

ANARCHISM FOR THE 90s



**Saturday December 2 1989
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
London WC1
(Holborn tube)**

FIND OUT MORE about the politics of anarchist communism, and the activities of the ACF, by coming to our day-school in London on Saturday December 2 1989.

We be examining both current, contemporary issues - like the struggle against the poll tax - and looking back at some lessons of history.

All our workshops will be introduced by speakers from the ACF, and will be followed by discussion and debate.

Here just some of what we'll be talking about:

PROGRAMME:

10.00-10.30 - Introduction, welcome & registration

10.00-12.00 - Marxism - a critique
or - History of class struggle anarchism

12.00-1.00 - Lunch

1.00-3.00 - Anarchism in practice:
workshops on: Fighting the poll tax
Anti-racist struggle
and more

3.00-3.30 - Tea break

3.30-5.30 - Workplace struggles

Refreshments - plus a simple lunch
will be provided.

MARXISM IN DECAY - For over a hundred years, Marxism has presented itself as the only true road to human emancipation. Yet the ideas of Marx are fundamentally authoritarian and ultimately counter-revolutionary.

This workshop will show why the Marxist obsession with the winning of State-power has enslaved whole peoples in the name of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

WORKPLACE STRUGGLES - This workshop will examine traditional ways of organising against capitalism at the point of production - including trade unionism and syndicalism, and expose their failings.

It will argue for a different strategy for workplace struggles, and will stress the importance of the revolutionary process moving beyond purely economic/workplace battles.

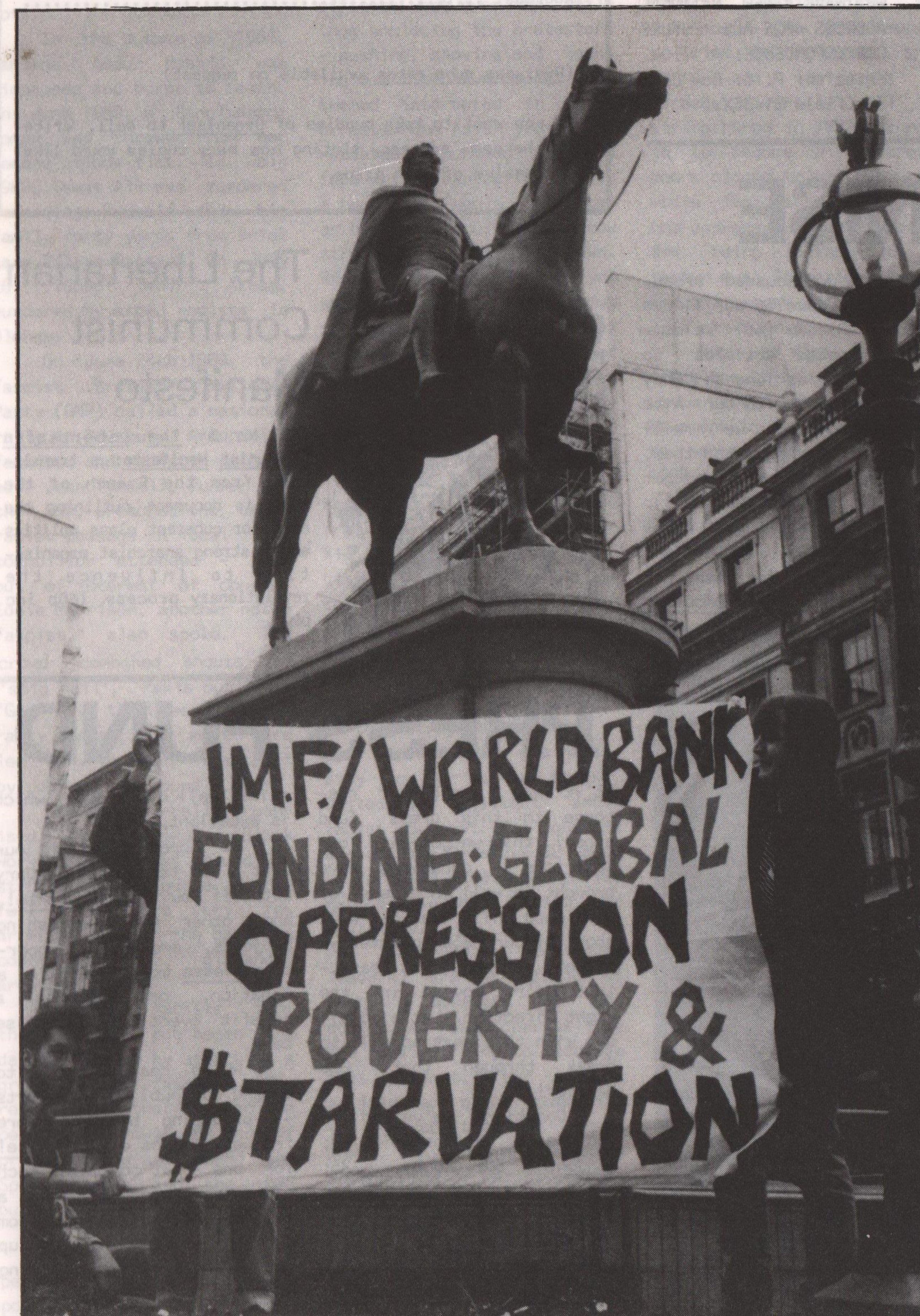
POLL TAX - This workshop will examine the strength of 'community', and workplace, resistance to the poll tax so far, will look at the role of the Labour Party, the leadership of the trade union movement - and of the authoritarian-Left - in trying to wreck the emerging struggle, and will weigh up the options for the crucial months ahead.

