HEAVY STUFF

THE THOUGHT BEHIND THE ANGER

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HEAVY STUFF

THE THOUGHT BEHIND THE ANGER

CONTENTS

Heavy Stuff 4. The Heavy Stuff is the theoretical / discussion magazine of the Class War Federation.

Produced by Tyneside Class War, PO Box 1QF, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1QF.

Front cover photo by Steve Conlon

CLASS WAR

BRITAINS MOST UNRULY TABLOID

A NEW CONCEPT IN POLITICAL BULLSHIT

With this issue of 'The Heavy Stuff' the Class War Federation has a new editorial group, and we've made a few slight changes to the format of the magazine. We have introduced **'Question Time'** - this is precisely what it says: you, the reader, write in with any nagging doubts or questions you have about our politics, and we attempt to answer them. In this issue we answer questions on the Poll Tax.

We have also introduced a **'Letters Page'** where you can take issue with any of the articles or letters that appear in 'The Heavy Stuff'. In this issue Sean Riley, the author of 'The Middle Class' in Heavy Stuff 3, faces criticisms such as: that by using crude generalisations, he is in danger of stifling further debate. Whilst both the letter and the reply are very long, we ask readers to use their common sense when writing - if not, we will edit them accordingly.

Last, but not least, is another new feature, **'This is Class War'**, by our National and International Secretaries - just to let you know what we've been doing. We wouldn't want you to be misinformed!

While the editorial policy of 'The Heavy Stuff' remains:

"The views expressed in these articles are those of the people who wrote them and not necessarily those of the Class War Federation", we would like to break down the distinction between reader and writer. The best way to do this is to create a feeling of ongoing discussion. The reader should be considering the arguments and then writing what they think of them. This can be done with "Letters Page', 'Question Time', and more effectively, articles can be made up from many people's contributions.

We recognise that not everyone has the skills and confidence to write complete articles. The thoughts behind our anger need to be documented and communicated. This can be done by interviews with groups or individuals, recordings of discussions, semi-written articles or scribbled notes. In some ways it makes our job harder, but it's much more interesting. The article, **'Mutual Aid and Community Care'** was the first of many that we hope to publish, using these methods.

We return at a time when interest and enthusiasm in the politics of the Class War Federation is overwhelming. We do, however, apologise to our readers for the gap between issue 3 and 4. Having spent much of our time and energy consolidating our success, we now have a paper that is not only enthusiastically read the length and breadth of the country, but is influencing the growth and direction of political movements East and West, hence our International Conference.

While our disagreements with the Left usually centre around the role of the revolutionary party (and, as promised, we continue our series on class), Jon Barr questions Marx's analysis of class and economics in **'Question Marx'**, and asks what happened to the inevitable collapse of world capitalism (or is it just around the corner?).

Propaganda is one of the things that Class War is most successful at. Neil Warne looks at the relationship between the ruling class, **Language and Power.**

We believe language is power and we must smash the power of those who use it to oppress us.

With high unemployment, a healthy working class is no longer required. Witness the downgrading of our NHS, coupled with the poll tax capping of local councils, councils implementing cuts to avoid capping or facing potential bankruptcy due to uncollectable poll tax. Dave Franklin, in 'Mutual Aid and Community Care', looks not only at the way disabled people are discriminated against, but outlines the duty of our communities to those whose needs for care and consideration are greater than ours in the present pre-revolutionary society.

'What's on the End of the Stick, Mick?' was originally a letter sent to Class War in response to letters that appeared in Class War, concerning the IRA/Irish issue. With the cooperation of the author, Micky McGuinnes, we have turned the letter into an article. We welcome further feedback on the subject, but please keep it constructive.

Let it be known that the Class War Federation's theory is not dogma, we are not writing the one true gospel. Our ideas are in a constant state of development and reassessment. Nor is our theory the creation of a single mind or ruling clique. It is the product of all our members and, of course, new members bring new experiences and new ideas.

Eventually contributions will come not just from members but from the class as a whole. Once a theory is developed from the majority, the revolution will take place...Simple!

Please note...all correspondence should be sent to the Tyneside address (not the London address). Limited stocks of Heavy Stuffs 1,2 & 3 are still available, all priced at £1 + large SAE.

RAGE ON...

THE HEAVY STUFF POSSE

QUESTION

Class and all that Jazz

A class is a group of people in a similar position, whose interests are similar economically, politically and socially. Since World War II we've been told: "We've never had it so good", that we'll all be rich, thanks to the "white-hot heat of technology", that "we're all middle class". Yet in our lives we are well aware that the class nature of society remains.

In Britain class is often portrayed as a British disease, yet it exists across the world. Class is not only about a set of manners and a particular accent: it is the product of economics and politics. The last 400 years has seen the rise of the capitalist ruling class. Before this there were two main classes. In this feudal period there was an aristocratic/church ruling class and a peasant class.

The development of trade and factory production saw the rise of a new class drawn from the artisans, merchants, and parts of the old ruling class. The new class controlled and developed industry. They controlled the means of production and distribution. This entrepreneurial middle class fought to become the ruling class.

The nineteenth century and the industrial revolution saw its final rise to world power.

Alongside the victory of the new capitalist ruling class, the peasant class was pushed off its land and forced into the factories of the capitalist class. It developed into the working class. A class without access to its land, forced to sell its labour.

The increased competition between capitalist entrepreneurs guaranteed an expansion of capitalist production. If the capitalist did not invest, and cut costs by economies of scale, then in the long term they would be forced out of business. This meant a growing working class.

The Ruling Class' State

Every ruling class requires a State. A State is a body of organisation needed to control those who the ruling class rule, to ensure the smooth running of the class society. In feudal times this involved an army and tax men etc. The rise of the capitalist ruling class, the increased complexity of life and increased working class resistance has seen a greater need for State control. The State is now a major employer.

Within it are the forces of control: the police, the army, politicians etc. Useful organisations to sugar the bitter pill of a class society: a health service, dustbin men etc., and groups with dual roles involved in control, and providing needed services, such as teachers and social workers.

Class and Struggle

In the nineteenth century, as the new ruling class imposed its capitalist economic system upon much of the world, a period of bitter class struggle developed. The working class attacked the capitalist class. Prior to capitalism the peasant class had attempted to overthrow its controllers, the aristo-cratic ruling class, eg the peasants revolt of 1381 in Britain. The development of the working class made such an overthrow appear more likely.

Although the working class were not serfs like the peasant class, they were slaves to wage labour. Factory work saw the growth of large cities and large working class communities who suffered similar conditions.

Mass printing and the need of industry to develop an educated working class saw a working class with more access to new ideas and more able to spread their ideas. The working class, from its experience, saw it had a common experience and a common interest in destroying class society, and, most importantly, the ruling class.

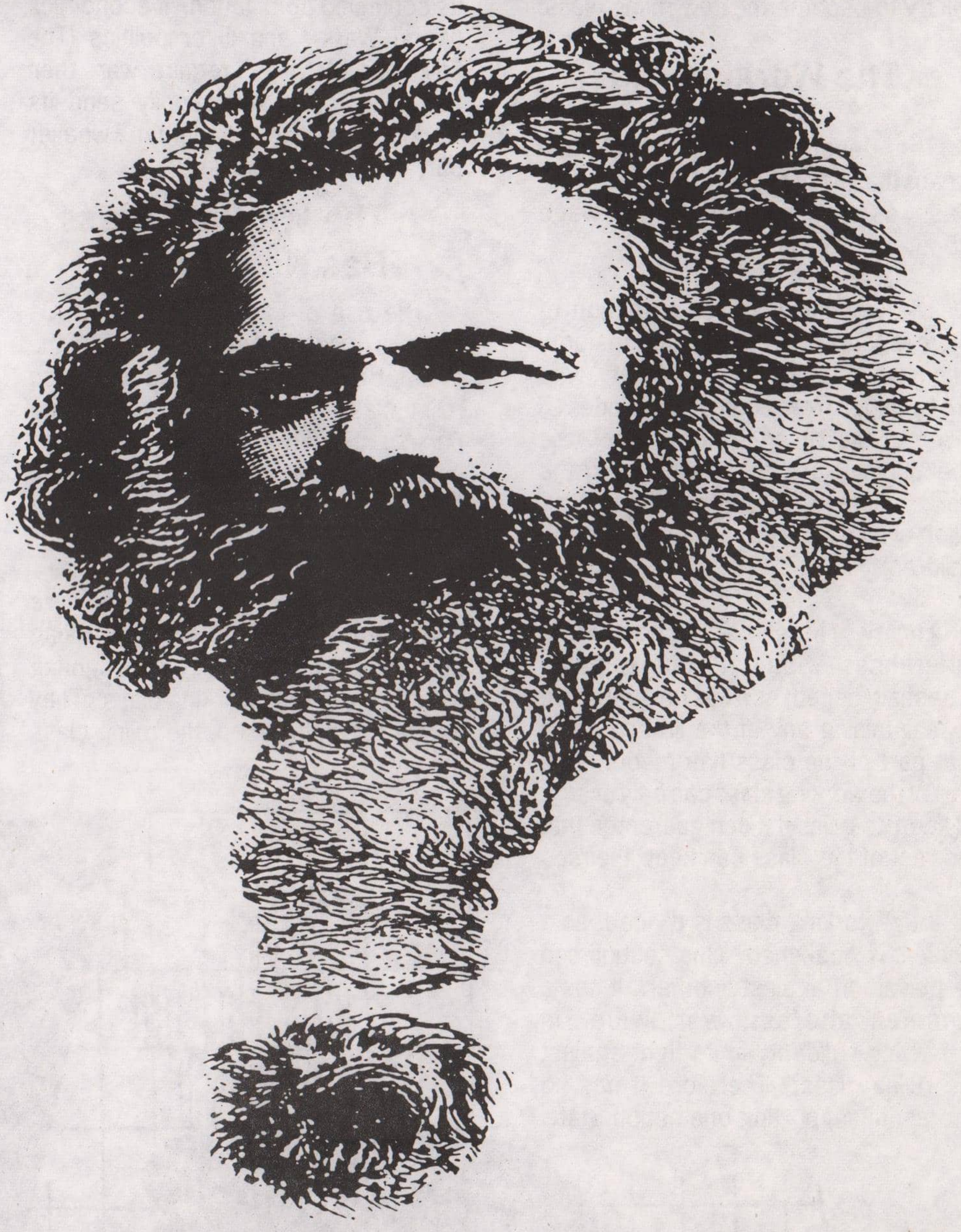
It was at this point in Europe (where the rise in the capitalist ruling class first appeared) that the working class evolved new ideas and began to test its strength around the working class struggle. The new ideas of Socialism, Anarchism and Communism were born.

While in previous societies, the peasant class had fought to overthrow its rulers and build a classless society, only at this point in history did these ideas gain coherence and various strategies.

It was at this time that a new middle class began to be formed out of the working class. A class of clerks, (managers, bureaucrats, shopkeepers etc.) who enabled the ruling class to ensure a smoothly-run society, and also develop a mass consumer market to supply back to the working class the goods they had produced.

Around this class, and from dissident elements of the old aristocratic ruling class and the new ruling class, a set of

MARX



intellectuals grew. Their names became linked with the new ideas: Karl Marx, Engels, Bakunin and Proudhon. Because of their access to the means ofproduction, they were able to produce political propaganda; and had a voice in the rapidly developing newspapers and journals.

Many weaknesses in the new ideas can be explained by the class experience of those who happened to document them. It is important to remember that because Marx' name is linked historically with communism, it does not mean that he created the inspiration or the central parts of these ideas.

His books came from the inspiration of his experiences in the Paris Commune and his contacts with working class people and their lives.

Since the nineteenth century the working class has become by far the largest. Along with the remaining peasant class, these dispossessed classes represent the vast majority of people in the world.

The Rise of the New Middle Class

In the most powerful ruling class centres eg Britain, USA etc, a large third class has grown, the middle class. Marx did not expect this to happen, but it has: a middle class pulled out of the working class to manage the machinery of capitalism.

The increasing importance of the State and the complicated market system has made this economically necessary. Especially in highly developed capitalist countries, this has allowed the ruling class to confuse us about class.

Instead of an increased polarisation into 2 classes, we have a pyramid structure with grey areas at class boundaries. Clearly because a minority in the working class has formed a new middle class dies not mean the end of class society. We have seen a re-structuring.

Class, Communism and Treachery

The events after the Russian Revolution in 1917 show that this middle class can have seperate interests. The working class struggle, that culminated in the overthrow of the Russian ruling class, is particularly important. While the working class attempted to build a new Communist society through workers' and peasants' councils, a group drawn from the middle class and working class intellectuals, actually seized power. The Bolshevik Party had originally appeared to be part of the working class, but, over time, it created a new State and became a new ruling class.

In the English Civil War, the middle class used the peasant class to advance its position. The same happened in the

French Revolution. Similarly in the Russian Revolution: the working class was ultimately pushed back from achieving the classless society it had attempted to create.

In the main, the middle class sides with the established ruling class. As a class, in a revolutionary situation, it may move towards the working class. Until its class privileges are destroyed, it is always possible that the middle class will try to become the new ruling class.

