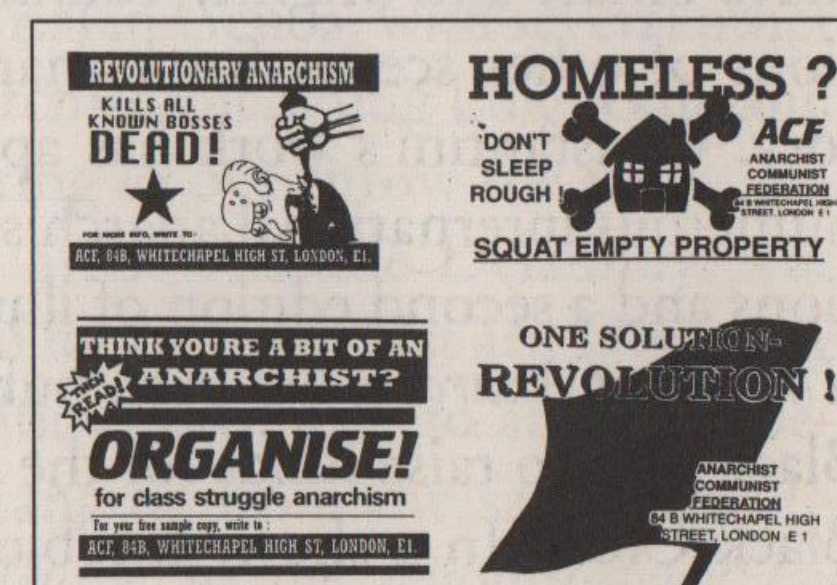
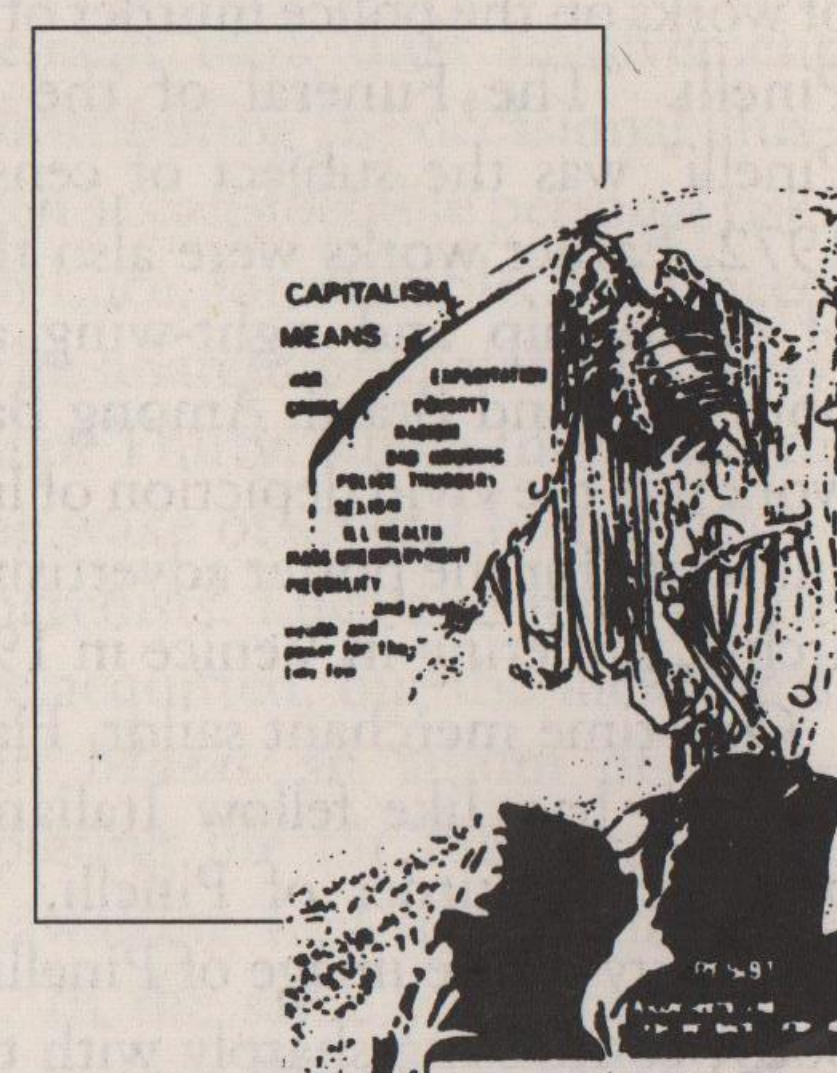
The important thing about this book, however, is Carr's evolution, accelerated by his reading of Korsch, Lukacs and the Situationists, from some-

one with a criminal mentality to someone with a revolutionary mentality. This isn't outlined until the conclusion of the book, but is all the more powerful and inspiring for it. On leaving prison, Carr, who had been a central figure in George Jackson's 'Wolf Pack', joined the Black Panther Party, working as personal bodyguard to the Supreme Commander Huey P Newton. Carr rapidly concluded that the armed reformism of the (by 1970) seriously-Stalinised Panthers could only lead to defeat and his criticism of the militaristic politics then dominant is spot on. Carr's break with 'leftist' politics was cut short by his murder in 1972, shortly after finishing this book. The motive behind his assassination has never been definitively ascertained. A COINTELPRO (FBI) hit? A product of the conflicts in the black liberation movement?