For details of other workshops, and to register fill in the form overleaf. Please try to book in advance.



ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism



Magazine of the
Anarchist Communist Federation

30p

Nov-Jan

1989/90

Issue 17

**ANARCHY
IN THE
EASTERN
BLOC**

**IRELAND:
SECURITY
LEAKS**

**MILITANT
AND THE
POLL TAX**

**CAMBODIA:
WHAT
FUTURE?**

POLAND

THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST Federation is an organisation of class-struggle anarchists. Its structure is based on membership of area and interest groups and individuals. We have members in the following areas:

Birmingham, Blackpool, Bradford, Chesterfield, Coventry, Co Durham, Essex, Glasgow, Halifax, Kent, Liverpool, London, Middlesex, Newcastle, Northampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Rugby, Sheffield, Sussex, Swansea, Wokingham and York. We have internal

groupings around the following industries and interests: Health, Education, Unemployed, Postal, Students, Local Government, Community Youth Work and Women.

The ACF promotes the building of a strong and active anarchist movement in Britain and internationally, and has contact with like-minded anarchists in other countries.

WE HAVE A NEW NATIONAL ADDRESS FOR ALL FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE: Write to: P. O. Box 263, Sheffield S1 3EX.

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 debate 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 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 endeavour to publish them. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all). The deadlines for the February 1990 issue are December 15th for features and reviews, and December 29th for letters and the news section.

All contributions to the next issue of **Organise!** should be sent to: ACF, Box 1, Hiziki, 15 Goosegate, Hockley, Nottingham.

Want to know more?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION, SEND THIS TO:

P. O. Box 263
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SUBSCRIBE:

TO SUBSCRIBE TO **ORGANISE!** costs £1.80 per year (four issues) including post and packing.