The Working Class

The development of capitalism means that the definition of of the working class as the proletariat, the wage labourers, is redundant.

The working class is a section of wage labourers. It is the vast majority who have no power in this society, who are excluded from control. It includes all those in the reserve labour pool (the unemployed) and those who keep the workers alive to guarantee a future labour pool (wives, partners, mothers and children).

The working class had wide differences within it, but remains potentially united, as it has no guarantee of maintaining any of the limited gains that part of the class has made. One part of the working class can only ensure to keep its gains if it can guarantee that the rest of the class can keep theirs.

If the working class is divided, as a whole it is weakened. One section can be played off against another. It has a common interest, worldwide, in displaying solidarity in its fight against the ruling class. Therefore it has no interest in supporting one nation State and its ruling class against another.Many, when faced with talk about the ruling class, cannot believe there is a conspiracy between Gorbachev, ICI, George Bush, BP Oil, John Major etc. Or previously between Ford Motors, Hitler, Stalin and Churchill.

The important thing to remember is that the ruling class is united in one thing: its wish to control the working class and ensure the smooth running of its continued domination. If economics (World Wars I and II) or politics (The Falklands/Malvinas) require war, then the ruling class will happily send its working class to die, to defeat a weaker part of the ruling class.

The Working Class Has No Country

The rise of Fascism in the 1930s gives a clear example of this: the attempt by the German and Japanese ruling classes to become the dominant part of the world's ruling class was unacceptable to Britain, a dying world power, and the USA, the dominant world power.

For that reason, the Fascists were fought and defeated. Many working class people believed they were fighting to save the Jewish working class. They fought for that reason, the ruling class did not!

There are many parallels with Saddam Hussein's attempts to create an Iraqi-led Arabic world power: the mass slaughter of whole sections of the Iraqi, Kurdish and Iranian working classes was ignored by the world's ruling class. But when economic power was at stake, the guns came out.

Whose Side Are You On?

There are 3 main classes in the present capitalist society. Some embers remain of the past feudal society (a peasant class and an aristocratic ruling class). The peasant class will, over time, be swallowed up into the working class: it will be forced off its land and into waged labour. Its interests lie with the working class.

The working class is the main revolutionary class, as its interest is to overthrow all dominating classes and to forge a classless society.

The middle class, with its advantages and privileges, has much to lose by such a revolution. It therefore tends to side with the established ruling class. It may join the revolutionary class, but it may do so to gain power as a new ruling class. It is therefore far from neutral.

The ruling class is the dominant capitalist class. It controls production and distribution, and reaps off massive profits. It controls all arms of the various States of the world. Its class interests lie in keeping things that way.

The State of Play.

As previously stated, the State is a massive organisation through which the ruling class maintains control. The 20th Century has seen a particularly huge development of the State. The periodic ups and downs of the capitalist world has increased its importance.

The working class would never have put up with the last 100 years, had it not been smashed down physically (army, police etc.) or at other times been guaranteed the means of survival (the Welfare State).

The State also allows major figures in the ruling class to regulate the irrational parts of the market economy: the most extreme forms of this were seen in the USSR, fascist Germany, and Britain during World War II: in such times, market capitalist economy is switched to a command capitalist economy. the ruling class, within the State, guarantees a strict control.

Such a mixture of market and command economies has become the dominant capitalist economic organisation.

The Growth of the State

The growth of multinationals is another reason for the State to expand. These enterprises, with little allegiance to a particular nation, are likely to shift their centres to where profit is greatest ie where the working class is weakest. Without a strong State to batter down the working class, important sections of the ruling class risk losing power within the world ruling class ie the British ruling class in 1974.

The State changed with the end of feudalism. Originally, the aristocrats forged a State based on their 'divine right' to rule. It therefore included all forms of the church. When the capitalist class seized power, it overturned all such inevitabilities - it expanded the role of the State beyond all recognition - the State is now far more complex, as the need to control class societies is far harder.

The Working Class Has No State

I've defined the State as the agent of the ruling class. The working class, in its struggle for a classless society, can't form a State. It would have to form organisations, armed militias etc. It would be misleading to call this a State: such worldwide working class organisation wouldn't resemble any form of State.

Those who want a 'workers' State' are following the same path as we have seen in Russia, Cuba and Nicaragua. As we've seen in Russia, this brings the emancipation of the working class no further forward. It has been forced to change one boss for another. The command economy of the USSR seems no more communist than Britain during the War. Leaders may call us 'comrades', but we continue in waged labour and all important decisions are made for us, not by us.

No state structure will wither away. It has nothing to offer the working class but the spectre of a new ruling class. It must be smashed along with the ruling class who created it.

Question Marx and Soap Suds

Obviously, class society is, in the main, based on economics. So what is economics and how does the capitalist economic system work?

Marxism remains the only developed economic theory with, at its centre, class struggle. This doesn't mean that it's correct. Marx based his study of the ruling class/capitalist organisation around the idea of a 'commodity'. In a capitalist economy, a commodity is anything that can be bought and sold.

A commodity, in capitalism, has two sorts of value: It has a use value. It can be used to do something ie food can

feed people. It also has an exchange value - it can be sold at a certain price. A commodity can only be used if it can be exchanged.

In theory, a bar of soap can be used to clean something. Under capitalism, it can only be used to clean if it is sold at a price. If it can't be sold, it will provide no use. There is also no guarantee that it will be of good enough quality to do what it's supposed to. To capitalists, it is enough that it is sold.

Over time there are occasions in the world economy when there are too many commodities to be sold at a profit. Prices fall and some useful products will be destroyed if they can't be sold at a profit. It doesn't matter if there is a need for these products ie they have a use value, but without an exchange value, they won't be used.

Marx claims that to exchange commodities, they have to be seen as equal. Clearly, as objects with different uses, they can't be seen as equal. They are seen as equal in relation to price.

What Price Our Labour?

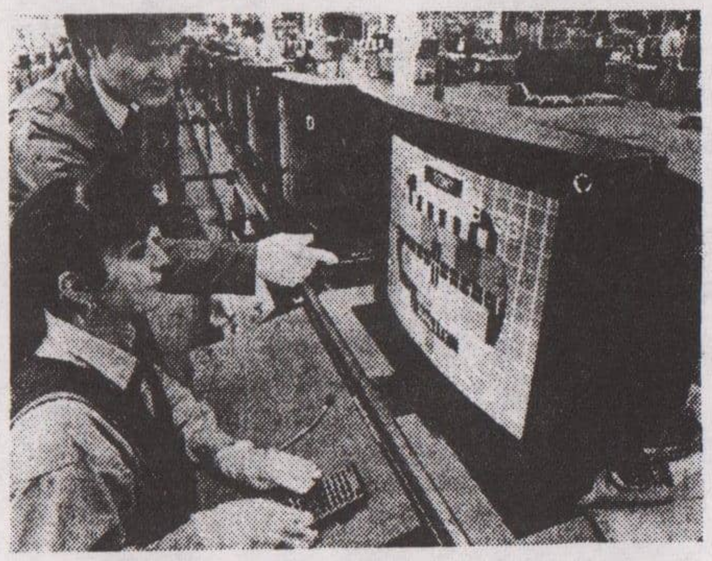
Marx asked what determined price. He claimed that the only basis on which a lb. of feathers could be equal to half a lb. of iron was the amount of work to produce both commodities.

Therefore:
LABOUR TIME=VALUE=PRICE.

Obviously, different types of useful labour aren't equal. They can't be measured in any way. They have to be treated as if they are equal, as if there is nothing to distinguish one type of labour from another. Marx added that the labour time that determined a commodity's value was the average a worker would expend.

If one worker is slower than another, it does not increase the value of the product. The relative values of different commodities are determined over time. The average labour time can change without the amount of useful labour changing eg Hand loomers found that when machine looms were introduced, what they produced was half as valuable as it had been.

Therefore, average labour does not



reflect each workers' real labour, only the general, socially necessary labour.

We have already talked about exchange value: It can have 3 forms; commodities ready for exchange, money for exchange and capital to produce more commodities.

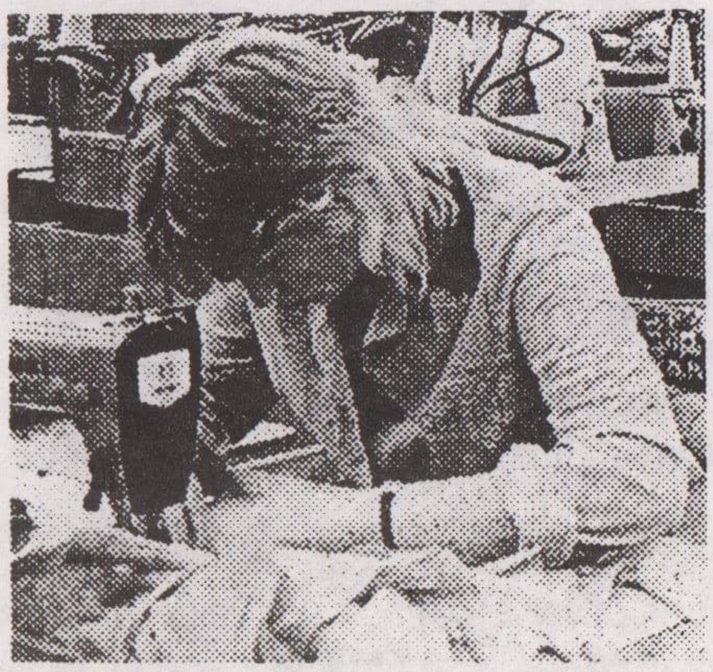
One commodity can express the value of many eg money and gold.

Overproduction and Profit

Capitalist economic organisation, for the ruling class, is not just about money. Money is invested as capital to generate profit. The working class sells its labour power (a commodity) to gain wages (money) to buy goods (commodities).

In contrast, the capitalist ruling class has money (in the form of capital) and uses it to buy labour power, to make money. The capitalist doesn't spend money to get back an equal amount: he/she expects PROFIT. The money after the investment must be more than the money before. This is SURPLUS VALUE. This profit is both personal gain and to get (accumulate) more capital.

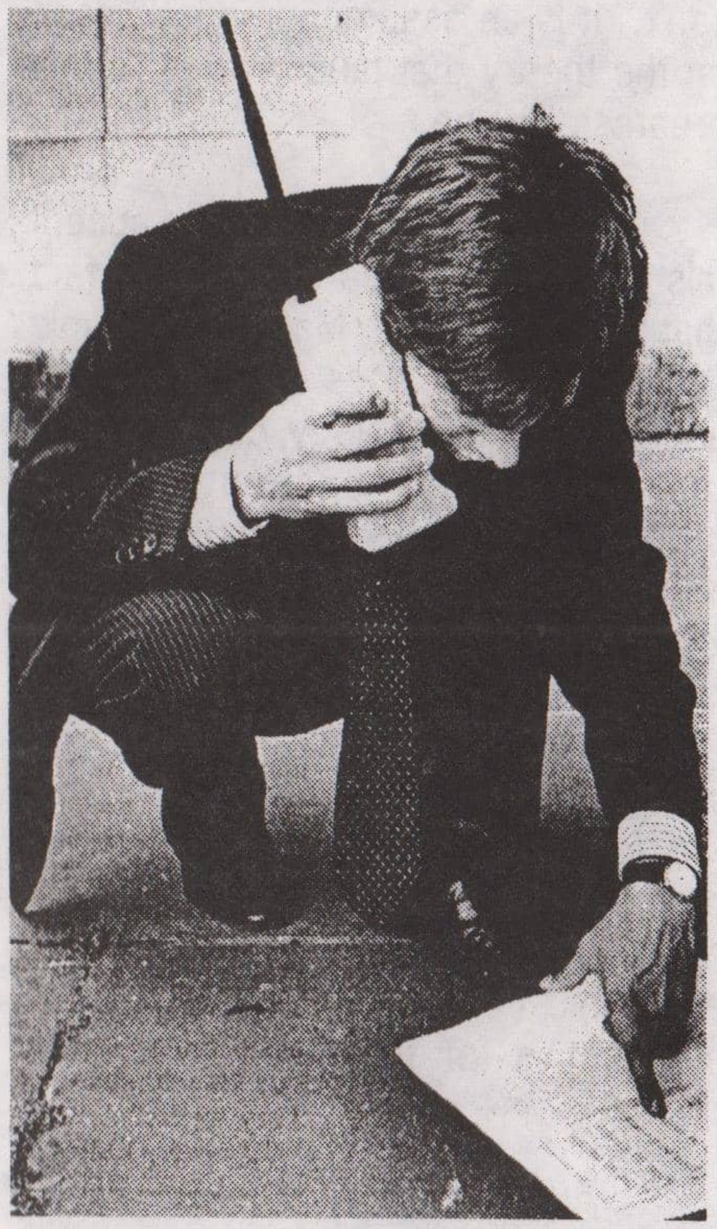
Marx pointed out that, for the capitalist ruling class, capitalist organisation is not just about becoming wealthy (the accumulation of commodities), but also about gaining greater means to produce more (theaccumulation of capital).