With a highly-informative introduction, afterword and new afterword, this updated reprint is gripping, depressing and inspirational in turn. Definitely worth a read.

Posters and stickers

BUNDLES OF THIS poster (left) can be obtained from our London address. London ACF have also produced a leaflet explaining the basic ideas of anarchist communism. We have four new stickers — on homelessness, anti-capitalist, think you're a bit of an anarchist? and organise for revolution. You can still get copies of our ecology sticker *plus* we have produced a new sticker on the Job Seekers' Allowance (see illustration). For any of the above, please send in a donation to the London address.



Organise!

ORGANISE! IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF). *Organise!* is a quarterly theoretical journal published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals. All articles in the magazine are by ACF members unless signed. Some reflect ACF policy and others open up debate in undiscussed areas, helping us to develop our ideas further.

Please feel welcome to contribute articles to *Organise!* As long as they don't conflict with our Aims and Principles we will publish them. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all.) Deadlines for next issue are 2 March for features and reviews, and 9 March for letters and news. All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:

ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Sell Organise!

ALTHOUGH OUR SALES are rising, we need to keep boosting circulation, so try and take a bundle to sell to friends and workmates.

By selling *Organise!* you can help our ideas to reach more and more people.

Write for *Organise!* You can help to make *Organise!* yours by writing letters and articles. Subscribe to *Organise!* Why not take out a sub to *Organise!*

Better still take out a supporter sub. Get your friends to subscribe or treat them to a sub.

Organise! will improve through a two-way process of criticism and feedback, and will better reflect the reality of struggle through readers communicating with us. Please write in with your ideas.

Please send all feedback, contributions for *Organise!*, requests for papers and Press Fund money (payable to ACF) to the London address.

IMPORTANT! The new national address for the ACF is: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX. This is the same address as correspondence for *Organise!* and for ACF (London).

WANT TO JOIN THE ACF? WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

I agree with the ACF's Aims and Principles and I would like to join the organisation

I would like more information about the Anarchist Communist Federation

Please put me on the ACF's mailing list

I am particularly interested in the Anarchist Communist Federation's views on

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Please tick/fill in as appropriate and return to:

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Press fund

AN ENCOURAGING RESPONSE to our last Press Appeal. £2000 from London; £25 from South London; £15 from Sheffield; £10 Anon; £100 East London.

It is vital that *Organise!* keeps appearing. As the Labour Party and the unions continue to adapt to new capitalist realities, and as the various brands of Leninism continue to peddle their confusion, it is more and more necessary that a clear, coherent, anarchist communist voice is raised loud and clear above the hollow noise of the

Left, whether it be Socialist Labour Party, Militant Labour or the SWP.

You can send cheques, POs, IMOs (made out to ACF) stamps etc. You can even send us a standing order to our account (write to London address for details).

All donations to London address.

Organise! back issues

BACK ISSUES OF *Organise!* (from issues 19-39) are still available from the London address. They cost 20p each plus SAE. Issues 24, 25, 30, 32, 33, 36 and 39 are sold out.

Issue 26: Women and revolution; Direct action. Issue 27: LA Riots; Yugoslavia; Malcolm X. Issue 28: Recession; Detective fiction. Issue 29: Debate on the unions; Italian workers organise. Issue 31: Somalia; Travellers; Natural laws. Issue 35: Rwanda; Italy; Carmageddon; Poetry and revolution. Issue

37: Pornography debate; Booze, cigs and dope; Moral panics. Issue 38: Militarism; Over-population myth; Cuba; Sport. Issue 40: Work; Job Seekers' Allowance; Art as a weapon. Alternatively, send us a fiver and we'll send you one of everything plus whatever else we can find lying around.

Anarchist Communist Federation

THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION is an organisation of class struggle anarchists.

We have members and groups throughout Scotland, England and Wales. Please write to the national address if you want to be put in contact. If you want contact directly with Scotland ACF, for contacts in Elgin, Glasgow and Aberdeen write to POBox 5754 (no other mention) Elgin, Scotland IV 30 2ZD. If you want contact with a group close to the ACF in New Zealand, write to PO Box 298 Whangataroa, New Zealand.