Make cheques payable to "ACF" and send them to: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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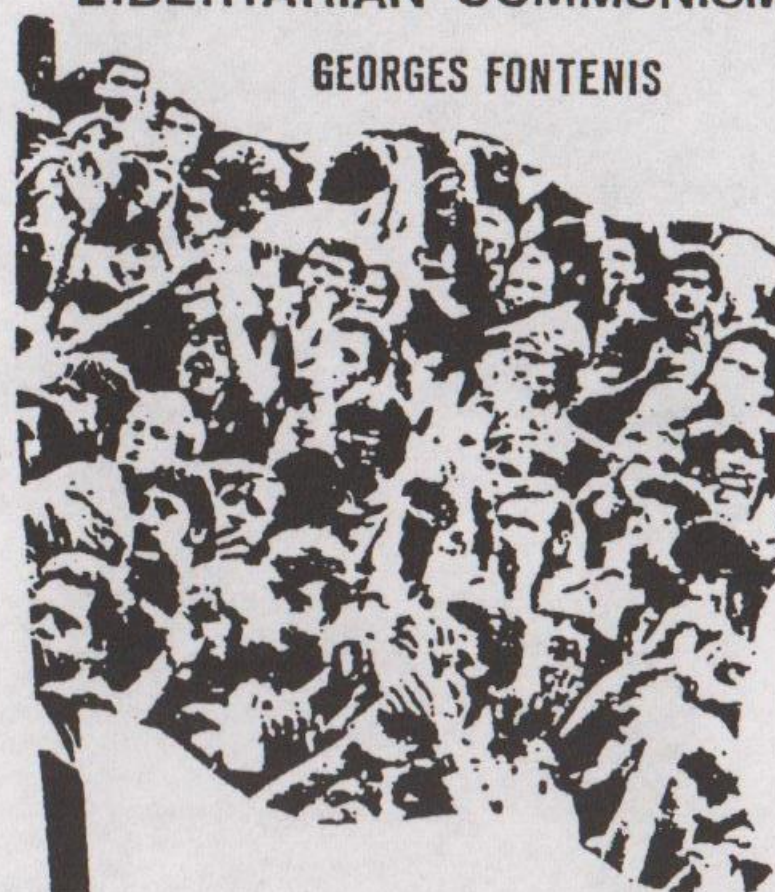
Address:

(Overseas subs rates available on request)

If you want to take bundles of **Organise!** to sell, write to the same address, stating how many copies you'd like to receive of each issue.

MANIFESTO OF LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

GEORGES FONTENIS



The Libertarian Communist Manifesto

ACE No 3 The Libertarian Communist Manifesto: a translation from the French of the Fontenis document outlining the need for coherent class politics and a strong anarchist organisation to influence the revolutionary process. (60p inc p&p).

PRESS FUND

WE'VE HAD A far better response to this press fund appeal than we got with our last one - donations have brought in well in excess of 150. And while that is well short of our 250 quarterly target, it shows - at least - that we're moving in the right direction. Let's go all out with this next appeal, to break through that 250 barrier!

Donations we've had in include: Dagenham, 50; London, 50; Rugby, 25; Bradford, 6.84; Birmingham 3.20 and Hastings, 2.

Our thanks go to all those comrades, friends, subscribers and readers who've given money - which will go a long way towards meeting our printing, production and postage costs.

Since we launched the press fund in Feb 1989 we've

raised well over 500 - which is excellent.

We hope to reach our next 250 target by January 20th. If you think **Organise!**, and other ACF publishing projects, are worth supporting please try to send in a donation, or organise a benefit event to help raise cash.

We're really keen to expand our publishing efforts - producing bigger, more frequent issues of **Organise!** for one - but to make such plans feasible, we need a regular, reliable income from our 'press fund' to top up the ACF's own fund raising efforts.

So, if you can, please rush donations to:

ACF Press Fund,
Box 1, Hiziki,
15 Goosegate, Hockley,
Nottingham NG1.

Cover photo: Carole Harwood

DEWSBURY: the rising tide of racism

IT SEEMS AT times that anti-racism has gone out of fashion. Racism certainly has not!

In the autumn of 1988, Maulana Abdur Rashid was kidnapped and burnt to death. In June 1989, a Bangladeshi woman was thrown from her second floor flat. In July 1989, Ismat Ali was murdered defending himself and his family forty yards from Brick Lane Police Station. On July 26 1989, Tahir Akram, murdered by armed racists in Oldham.