Selling Us the Fruits of Our Labours

Where is profit made? It is made at the expense of consumers - the market. Is the capitalist trying to buy cheap and sell dear? Marx claimed that if this was the basis of value (therefore price and profit) then capitalists would be ripping each other off. To make such profits the buyer would be paying more than the exchange value of the commodity.

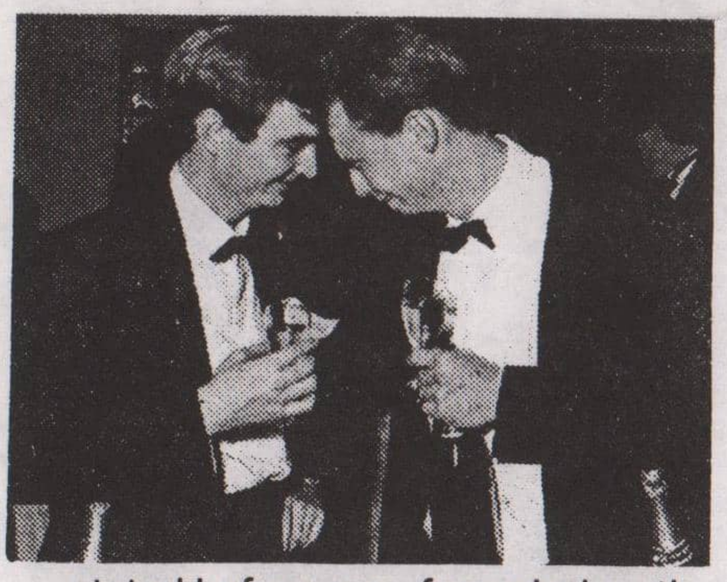
Marx said that competition would



stop this overcharging. The rivalry would, in the long term, bring prices to the value. This is what was meant when we said that over time the relative values of commodities were fixed. He claimed that commodities tend to sell for what their cost is in terms of average, socially-required labour.

Wage Slavery

If profit is not made in the exchange, then it must be made at the point of production. The working class, as



stated before, was forged when the peasant class was forced off the land and made to sell its labour power: its ability to work.

In the capitalist economic system, the worker is dependent upon on the ruling class for employment, and is exploited as the ruling class has control of his/her labour. This is the 'freedom' within the ruling class' capitalist system: You either sell your labour power or starve.

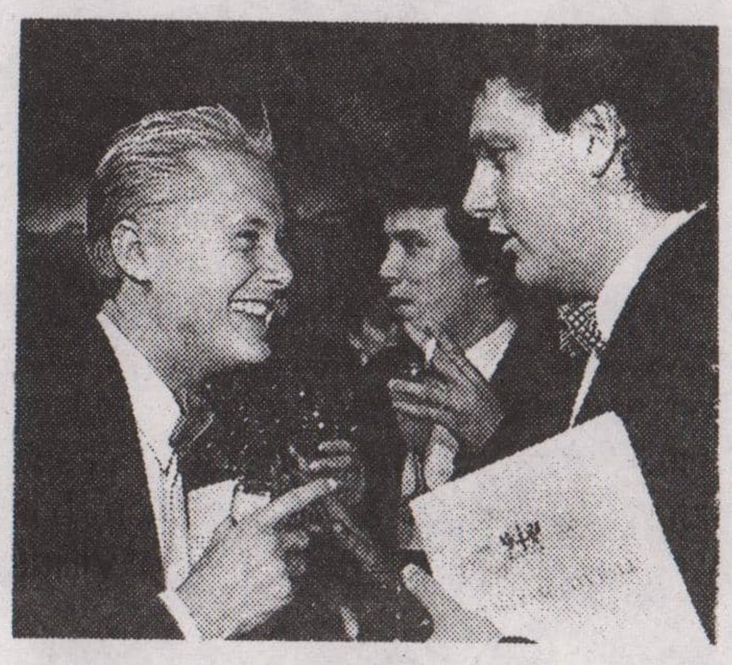
The capitalist class and the working class are supposed equals. Both are owners of commodities. One owns capital, the means of production. The other owns labour power. Yet with the sale of labour power, working class people lose all control over what they do and how they live.

Just as exchange value is not the same thing as use value, so useful work (for the worker) is not the same as the work we experience in the capitalist system. There is a difference - an alienation between the two.

Getting Ripped Off All the Way Down the Line

As earlier said, profit seems to be made at the point of production. But how?

When we sell our labour power,



we sell our ability to work for a given time. It may be, for example, that to produce enough useful value to live on, we would need to work for 8 hours for 2 days. This is the labour necessary for us to survive. We have sold our labour power for 5 days of 8 hours. These 3 extra days are surplus labour.

The capitalist will pay us the amount necessary to keep us working. This is made in 2 days. The value created in the other 3 days is surplus value. It is the result of surplus labour.

Profit and Variables

If the labour produces less than the average, then profits fall and the ruling class entrepreneur goes bankrupt.

The capitalist needs workers with average skills (VARIABLE CAPITAL) and up-to-date technology (CONSTANT VALUE). Marx claims that capital (technology) can't increase surplus value. If the capitalist buys the machinery for what it's worth, in terms of socially necessary labour time, it can't produce any more than the value given it by the labour. The rate of profit is therefore the surplus value divided by the cost of variable capital plus constant costs.

The Collapse of Capitalism

This is the basic Marxist explanation of working class exploitation. Marx, filled with the 19th Century obsession with science, wanted to explain class struggle and capitalism scientifically. His theories led him to predict the inevitable collapse of capitalism.

This was due to the "organic composition of capital" - capitalists in competition are forced to lower costs. This means increasing more new technology: a process Marx saw in his time. More products can be produced for less.But if constant capital is increased there will be no change in surplus value. The rate of profit will fall. The only way to maintain profit will be to attack the working class by reducing the cost of variable capital, and

worsening their conditions.

This poverty will increase resentment in the working class and increase class struggle. The process of capital accumulation will see the means of production in fewer hands as small businesses fail. Therefore more and more people will be in 2 classes: working and ruling. Class antagonism could only get more bitter until the inevitable overthrow of the ruling class and its economic system.

The ruling class in one area may put this crisis off by war. Ignoring the fall in profit, the ruling class may set its heart on expropriation rather than change. Alternatively, the worker may be forced to work more hours (increasing absolute surplus value), or the work rate may be increased (increasing relative surplus value).

So When's the Revolution, Karl?

The clarity of Marx's theory, and its ability to counter all criticisms are at first very attractive. It seems to explain working class experience and many of his observations seem to hold true eg the accumulation of capital and crisis through overproduction.

But why in the last 100 years hasn't the working class seen much

It seems ridiculous to dismiss all of Marx's theory and observations, but is it necessary to accept them all as gospel truth or a new religion? Isn't the struggle for a classless society, where each gives from their abilities and receives their needs, more important than hanging on to one man's theories?

Why can't technology, with labour, create increase added value? The answer, for any Marxist, is that it can't. It is an assumption based itself on the theory that labour power alone creates all value.

There is no reason to accept this assumption apart from the fact that it's central to Marx's economic thinking. What does it mean if you accept that technology can increase the amount of exchange value produced by a worker's labour power? It means that there is no inevitable long-term fall in the rate of profit.

Therefore, there is no inevitable revolution. It can't justify the fact that a ruling class controls the means of production and the mass of people are excluded from economic control. The revolution to end that is for the working class to create.

Marx and Value - Abstract Theories

Is exchange value a fixed amount determined at the point of production? Is it necessary to be able to 'scientifically' say how much each worker is being exploited? Is exploitation an amount? Exchange value, as Marx stated, is not the same as use value.

Clearly, the working class produces all use values, things we can use. These

use values can't be priced. A toothbrush is a toothbrush and it has a use: cleaning teeth. A lb of butter is a lb of butter and it's good to eat. No amount of cleaned teeth equals butter eaten.

Exchange values are totally different. They are ABSTRACT values related to the make or determined by State bodies through subsidies, rationing etc. There is no reason to suggest that they have any basis in reality outside capitalism. One capitalist is not ripping off another if they set a certain price. This is just the price that supply and demand has determined.

If that price does not cover fixed and variable costs the capitalist will not sell, as he/she can't make a profit.

The important fact in this class society is that those who produce all useful commodities have no control over what they produce and how it's distributed. This is exploitation, not some fanciful equation determining a rate of exploitation.

Possession is Power

If we look at uncultivated land, here is a commodity that has had no labour power used on it. It does have an exchange value. It has a value to property developers who will pay the person who has taken it into his/her possession to make a profit from selling it. It's the process of capital accumulation, the taking control of all the means of production by a minority, that we need to destroy. It is not a question of whether the taking was fair or foul.

Consummate Theft and Corporate Control

What about when we consume? We are sold back what we have produced. We're being exploited to make profit as much at this point of the process as we were at the start of production. Marx could not have predicted the consumer society.

In the late 20th Century, when large multinationals or State-controlled industries distribute much that is produced, competition is occurring. Is there such a thing as a fair price? Isn't it as big a nonsense as a fair wage. We are manipulated by advertising into feeling that we must consume certain commodities. We are open to increased exploitation both at the point of production and consumption.

The Proletariat and the Working Class

Obviously, the attraction of Marxism to the working class is the central position it puts class struggle in, in its analysis of the ruling class economic organisation: capitalism. Accepting economic realities can't change that. But there are implications if we reject parts of Marx's economic theories eg the middle class will not wither away as Marx predicted.

The proletariat are those who earn a wage for working. Are all wage earners in the same class? Marx was unable to foresee the development of a large middle class. His economic theories made such a thing seem impossible. It has happened - the middle class have control and privileges, given them by the ruling class. Their interests lie, most of the time, with the ruling class. Unless the proletariat includes only those who have no control over the means of production, then it's not the same thing as the working class.

Meet the New Boss - Same as the Old Boss

Marx, at his point in history, couldn't have been expected to predict the State ownership of the means of production within capitalism. Such State control does not end the exploitation of the working class. The State, as earlier stated, is the tool of the ruling class. The myth that a fair wage could be paid, from which no surplus value would go to the ruling class, is linked to errors in Marxist theory. There is no fair wage and a worker can't be compensated for his/her work. Only in a classless society where we are free to give from our abilities and receive our needs, will exploitation be ended. Private or public ownership are little different for the working class. Neither are a step towards communism and working class control.

The Future is Ours - We Just Need to Reach Out and Take It

At times Marx, with his inevitable revolution, appears to deny his stated belief that men and women make history. In his overwhelming wish to see the triumph of communism, he was willing to believe that economic facts would make its arrival inevitable. He was wrong: The working class, if it recognises its interests, can create such a society.

At certain points in history it is more capable and more likely to achieve its ambitions. Nothing about class struggle is inevitable.

Jon Barr.

WHATS ON THE END

In issues 42 and 43 of Class War some interesting issues were raised (in the letters page) on Ireland and the IRA, which have either ignored or side-stepped in their knee-jerk support for anti-imperialism.

The Class War Federation, and in particular the Heavy Stuff editorial group, welcome correspondence on this subject (and any other) and hope this will open the debate on Ireland to everyone, not just Lefty intellectuals.

This article is not Class War's line on Ireland - it's just asking and answering a few questions that the left are too scared to come to grips with for fear they may lose a bit of credibility with their student members. Anyhow, here goes..

"SURELY WE SHOULD SUPPORT THE IRA BECAUSE THEY ARE DEFENDING WORKING CLASS IRISH CATHOLICS?"

Not when it really mattered they weren't. When the B-Specials (paramilitary Protestant police) and loyalist gangs rampaged through the nationalist areas of Belfast in 1969 the IRA was nowhere to be seen.

In fact a piece of graffiti on the Falls Road said it all, "IRA - I ran away". When the people of the Bogside and Derry rose up against the state to defend their homes, their families and their lives they did it themselves with bottles, bricks, barricades and petrol bombs. This act inspired similar insurrections in other catholic ghettos and almost brought about the defeat of the RUC.

While the Northern Ireland Catholics were fighting for their lives, the IRA was away reading books in the South. Their guns, which could have been used to defend the Catholic working class, had been given to Welsh Nationalists years before, or were left gathering dust. In 1970 the IRA split into two, the Provisionals (Provos) took up the armed struggle while the Official IRA faded into history.

OF THE STICK, MICK?

"IF THIS IS THE CASE THEN WHY ARE THE IRA SO POPULAR?"

In the beginning the IRA recruited large numbers of Catholic working class youths who had fought in defence of their communities. It was this alone which gave them credibility and support in the working class ghettos of West Belfast and Derry. It's time the myth of the Provos, being a people's army which rose in defence of the Catholic working class, was knocked on the head.