On June 24th 1989, the fascist British National Party (BNP) called a national rally in Dewsbury. Around 150 fascists and racists gathered. John Tyndall, fuhrer of the BNP, preached the usual racist message. A local Tory councillor attended - just out of interest of course. Eddie Morrison, another noted fascist, also spoke. The crowd combined shouts of 'seig heil', 'Pakis out' and 'God save the Queen'. Their rally ended, and most were led away to their transport by police, at around 3.00pm.

The counter-rally organised by Kirklees Black Workers' Group was around 800 strong. It was quite peaceful. There were very few arrests early in the day. The counter-rally disbanded around 1.30pm.

However, racists from the Black Bull pub began the day's violence by attacking a group of anti-fascists. The result being that the police penned the growing number of protesters in and around the Sport Centre and the DSS building.

Far from protecting people from racists, the police were content to allow Asian shoppers and traders to be robbed and attacked. The message from police - you should have stayed at home.

Rather than take on the racists, the 750 police de-

cided to attack the anti-racists who had been trying to disperse. About 50 officers went over the railings enclosing the protestors - pushing, shoving and lashing out with truncheons. They seemed interested in mass arrests. One Asian youth was repeatedly punched in the face whilst handcuffed and in a headlock. People retreated as best they could, up narrow streets towards Savile Town. Riot squads were employed spreading terror throughout the area, people of all ages running in fear from mounted police.

On the day, 59 anti-racists, black and white, were arrested. That has now risen to 82 following police raids. This includes people from Dewsbury, Leeds, Sheffield and Botley. Bail conditions have been imposed on some very like South African 'banning orders'. The police are using this as an excuse, afraid of anti-racism, afraid of solidarity, their object is to destroy them.

There is only one necessity now for us - a strong, united and militant anti-racist movement. The charges against the Dewsbury 82 must be dropped and the police exposed in their racism and brutality.

'Chamches' (community leaders) are as afraid of such a movement as the police. As reactionaries they are busily trying to sabotage this attempt. After all, a politicised black community would rob them of their power. They are uninterested in the rise of racist attacks in Savile Town. The local press seem only capable of branding defenders of the community as rioters. We can not fail now. If we do then we all face attack from judicial and public bigotry.

All of this should be placed against the backdrop of other events.

The Tories are pushing a new national ideology. Education is going to be even more perverse, nationalist and anti-human. The government's policies on refugees, migrants and immigrants - already severe - will be strengthened in 1992. Europe is to become a fortress, doors closed to all but rich white immigrants. The poor, the oppressed, the exploited are being locked out or thrown out. Terrorism, drugs, and all manner of crimes are laid at their door.

Each of these problems needs answering. It is up to us to provide that answer - a movement to defend the 82 and to opposed the racism of 1992's 'Fortress Europe'.

Information from: Sheffield Defence Campaign, P. O. Box 246, Sheffield S1 1GT. ●

RUC conspiracy

RECENT WEEKS HAVE seen the 'exposing' of links between members of the Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Ulster Constabulary, and loyalist paramilitaries by the emergence of leaked documents containing files on nationalist individuals, including some IRA members.

The first expose came from the UFF (Ulster Freedom Fighters) confirmation through a BBC reporter, that they had used 'confidential' British security files in planning the murder of Laughlin Maginn, who was killed at home on August 24, and who had previously received and reported harassment and death threats from the RUC and UDR.

The following week it emerged that a British soldier convicted of possessing information intended for passing to loyalist death

Continued over



photo: R Galbraith and J Jackson

squads, had been reinstated into the army in England.

On September 10 the British army admitted that more files had "gone missing" from Ballykinlar base in County Down. The same day two UDR soldiers were charged with Maginn's murder.

We can see the hypocrisy of the Irish establishment in their 'grave concern' about the events. Sinn Fein too must see that military espionage is an inevitable tactic in a war time situation, one that is surely also employed in defending nationalist communities. Outrage and moral indignation are not appropriate here, when the links between the State and right wing groupings were already clear.

It is no surprise that such tactics are used when a state by it's very nature has an interest in putting down resistance to its imperialist presence. Revolutionaries would not 'criticize' a State for fulfilling what we know to be its function.