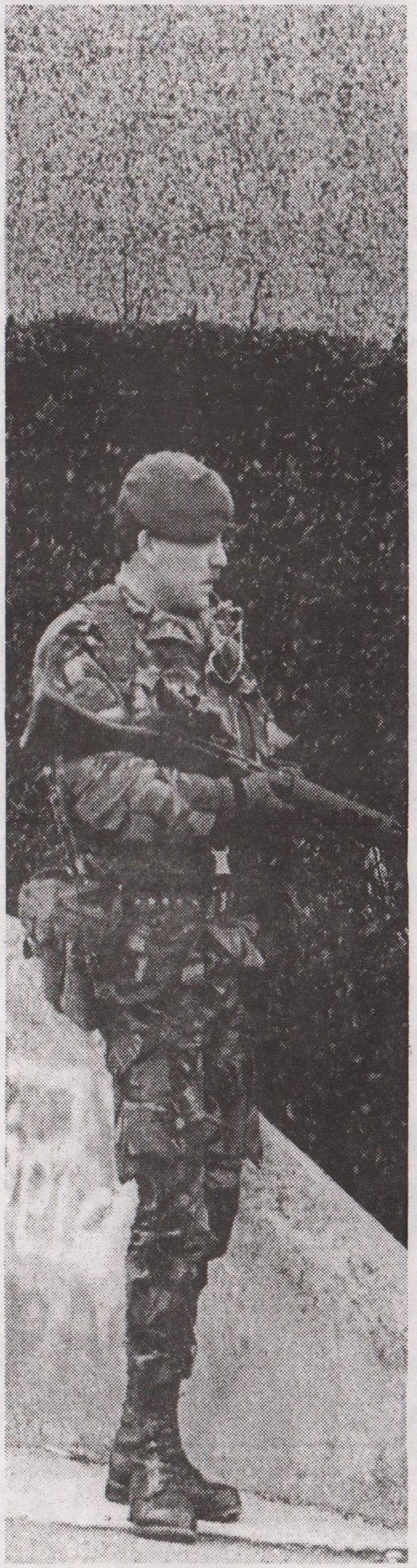
"CLASS WAR SAYS IT SUPPORTS ALL FORMS OF FIGHTBACK SO WHY NOT SUPPORT THE IRA"

We support working class fightback against oppression in all shapes and forms, including the right to bear arms against an imperialist power. But we do not support the IRA. Their politics are authoritarian and based on outdated forms of socialist/communist ideas which are proven to be wrong, or at best naive and unrealistic.

Authoritarian socialism and communism have been proved a dead duck - the events of the last 100 years have proven that no-one can be trusted to manage the affairs of the working class, other than the working class. Similarly no-one can be trusted to fight against the oppression of the working class other than the working class.

"NONE OF THE LEFT CRITICISE THE IRA SO WHAT GIVES CLASS WAR THE RIGHT TO TELL THE IRA HOW TO FIGHT THE BRITISH STATE - SHOULDN'T WE JUST LET THEM GET ON WITH IT?"

It's wrong to say that criticism of the IRA is a betrayal of the Irish catholic working class, or that British workers have no right to pass judgment on the Irish situation. These are the arguments of the middle class left, used to stop us thinking and acting for ourselves. We do not give uncritical support to anyone.



The Irish situation was created by the international ruling class, has been perpetuated by international capitalism and can only be solved by the international working class.

"WITH ALL THE HATRED AND RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY THAT EXISTS IN IRELAND WILL THERE EVER BE PEACE? SURELY IF THE BRITISH STATE PULLED OUT THEY'LL ALL KILL EACH OTHER?"

The British state has systematically split and counter split the Irish people for the last three hundred years - divide and rule - but those three hundred years have not been easy for the British ruling class. Time and time again the Irish working class have united across the sectarian divide to drive out those who have used religious bigotry as a tool for ensuring Ireland is kept under direct rule from Britain.

Things will become more and more difficult for the capitalists as the Irish working class realise that their interests are best served by uniting across the sectarian divide to smash not only capitalism, but all those who oppress them.

Only when Ireland is united, and capitalism smashed, will a strong Ireland be able to determine her own destiny.

If any Class War or Heavy Stuff readers want to find out more about the war in Ireland then "The Spirit of Freedom" (available from Attack International, BM 6577, London ,WC1N 3XX. for £1.00) is an excellent pamphlet to read.

Forward to revolution in Ireland, Britain and the World.

Micky McGuinness.

LANGUAGE & POWER

POWER

This article explores the way the political and social power of the ruling class is reinforced by their control of language.

In the 1930's an Italian Leftist called Gramsci came up with an analysis of Capitalism that made a lot of sense. He said that one of the ways in which the ruling class maintain control of society is by controlling the "*dominant ideology*"(or *hegemony*) of the State. What this means is that the dominant ideas in society are established by the ruling class itself, even down to working class people's attitudes and ideas about culture. The "Protestant work ethic", the notion of Property and Purchase,workers and bosses, the wage-labour system,Patriotism, Parliamentary Democracy-the dominant culture of society is part of the agenda set by the ruling class and nurtured within the working class as ideals to live by.

Obviously Class War's aim is to destroy the ruling class hegemony and get working class people setting their own agenda based on fightback and worker's control - when these ideas are dominant in society the ruling class would have lost control.

LANGUAGE

As I've said, whoever controls the hegemony of society controls that society - whoever controls language both at once. What I'm talking about is the ability of the ruling class to control language, control interpretations, the abstract concepts behind the *word* itself. And by that process to control thought; social control without coercion.The media has an incredible power to alter attitudes and perceptions.

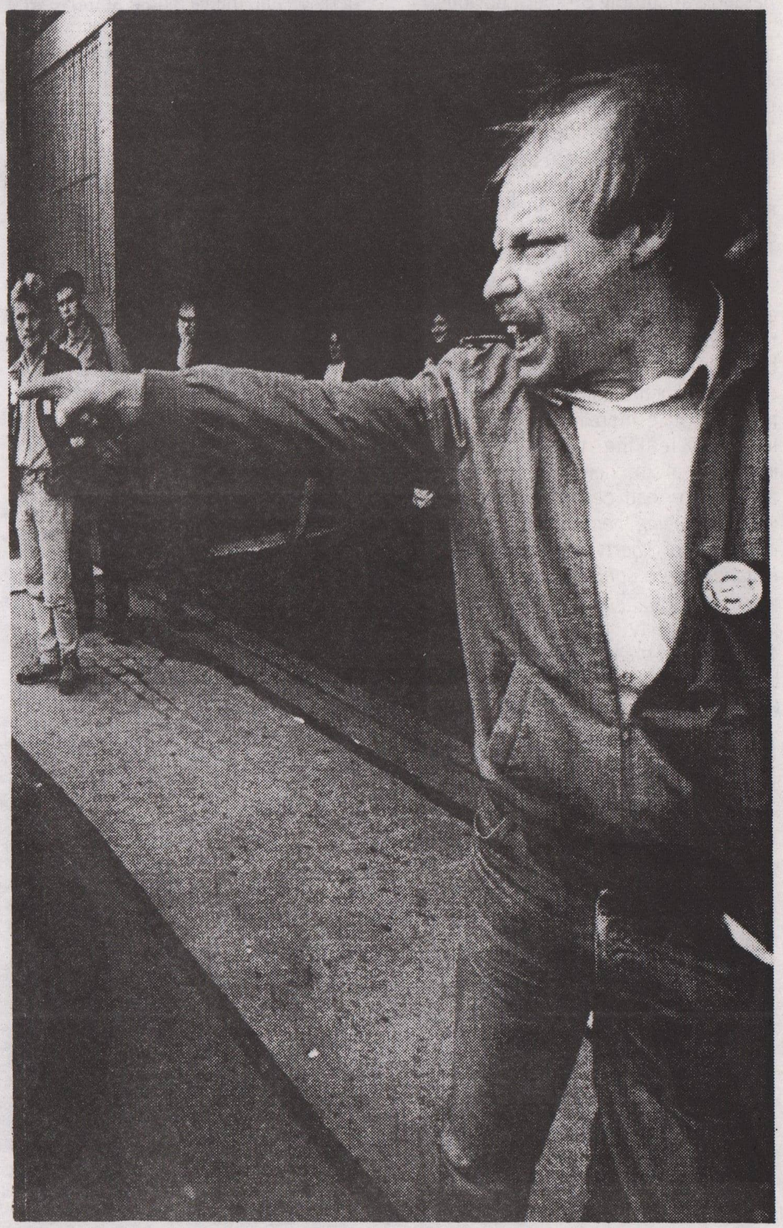
More than that it also has the power to subtly alter the meaning of keywords. It has long had the ability to remove troublesome words that may be useful to explanations of resistance or a new society.

"WAR IS PEACE"

George Orwell expressed these ideas in his book "1984". He portrayed a vision of the future in which a new official language, "Newspeak", had been introduced instead of English ("Oldspeak") as a form of thought control.

"It was intended that Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought ...should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. Its vocabulary was so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods.

This was done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable word and by stripping such words as remained of their orthodox meanings, and so far as possible of all secondary meanings whatever. *To give*



a single example. The word free still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as 'the dog is free from lice' or ' This field is free from weeds'. It could not be used in its old sense of 'politically free' or 'intellectually free', since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, and were therefore of necessity nameless."

[George Orwell "1984"].

But there are much wider issues at stake here than just a gut-reaction paranoia about "Big Brother", obviously "1984" is just a book, but it is important to understand how much simple changes in meaning or interpretation of words can alter the discussion of those words. The whole nature of social control and hegemony is brought into perspective - its subtle workings and power to manipulate. It can also affect the whole of political language and propaganda.[1]

" ...words which had once borne a heretical meaning were sometimes retained for the sake of convenience, but only with other meanings purged out of them. Countless other words such as honour, justice, morality (Orwell's liberal leanings leaking through here!), internationalism, democracy, science and religion had ceased to exist...*All words grouping themselves around the concepts of liberty and equality, for instance, were contained in the simple word crimethink*....The concept of political equality no longer existed and its secondary meaning had accordingly been purged out of the word *equal* " - (1984").

There is of course a question of whether or not the word is equal to the concept, you could argue that a concept can exist without a word to encapsulate it. This may well be so, but it becomes very hard to explain (perhaps even to think) a concept without words (try it), and if its not on the agenda then its not even going to be discussed....

ANARCHISM

A prime example of a troublesome word is "Anarchist" - the derision and mania aimed at those who adopt the politics of Anarchism,[2] has been used for a century to ward people away from even taking Anarchist politics seriously (not that this has ever been particularly difficult, since representatives of Anarchism have traditionally behaved like alien invaders from the planet Stupid).

Despite class struggle Anarchism's basically common-sense politics, Anarchism has lost its meaning so much that even Anarchists stick things on the word: Anarcho-Syndicalism, Anarcho-Communism, Anarcho-Pacifism etc. While "Libertarian", on the other hand seems to mean anything from Thatcherism to Bakunin, from free-market Capitalism to workers councils.

"CONSERVATIVE"

Last year, amidst a barrage of abuse heaped upon the BBC for 'Left-wing bias'(laugh I nearly paid my licence fee!), Norman "Spot the Balls" Tebbit launched a rabid attack on the fact that the word conservative(small 'c') is used to mean "one averse to change" and not Conservative (Big 'C' big deal):

"The word "conservative" is now used by the BBC as a word of abuse for anyone whose views differ from the insufferable, smug, sanctimonious, naive, guilt-ridden, wet, pink-ridden, orthodoxy of that sunset home of the third-rate minds of that third-rate decade, the 1960's.

"Hence the neo-nazis in South Africa are bracketed in smear by association with "their conservative allies" despite the fact that the Nazis were National Socialists.

"While poor(!) Mr. Gorbachev struggles to soften the Communist system, the extreme Hard-line Communists who oppose him are designated "conservatives". Indeed, to my astonishment, I learn from the BBC that Stalin and Brezhnev were "conservatives" while poor, ill-informed me, had thought they were Communists"
[Norman Tebbit].

What Tebbit is trying to do here, is to blatantly remove the real meaning of the word that is closest to his heart. What sticks in his throat is that conservative can be used to mean anything other than the Conservative Party, and can *even* be applied to organisations Tebbit doesn't like!

By chipping away at little issueslike this, the Tories are gradually changing political language within society in an attempt to totally marginalise ideas which are not their own, interpretations they

1 - Readers of Class War should know well that the style and language of political propaganda have a direct link to its accessibility and success.

For example, if its written like an encyclopedia then its meaning is lost on ordinary people - you may well be able to understand the words but you're simply not interested in wading through the bullshit.

2 - The Media and the Press have for a long time now used the phrase "self-styled " Anarchist to describe an Anarchist who is vaguely rational about their politics, so that they can be distinguished from the cranky bomb-throwing bunch of 'terrorists' that the Media have established as a "genuine" manifestation of Anarchism.

dislike.

In the same way the Labour Party attempts to identify socialism withSocialism, with the Labour Party so that they become the sole representatives of genuine Socialism. The deliberate confusion of militant and Militant benefits both Left and Right, providing more scapegoats or more 'members' depending on your viewpoint.

"COMMUNITY"

"Friends and strangers working, thinking and acting as one , and so on" [Darren Ryan - Heavy Stuff No.1].

Ideas about "community" are very close to the core of Class War's politics. The attitudes of working class unity and fightback that are summed up in the phrase "community resistance", are obviously not based on the same concept of community that which the Tories hold dear. Tory policy-makers talk about creation of a Conservative Community and the fact that Tories "*have, at the root of their instincts and policies, a particular idea of community which they wish to see fufilled.*" Their version of community has at its heart the family, ("*should not the State publicly and systematically discriminate in favour of families?*"), and the "*units of social life which are the natural focus of people's loyalties*". This "*Community*" is "*populated by men and women of property*", and their methods for strengthening this idea of a Conservative Community include the processes whereby " *Schools now have more say over their own affairs; tenants can manage their own council estates; hospitals will soon be self-governing; Neighbourhood Watch schemes are bringing people together*"

[Robin Harris - Centre of Policy Studies].

'Community Policing' is the kind of phrase at the roots of Tory ideas about control of society.

More than a nasty vision of the future, these ideas are a direct attack on working class communities, part of a sustained campaign aimed at splintering and destroying working class fightback, breaking the links of common experience and solidarity at each opportunity.

In the past we had to suffer a whole variety of weapons, from racism and police attacks to yuppies, and we can only expect these attacks to continue until it becomes too dangerous to take on our communities. The Tories have made it plain how important the control of communities is to those in power, in their attempt to wrestle the word from the grasp of working class culture and to turn it into a mockery, a theme park of grassing neighbours and jolly Policemen.

IDENTITY CRISIS

Evil scumbag Lady Porter and Westminster City Council have recently tried (and failed!) to get a court to give them permission to sell off a low-rent housing estate, the Grosvenor Estate, which was built as "dwellings for the working class and no other purpose"

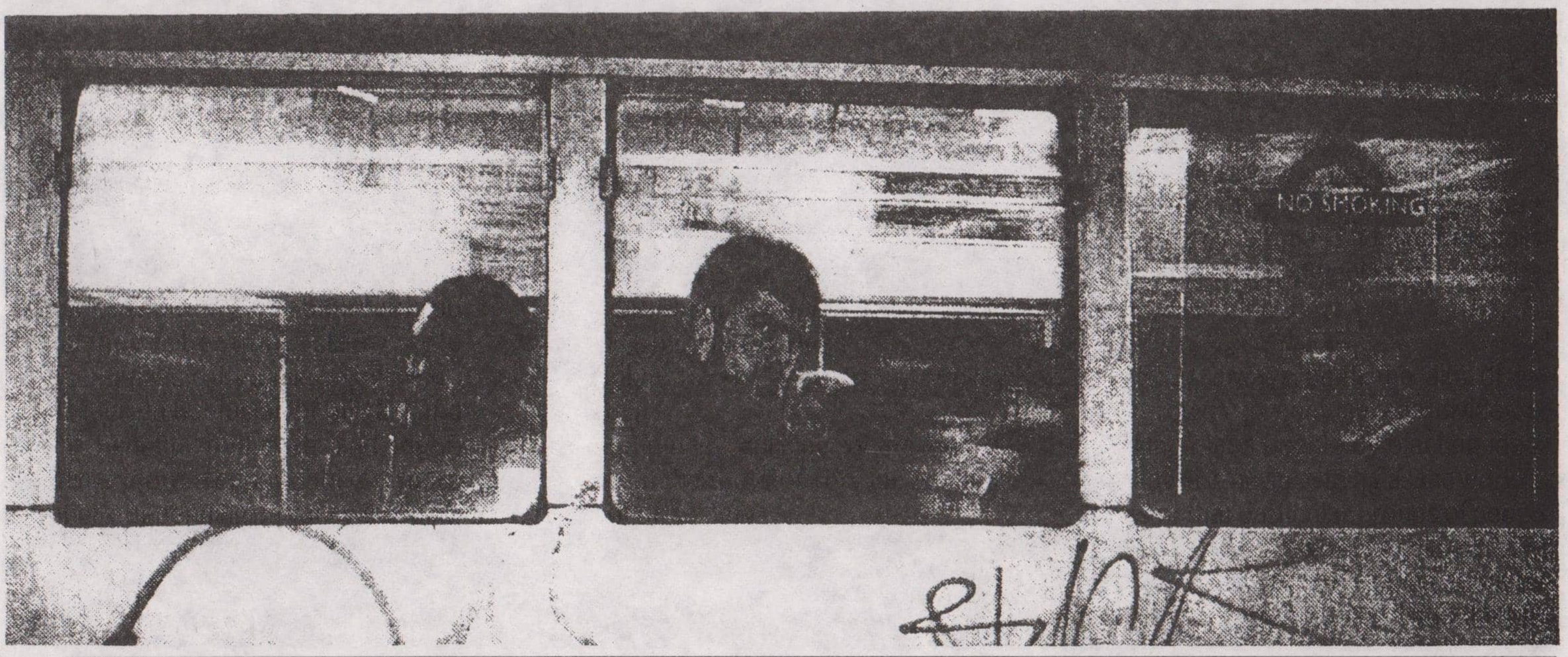
The Tory council tried to get the flats sold off on the grounds that the term "working class" has "*no clear meaning in today's society*"[Evening Standard 19/3/90].

It has always been the aim of the ruling class to confuse and divide the working class people by planting ideas that there is no such thing as the working class or that particular groups of people are "no longer" working class. The Tories are constantly bleating about the "end of the working class" and the fact that "everyone is middle class now".

It is obvious that you cannot have a united working class if members of the class think they are members of an "underclass"[3] with nothing in common with the people around them, or part ofthe "new middle class", or whatever. All the while working class people are divided and fighting amongst ourselves we are no threat to the bastards in control.

By manipulating the meaning of words like 'class' the ruling class can alter the identity of whole sections of society, the culture and attitudes of people become changed, and suddenly their interests lie with the middle class or some other scum who are actually are their enemy.

Class-consciousness is an important part of the struggle for working class control, we must never lose sight of who we are, we must always fight against the mickey mouse class analysis of those who have the interests of the ruling



3 - There is no such thing as an "underclass", a seperate mass of 'disenfranchised' people. The working class has always been an underclass, has never had a "say". People who talk of an underclass are trying to divide working class people - the working class has never been one homogeous mass, there have always been better off and worse off. The idea of an "underclass" is a Sociologist's wet dream.

class at heart, and who want to render "the working class" meaningless and voiceless.

"THE END OF COMMUNISM"

Political theorists have talked since the 60s of "the End of Ideology". This has been updated recently, following the events in Eastern Europe, to "the End of History" and "the Death of Marxism". What these "philosophers" are actually on about is the 'triumph' of liberal democracy over totalitarian Eastern Eurpoean-style Communism (or State Capitalism if you prefer), referring to the way the systems of so-called Communism are collapsing all over the world, in favour of Western-style liberal democracies. This doesn't necessarily mean people actually *want* liberal democracy in itself (I mean that I'd rather be poked in the eye than burnt alive, but it doesn't mean I *want* to be poked in the eye!).

As Communism becomes a dirty word so Communist Parties all over Eastern Europe are abandoning it in favour of "Social Democratic Party" or "Democratic Socialist Party" (and the Italian Communist Party are now "The Democratic Party of the Left"). This doesn't mean anything has particularly changed (meet the new boss, same as the old boss), it just goes to show that the name is more than superficially important. After all, the Communist Party began life as the "Bolshevik" or "majority" Party, and how can you lose if you've called yourself the majority?To talk of the death of Communism before it has even begun, shows more than a little wishful thinking on the part of the middle class intellectuals who come up with such theories. Communism, as Class War would describe it, has never existed on a large scale, only in short-term periods of resistance, like in Hungary in 1956, or the like. In countries like Romania, working class people began organising after the revolution in ways that Class War would like to see our revolutionary movement developing, with street and factory councils, very close to genuine forms of Communism (as opposed to Russian-style dictatorships), and at the same time their slogans signify their hatred of what they have been led to believe has been Communism, the system that has kept them enslaved all their lives. That these workers organisations were crushed so quickly by the "National Salvation Front" is evidence of the ability of the Communist Party to fool all the people some of the time.

You can argue forever about the "true meaning" of a word like Communism, but you're on a loser right from the start if you have to justify your definitions before you can even talk about the politics of the word.

DON'T YOU GET FRESH WITH ME!

Words are 'empty' vessels, not charged with eternal meaning. They're not 'sacred', not to be scared of. They are putty in our hands!...No word has a fixed meaning, and every word has a multiplicity of interpretations.[4] There have obviously been myriad changes in words and languages, not least by advertising, but these don't usually change the meaning of the word eg "fresh", "clean", or "new" are simply lies, they seem to think that if you repeat them often enough someone might believe you! They don't alter the meaning of the word that they misuse.

MEANING-LESS-NESS

The point is not to fight for "words" (they're just a string of letters), it's ideas, not words, that matter - but to evolve forms of struggle which can leave no doubt as to their message, no ambiguity; so that to misinterpret them is an impossibility, to divert their meaning would render them meaning-less.

The point is that, although they control language, it is still possible for us to use it against the ruling class, to subvert and undermine, and we must realise the importance of this.

SEIZE THE TIME!

The combativity of the wider working class has seldom been so focussed as it has been on the poll tax.

Here is a point at which the hegemony of respect for the law grinds uncomfortably against a widespread revolt against an "unfair" tax and the government that invented it. What we must spread is the idea that no government could possibly fulfil the desires of the working class. And if the dominant ideology within society includes 'the power of the working class', instead of "do what you're told", then the language can become *our* language, and *our* culture, *our* words, *our* meanings, *our* time will come!

Neil Warne

4 - It has become a political cliche that one person's "freedom fighter" is another person's "terrorist". A good example of a word that has totally reversed its meaning is "wicked", which has completely changed from 'evil' to meaning 'brilliant'. "Not bad meaning bad, but *bad meaning good!*" - Run DMC, 'Peter Piper'.

LETTERS

Dear Heavy Stuff,

"The Middle Class" by Sean Riley(Heavy Stuff 3) was an interesting attempt to describe the social and political contours of the middle class, except that anger and hatred replaced analysis. Three statements, for me, summed up what the article should have explored: "the vast majority of the left [are] middle class"; "the middle class are not important from a revolutionary point of view except in so far as they hinder the working class from becoming a revolutionary class"; "[the middle class] has a long history of producing courageous fighters against Capitalism [and in] any revolution splits and a part of it sides with the working class."

The most dominant and vocal of 'the left' may be middle class; If literature or public speaking is the main output, middle class people are more likely to have the education and confidence to shine. But what is the function of the middle class within revolutionary movements? A guide to who is middle class might be helpful, not just vague hints about what someones job is. Almost all low-level professionals have nothing but their labour power to fall back on. You're in danger of sliding into generalisations.

In your sweeping statements about alternative and single-issue politics I agree with what you say about the political effects of these movements. Though, it is ridiculous to suggest people get involved because it is "the only thing which threatens to fuck up their lives". People see through single-issue politics and move on elsewhere, and their involvement may have been in ignorance of the real function of the alternative middle class.

These criticisms are linked to the strongest parts of the article - the moralising of middle class people. Middle class people see themselves as standard human beings, anyone else can be seen as sub-human. The alternative middle class see themselves as saviours of humanity. Those from working class backgrounds, but now in the middle class will need to deal with feelings of loss and guilt, from what they've lost, and what they've gained. Feelings of superiority cover up such obstacles.

What about middle class people from working class backgrounds in revolutionary organisations? They express their superiority by treating their own perceptions as more meaningful than those of others and putting their own motives first. So human rights really signify middle class people's rights. The newly-fledged middle class person has to find his/her way around in this bourgeois culture and ideology, and the reaction against it is what leads many into left groups.

Just dipping into the psychological and social meaning of the middle class shows how much more complicated the picture is than the 'middle class shite' conclusions in Sean Riley's article. The parallel I wanted to draw is between those crude conclusions, and the equally crude middle class perceptions of the working class. If political analysis is the aim, then gaps and errors in arguments need opening up,not covering up. If the motive for doing it starts to be shuffling people from one side or the other of the 'us and them' divide -quite arbitrarily and to no other end than to make us feel OK - then this needs to be distinguished from trying to explain and change the world. There is a danger of generalisations becoming blunt instruments which could stifle debate on class.

TJ,Newcastle.

REPLY: Dear T J

Your letter on my Middle Class article asked many questions and made many assumptions. I don't have the space to deal with each of your points; instead, I'll reply in 4 sections that cover some of the main areas of your letter:

1. You find my article too superficial and state that anger and hatred replace analysis and being a 'blunt instrument'.

There is anger in my article, and rightly so. It sets out to demonstrate the nature and functions of the middle class in Britain, in straightforward

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terms, with passion and clarity, in a short space. I believe I was fairly successful. To summarise briefly: in the course of the article I criticise a part (and ex-) group in Class War for adopting a Pol Pot-type of attitude to middle class people. I state in the "Class Health Note" that the middle class have their own honourable tradition of fightback against capitalism and oppression and that in any revolution, the working class and split and take sides.

I mention the brutalising affect of middle class culture on individuals. I even bemoan the fact that self-destruction is all too often the end result of the middle class dropouts who suffer from confusion and self-disgust.

But, much more importantly, I outline the function that the middle class perform for capitalism and their effect on the working class I also stress their separate interests and agendas *as a class* within capitalism. This is hardly the rantings of some hate-filled nutter!

I would suggest that the problem the article poses for you is that it deals directly with uncomfortable truths.