We oppose its continued existence as it is the root cause of the divisions in the working class such as exist in the six counties. We advocate the removal of the state by class conflict and are not surprised when the ruling class supports one section of the class against another to prevent its own role being exposed. In hiding the class nature of society, Sinn Fein and the IRA are obstacles to the defeat of the class system.

The reason for the leaks is not simply to prove how easily loyalists can pin point and harass nationalists. Reports have uncovered links between an extensive and influential "Inner Circle" in the RUC and the loyalist paramilitary group Ulster Resistance.

Ulster Resistance has the primary objective of undermining the Anglo-Irish Agreement by showing they have enough influence in the RUC to shape events in the Six Counties for themselves, if the British government stops doing it for them.

Ian Paisley led an illegal paramilitary show of strength just after the

signing of the accord to make a very similar point.

To the British state the Anglo-Irish Agreement is a way of maintaining it's imperialist power on both sides of the border. Sinn Fein is of course only prepared to oppose the anti-republican nature of the Accord, rather than rejecting it as a ruling class initiative. To the loyalists it undermines the terror they can inflict on the nationalist community.

Thus it is not simply the case that the British State is pulling all the strings in the north of Ireland. If the situation is a struggle between aspiring future rulers on both sides, we must find revolutionary solutions rather than apologise for leadership politics. The ultimate enemy of the Irish working class is the ruling class, and we must not shy away from exposing that fact. ●