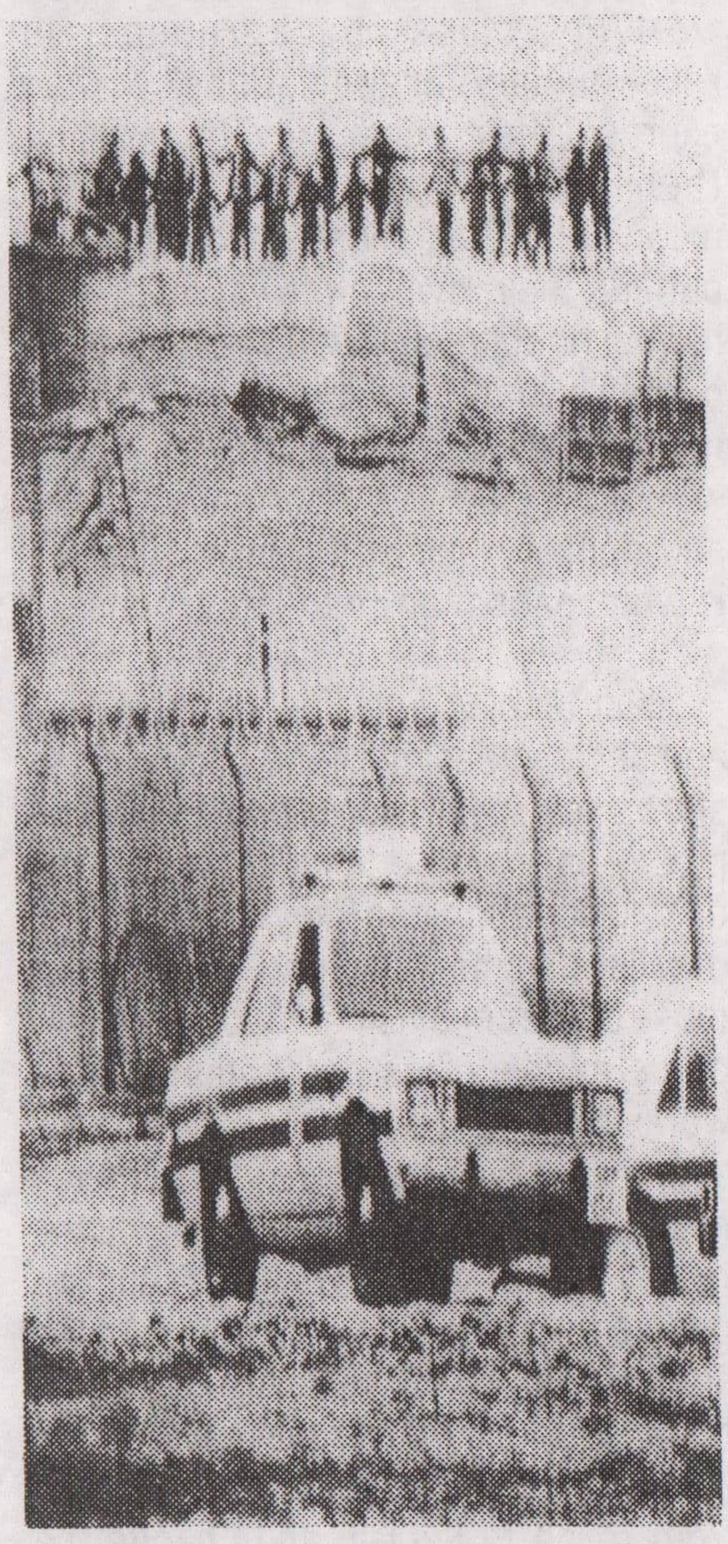
As for my article being a "blunt instrument", as you put it, you're quite right! A blunt instrument is precisely what's required to shatter the accumulated 'clinker' surrounding the subject of class in general and the middle class in particular. This 'clinker' represents the work of generations of middle class thinkers and writers in their efforts to mystify and obscure the reality of capitalism and class, which I point out in the article.

I could have chosen to use language the way you do, but I would have just added to the problem. Anyway, I don't agree with your (implied) view that the working class are unable to understand the ins and outs of capitalism and class. Your assertion that reality is a "complex set of phenomena" governed by "moral imperatives" etc. etc., betrays an attitude common in the Left that seeks to keep knowledge and facts the exclusive property of an intellectual elite.

2. You give a long list of what my article *should* have contained.

I agree with some of this. It could have done with being more detailed and longer, with a fuller analysis of middle class identity. However, the main reason behind the article was to describe the *function* of the middle class. It would have been valuable to explore the transition from working- to middle class and I will do so in the next article on the working class.

The rest of your comments here seem concerned with exploring the inner psyche of the middle class. I don't think this is a useful activity. I agree that middle class life is miserable, brutal and lonely. If you need to describe this, then



you only have to examine the novels, poems, films, paintings etc. that the middle class by and large produce. Alienation, angst, psychosis, anomie etc. all figure large in their cultural output!

Undoubtedly, the middle class have much to gain from the destruction of the class system that causes them so much grief!

3. You criticise my attitude to single issue politics.

I disagree with you completely. The middle class are involved with single issues for 2 reasons:

i) It furthers their own interests as a class in the role of 'experts';

ii) It's merely a continuation of their normal function within capitalism, which is to solve the problems of production and social organisation that capitalism faces as it continues.

This is what CND, 'feminism', vegetarianism, ecology, therapy, are all about. None of them challenge the social relations of capitalism, and they never will. Many single issue politics are in fact deeply reactionary, and at best divert and divide opposition to capitalism. In the article, I quote from the book, "Strange Victories" (Elephant Editions) that gives an excellent, and class, analysis of the role of the middle class and single issue politics within capitalism.

The notion that middle class people work their way through single issue politics to something better, or as you say, "People see through single issue politics and move on elsewhere." Where, I would ask? The yield of people from single issue politics getting involved in class politics is *extremely* low.

4. Your comments at the end of your letter are irritating. My article does not come to the conclusion "middle class shite". In the fact the "summary" states:

"So that's the middle class, they are more than just the dogsbodies of the ruling class, they help to guide the development of Capitalism and look into future possibilities. They are crucial to the running of advanced capitalist economies like Britain. Sometimes they come into conflict with the Bosses but essentially they are on the same side.

From our point of view, their most important role is to control us, to persuade us that the present state of affairs is permanent, that we can only change things so long as we work within the limits they set whether they be parliamentary, pacifist protest or within the "party"..."

CONCLUSION

Some of your points are valid, but in the main you are squealing like a stuck pig because my article on the middle class exposes uncomfortable facts and truths.

We face a choice, to stay on the terrain of bourgeois intellectualism, contemplating our navels and talking about ourselves, or to get involved in the real world and talk to real people and get our hands dirty in the struggle.

I have made my choice. What are you going to do?

Yours,

Sean "Sledgehammer" Riley.

QUESTION TIME

POLL TAX

Q. What about the poll tax?

A. Unlike previous policies of Tory governments of the '80s, the poll tax is seen as a direct attack on the whole of the working class. The specific role of the tax is to bring local government spending under the direct control of Westminster, but this isn't the reason why millions aren't paying: it's simply because we can't afford to pay or refuse to pay the same amount as a rich bastard. And quite rightfully so.

Class War have continually advocated the use of 'militant' tactics in order to smash this tax, as 'unfair ' as all taxes are. We are both using and witnessing the widespread use of these tactics.

Class consciousness has undoubtedly been reawakened as so many are identifying their **real enemies:** not just the Tories and the rich, but the police, the courts, the bailiffs and the Labour councils just as much as the Tory ones.

Will John Major announce that the poll tax has caused more poverty and misery than expected, and that he's going to reform it? What threat will a Labour victory pose?

With the poll tax heading into its second year in England and Wales, and its third in Scotland, people, sucked dry by a war in the Gulf, face the prospect of a General Election. Many see the poll tax not too far behind Thatcher **and** Major.

Supporting non-payers, challenging the courts, beating off the bailiffs, defending our right todemonstrate, and emphasising our right to self-defence, are among the many strengths of the anti-poll tax movement; and it's growing.

But, unless we want to see the poll tax reformed, instead of completely destroyed, alongside poverty, exploitation and misery, we must start answering the question: "What is the alternative to the poll tax?"

Otherwise, the anti-poll tax movement will have nowhere left to go, and will end up in the history books, documented as a well-disciplined civil disobedience movement that brought parliamentary democracy to its senses.

In the next issue of The Heavy Stuff, we'll be taking a closer look at the poll tax - Watch this space!

MUTUAL AID AND COMMUNITY CARE

The first part of this article is taken from an interview with a man who is paraplegic as a result of a spinal injury caused by a motorbike accident. It expresses his view of life and other people's attitudes towards disabled people.

"WHAT SORT OF CHANGES DID YOU EXPERIENCE ON BECOMING DISABLED?"

"The first thing that comes to mind is people's attitude towards you. There are many types of attitude. One is the patronising assumption that you're not a normal person (whatever that is!) And

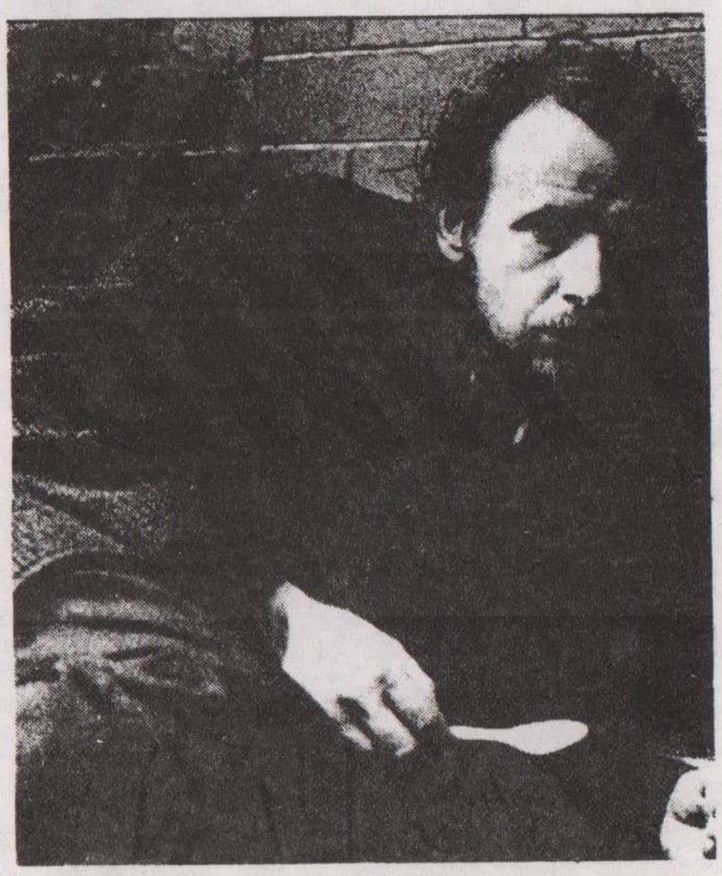
that people in wheelchairs or who are otherwise disabled can't express themselves and aren't capable of voluntary free expression. For example people don't ask YOU the question, they ask the people you are with. I think that's down to people not knowing how to react to disabled people. Awareness of the reasons why you are disabled is negligible. It's all very well saying that it's a "lack of education", but the only time most people encounter disability is when it's them, their friends or loved ones who are disabled.

Another type is the person who knows someone who is disabled, and I'm talking from experience here. They tend to

compare you, for whatever reason, to the disabled person they know, no matter know different the causes and disability may be.

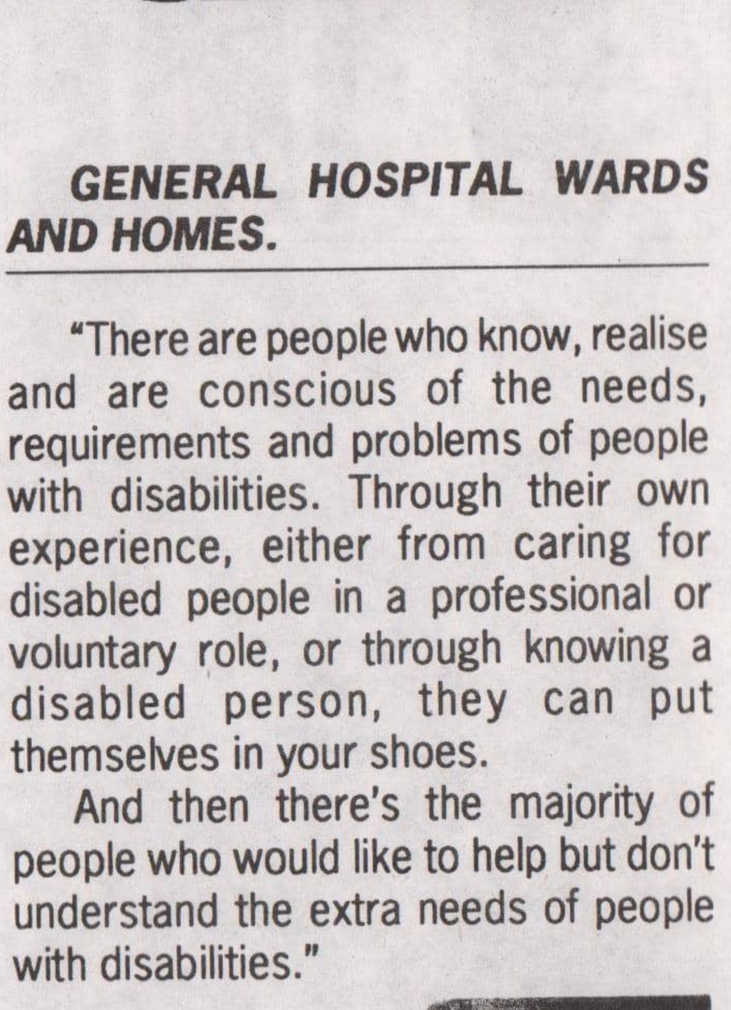
Or they compare you to the films, TV programmes, books and adverts they've seen and assume you're all the same and can do the London Marathon!"

ONE IN EIGHT HOUSEHOLDS IN LONDON HAS AT LEAST ONE DISABLED PERSON, AND MOST OF THESE HOUSEHOLDS HAVE AN ANNUAL INCOME OF LESS THAN £7,800. THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM IS HIDDEN BY THE NUMBER OF DISABLED LIVING IN GERIATRIC, PSYCHIATRIC OR GENERAL HOSPITAL WARDS AND HOMES.



"There are people who know, realise and are conscious of the needs, requirements and problems of people with disabilities. Through their own experience, either from caring for disabled people in a professional or voluntary role, or through knowing a disabled person, they can put themselves in your shoes.

And then there's the majority of people who would like to help but don't understand the extra needs of people with disabilities."



HOMELESSNESS HAS RISEN FAR FASTER AMONG THE DISABLED THAN IN THE GENERAL POPULATION. IN LONDON THE INCREASE HAS BEEN UP TO 146%, COMPARED TO A 70% OVERALL INCREASE.

"CAN YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE PARTICULAR PROBLEMS DISABLED PEOPLE FACE?"

"Most people take access to public places like shops, cinemas, nightclubs, clubs, swimming pools and even their own place of work for granted. However this is one of the first things I came to

realise will pose difficulties.

Even in this day and age when public awareness for disabled people is higher than ever before, new buildings are still being built without provision for them. This is not just the entrance to the building. Badly designed features also include toilets, doors, handrails, electric sockets and light switches which are always too high or too low."

IN THE LATE 70'S THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT ESTIMATED THAT OVER 500,000 HOMES SUITABLE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE WERE NEEDED.

BUT LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS HAVE ONLY BUILT A LITTLE OVER 52,000.

"For example many clothes shops are on more than one floor, making it impossible to visit the ones that aren't at ground level. Even the clothes that are available are often unsuitable for some disabled people who are far from the "ideal" shape.

Also there are only three cinemas in Bristol, where I live, that I can get into, which cuts down the choice of films I can see, especially as two of them are of the "Arty" type.

With clubs it's the same old story of poor access and lack of facilities. If I had a drink for ever time I've been called a "fire hazard" I'd be a happy man!"

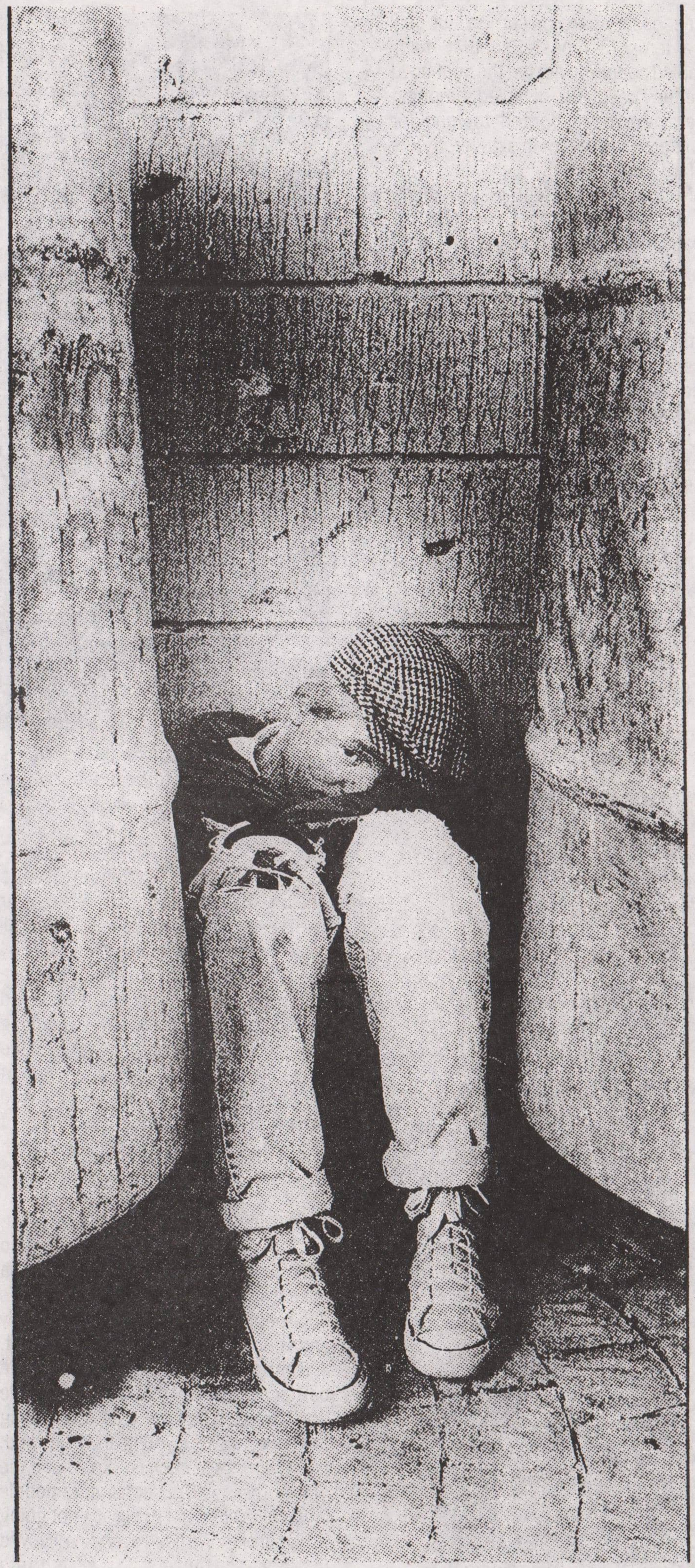
THE REPORT CONCLUDES THAT PUBLIC RENTED ACCOMMODATION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR MOST DISABLED PEOPLE BUT THE NUMBER OF NEW COUNCIL LETTINGS HAS FALLEN BY HALF SINCE 1979.

THE RIGHT TO BUT POLICY IS NOT ONLY REDUCING COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK. IT'S ALSO CREAMING OFF THE BEST AND MOST READILY ADAPTABLE.

"HOW ARE YOUR EXTRA NEEDS PROVIDED FOR AT THE MOMENT?"

At a basic level the legislation laid down for, and the bodies governing the day to day living of disabled people, are shrouded in a thick haze of bureaucratic mystery. So trying to get them to work for me is virtually impossible.

Many disabled people need "carers". Voluntary organisations have in the past taken the hassle out of getting the



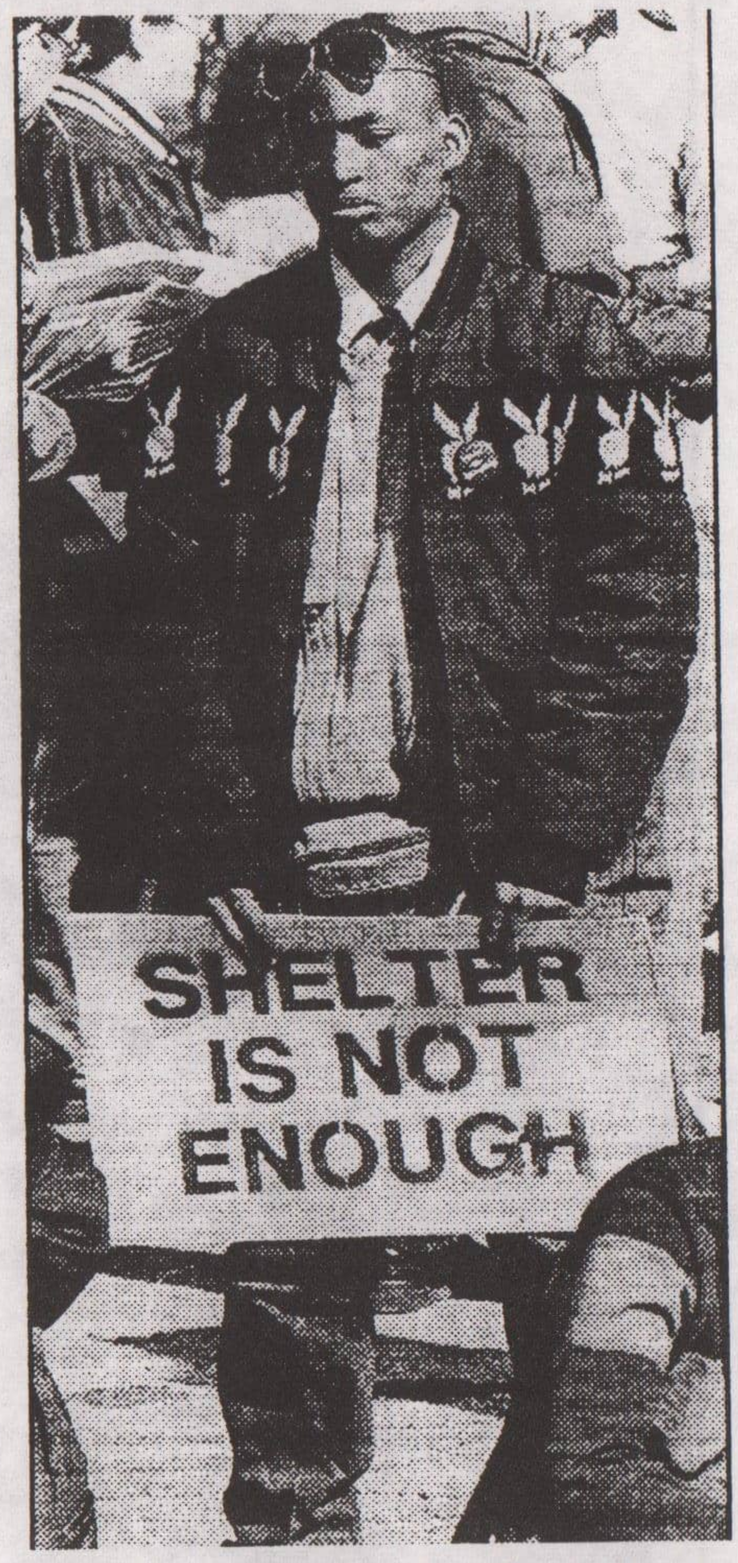
necessary care or carers, but only on a temporary basis, so that many disabled people do not get the continued care they need. The disabled, amongst others, are being forced to fend for themselves as part of this governments welfare cuts."

Nobody wants to feel sorry for them, but it's hard not to feel sorry for the situation disabled people are in.

Unless they belong to the wealthy class they're bound to have a hard time getting what they need to get by. We all have a hard enough time, and they all need more specialised and expensive things than we do. Rich bastards drive £50,000 cars while people haven't got decent wheelchairs, why? There's no profit in wheelchairs.

Under this government things are getting harder for sure, but it's never been easy.People with the least of disabilities were shoved in homes, out of sight of polite society. Now the government wants everyone out into the community - it's cheaper.

That would be fine but at the same time they are destroying communities," there is no such thing as society" we are



told, every person for themselves is what we have been force fed - but where does that leave people who need help to get them by?

Under State Socialism things wouldn't have been much better. Our needs assessed by faceless, all-powerful bureaucrats and handed down to us by our beneficent masters. Fuck that! we make everything, and what we need should belong to us already. Everything ever created, every building, every piece of machinery, every wheelchair, is part of our common inheritance. And whetheran individual is capable of producing or not, they should get what they need.

Disabled people are people first, and disabled after, and we'll all involved in the same struggle. If a shop or cinema put a "NO DISABLED" notice outside it's door people would protest immediately and strongly, but they're not that blatant. A flight of steps is just an effective a barrier, it's just that non-disabled people don't notice it half the time. Everything is planned with the young and fit in mind; that's where the cash is. So what if the old; mothers with pushchairs; or people in wheelchairs can't get in, it's not going to hurt profits. We need everyone invoved in our activities. We should start listening to people's needs and take action to sort out the problems.

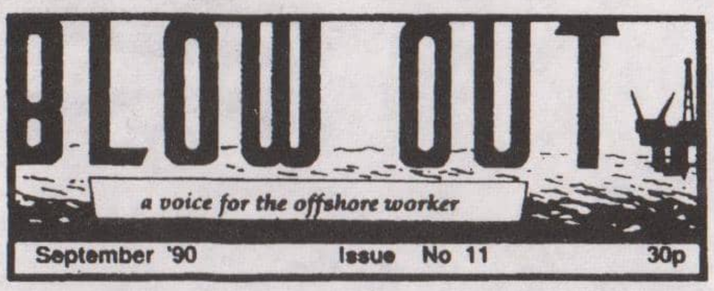
Many people do have extra needs and may need help obtaining them. At present, they must rely on government for many things. We have to make it clear that they'll get all the help they ask for when that government ceases to function.

If we're calling for non-payment of all taxes, we've got to assure people their needs are going to be catered for. We could start now: setting up the sort of organisations, within the community, that allow people to get what they need.

Don't feel sorry for the disabled - feel anger: anger at the system that gives us all a hard time. It's all ours, we've just got to reach our and take it!

The first thing to do is to start listening, to try to 'the extra needs of people with disabilities'. Anyone with knowledge or experience of these needs will be welcome to write in The Heavy Stuff. Let's get some dialogue going and make sure no one's left outside, at the bottom of a poxy flight of steps.

REVIEWS



END OF AN ERA

BLOW OUT: a voice for the offshore worker

- 52 Guild st., Aberdeen, AB1 2NB

Since the Piper Alpha explosion where 167 men lost their lives, the Offshore Industries Liaison Committee (OILC) has been working hard to keep safety on the oil companies' agenda.

Blowout (OILC's paper) has the potential to be the most boring piece of shit ever committed to paper, but instead...it's angry and informative in its struggle to spread its message to all offshore workers in the oil industry.

After 20 years of struggle, there is no trade union recognition on the rigs, people are killed and injured every day in the most unsafe working environment in Western Europe.

The OILC are trying to organise on the rigs despite threats of violence and sackings. They are fighting for safety, fighting for job security, and fighting for the right to organise themselves.

Blowout is full of information about strikes, sit-ins, lock-outs, and sabotage - the best part of all is the letters page, where what have got to be the most militant industrial workers, make their views on a number of topics, including union bureaucrats.

The OILC is fighting sackings and blacklistings, and struggling for safety at work. Let's hope they succeed and that their supporters don't let them become yet another bureaucratic union.

REVOLVER

- The 2000AD Comics Group (Fleetway Publications)

I've decided to do this review before reading Issue 7 and guess what? It's the last issue. Apparently they didn't sell enough and the accountants closed them down. Which just goes to show what a crap system production for profit really is!

In general, 'adult' comics and graphic novels are really increasing in popularity at the moment, and I thought Revolver was one of the best efforts. It worked on many levels: humour, adventure, pure fantasy, great artwork, and not least, social and political comment.

Of course, many people will sneer at the thought of a comic having anything important to say but, although it didn't pretend to give any answers, Revolver brought up many important questions and showed us new ways to look at things.

To the artists at Revolver: if you want your work published, and at the same time want to join the movement to stuff the tunnel-visioned geeks who shut you down.....get it touch with us at The Heavy Stuff!

the free

THE FREE

- M. Gilliland (Attack International)

This is a new editions of the book that was first published in 1986. This edition is a much smarter book, with a new cover that is more attractive, a better layout and typesetting.

The Free is a very good story; the characters are brought to life and make the tale involving, and the ending does justice to a story of hope and ongoing struggle.

This is not a blueprint for a revolution, however. There are improbable occurrences that don't bear up to political analysis. Read as a story: it's a very entertaining book.

Available from: Attack International, BM 6577, London WC1N 3XX

OUR TIME HAS COME

The collapse of the state communist tyrannies in Eastern Europe has given Class War an unparalleled opportunity: to well and truly get our politics onto the centre stage of the European political agenda, well away from the Lefty fringes.

In East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere, the brief honeymoon with Western capitalism is already over - disillusioned workers are realising that they are being provided with nothing better than the Stalinism of Hoenecker and Ceaucescu. They aren't going to sit back and embrace capitalism, when all it'll do is to make a fast buck out of them, just like their previous ruling class did.

Just as in the West, the communist and Trotskyist parties, ranting and raving, are following the old bosses of the East down the plughole of history: organisations like Militant have seen to that.

But in stark contrast, the black flags of anarchism have surfaced in force, all over Russia, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, becoming part of a vibrant and significant social movement. We must do all that we can to be a part of this current, and build a truly autonomous class struggle all over Europe.

In 1992, the European Community will declare the single market, but it's irrelevant and foolish of us to wait until then to respond to the ruling class and its desires - we need to build and defend a coherent class struggle European movement, right now.

A movement capable of concerted and lasting action across the continent, East and West.

Class War delegates have already attended conferences in Germany and France, while others are about to speak throughout Italy. We're concentrating on our links with European groups who share our political views: in Norway, Finland, Denmark, Spain, Italy, France, Holland, Belgium, Greece, Sweden, Turkey, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

The response is good and means that we have a lot of common ground on which to create real alternatives to both capitalism and state communism.

Class War groups are appearing faster than we can keep track of them! There are now 3 Class War groups in the USA and the New York group has already produced its own Class War paper, which will become regular. As far afield as Hong Kong, delegates are asking to attend our conference.

As a result of so much genuine interest, we're organising a week-long conference in September 1991. It'll take the form of meetings, rallies and events, all over Hackney, in East London. Delegates from Russia and every European country have already been invited to attend, to discuss their current political situations, strategies and methods; and how all of us need to develop a unified response. It looks as though a minimum of 75 people will be attending from Germany alone - so get your booking in soon!!

We welcome EVERYONE interested in forging a new class struggle movement - a movement BEYOND Nationalism, Marxism, Syndicalism and Separatism.

WE ARE ASKING YOU TO HELP US IN THIS AMBITIOUS PROJECT.

FOR A NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT

CLASS WAR, HACKNEY, LONDON, ENGLAND, SEPTEMBER 1991.

JOIN CLASS WAR

The Class War Federation definitely put itself on the map over recent months, both physically and politically.

Three excellent conferences already in the 90's have helped this along. We discussed and agreed (among other things) an approved constitution, the development of local and national action plans and a 'New member's pack.' Look out this summer for a new publication, an in depth political statement.

GROWING

Nationwide we welcomed new groups into the Federation from Redditch, Redhill, Grays, Doncaster, Caister, Edinburgh, Leeds and Liverpool as well as active contacts from individuals elsewhere. But we know there's more of you out there so get in touch and get active.

As for those moaning doubters who'd thought we'd turned into lefties or would fall apart with our rigorous approach: We see our principles remain unchanged. That is how our organisation thrives; without leaders. Instead we rely on the input from each and every one of our members. We work together to make a future for us all.

Last year started off quietly but along came Spring with a bang: on the 31st of March rioting hit central London over the Poll Tax. We at Class War were over the moon, on national TV saluting the working class heroes of the day. (Where the Left were is anyone's guess aside for "Supergrass" Militant, but that's another story.)

The Hotline started glowing white hot with calls from 'Clive Anderson Talks Back' to the Economist wanting a comment / appearance / opinion from Class War. You'd have had to be deaf and blind not to have noticed us for months after the riot.

In spite of an 'Enemy within' media campaign and rumours of a Met. cops rematch, we refused to be intimidated off the streets. As a result our popularity has grown. Many now see our common sense politics as not just an option but a necessity.

NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR

While the left were siding with Saddam Hussein we made no distinction between various sets of world leaders. We said 'Turn the guns on the real enemy' - Major, Bush, and Hussein (Class War 44). Nationally our stand against the war gained support from many who had no time for the radical vicars, peace marches and loony lefties who, it seems have changed sides yet again and are now supporting self- determination for the Kurds.

CLASS WAR

'Britain's most unruly tabloid' has really started to realise its potential. First of all it increased in size by four more pages, then with a technological facelift, we produced a new logo, new layout with extra colour. We didn't mind bragging about constantly getting letters commenting on the paper's improvement both in content and appearance.

Our new centre pages 'Feature section' being particularly praised. Here we were able to feature and comment more in depth on issues such as The Gulf War, The Strangeways siege etc. Certainly as Federation members we are proud to be selling Class War. In the future we plan to publish the paper every month - watch out the nationals!

We've also got a nice little sideline in merchandise: Class War mugs, stickers, badges, posters and T shirts. Our Anti-poll Tax packs were outstandingly popular. In total over 100,000 'Fuck the poll tax 'stickers were produced and distributed.

Much of this has been possible due to the hard work of the Surrey group as well as the Federation as a whole. The paper collective, National and international secretaries, Treasurer, Regional organisers and all the membership have worked hard to build a solid platform for Class War to go into the 90's, and thanks to Tyneside's work we're looking forward to a new and more regular 'Heavy Stuff.'

In the 'Run down Kenneth Clarke' paper, last year we said "Our time has come." We still believe this, call us arrogant bastards, we don't care. Class War is now the largest revolutionary working class organisation in Britain. The Left's so called leadership have shown again and again that they are neither revolutionary or working class.

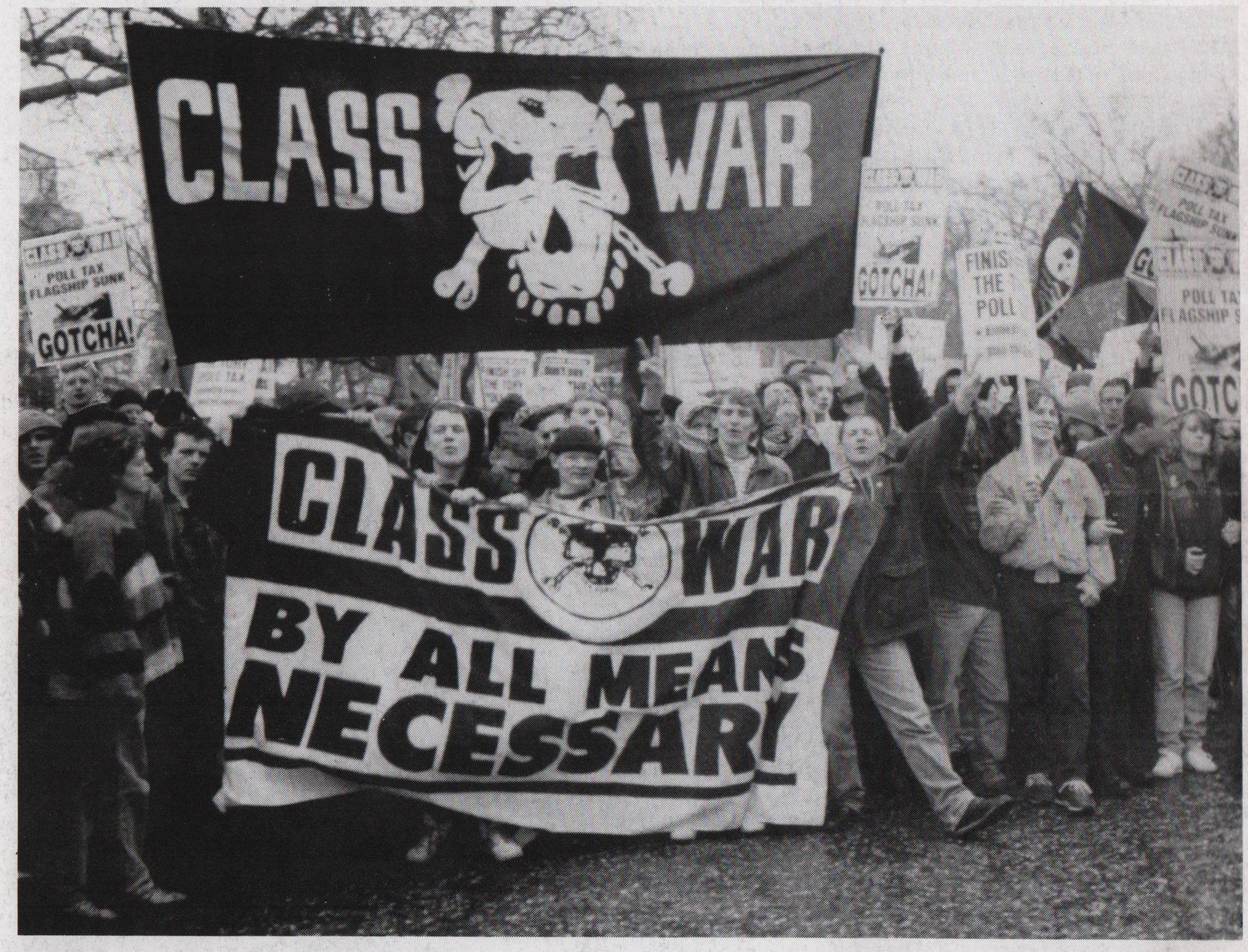
So Get Active, Get Organised, Get in touch.

CLASS WAR
NATIONAL SECRATARY
PO BOX 39, SW PDO
MANCHESTER M15.

CLASS WAR — BRITAINS MOST UNRULY TABLOID

WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE HEAVY STUFF

- **"Attempting to disguise their real dilletantism and lack of any analysis" - RED ACTION**
- **"It's as accurate as a Sekonda, but only costs £1.49" - DEREK HATTON**
- **"A monstrous carbuncle on the face of British politics" - PRINCE CHARLES**
- **"If you know these people, shop 'em" - TOMMY SHERIDAN**



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