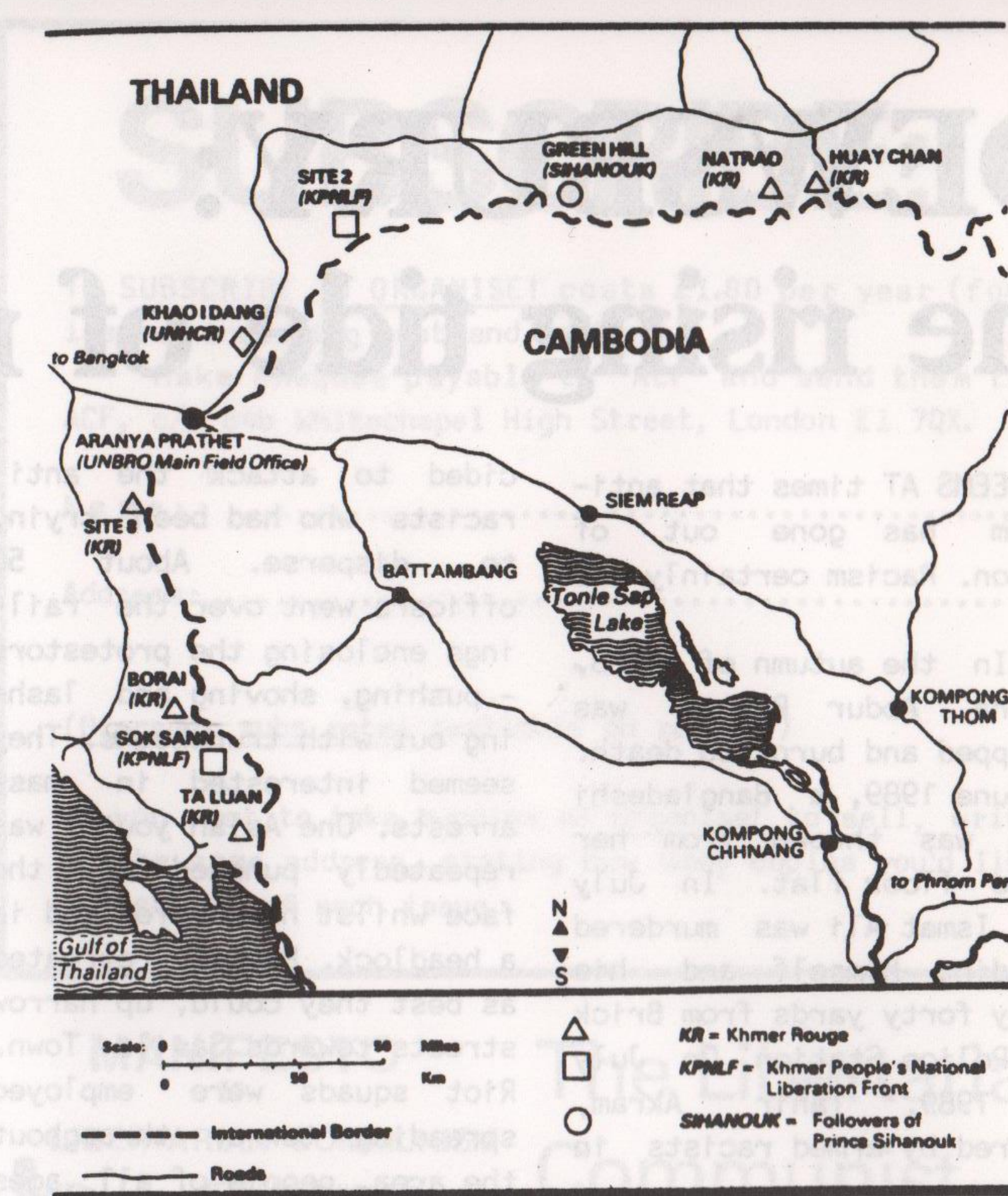
Cambodian civil war

TAKE SEVERAL INGREDIENTS: nationalism, political ambition, foreign intervention, Marxist-Leninism, and imperialism - and you have a recipe for disaster.

Since March 1970, when Prince Sihanouk was kicked out of power by Lon Nol, Cambodia has suffered from civil war, mass starvation and genocide.

Cambodia, before the decades of chaos, was a land overflowing with agricultural wealth. We should not overstate the quality of life at that time: Cambodia was, and is, an economically backward country. Nevertheless, it did manage to keep out of the wider Indo-China conflict until foreign intervention upset the apple-cart. US saturation bombing, early Vietnamese - and then Chinese - support for Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge, and finally, Vietnamese invasion, have all played their part.

Pol Pot's acquisition of power, and the implementation of a dogmatic restructuring of the economy, had devas-



tating results. The cities were emptied and all opposition was annihilated. Mass killing, starvation and forced labour, became part and parcel of the Marxist government's strategy.

Then, eleven years ago, a Russian financed and supplied Vietnamese army imposed their order.

A Vietnam-approved 'communist' regime was imposed under the head of Hun Sen. And now, the Vietnamese have had enough: they can no longer afford to keep thousands of their troops on Cambodian soil, as their own economy disintegrates.

The fear now is that civil war will once again intensify. The Khmer Rouge is estimated to be about 30,000 strong - not an overwhelming force, but nevertheless a threat. They draw their support from some sectors of the peasantry who were relatively unaffected by Pol Pot's period of power, and there is the prospect that their strength will grow.

There is the prospect, then, of two 'communist'

armies - insurgent and governmental - facing each other in the battle fields.

Both the Khmer Rouge and the Government claim to be 'Marxists', yet their loyalties are not really tied to any particular class. Rather, it is power for themselves that each is struggling for. Marxist regimes, whatever stated motives, end up at the helm of new ruling classes that their 'revolutions' bring about.

As both the Soviet and Chinese models of economic and political reconstruction have proved to be unviable, the obviousness of this becomes increasingly apparent.

But, so long as external agents - such as China - back this or that 'Marxist' force in Cambodia, then there will be little prospect of anything but continued civil war. ●

'NEWS AND ANALYSIS' is continued on page 12, with a story about life for Cambodia's refugees in the camps in neighbouring Thailand.

Solidarity promise to crush resistance

"We must help Poland in every way we can to create the framework for a genuine market economy."

THESE ARE THE words of Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in response to the recent political changes and reforms in Poland. Poland is to be the Trojan Horse in the Eastern Bloc camp, whose conversion to "a genuine market economy" will sound the death knell for State 'Socialism' and usher in the final triumphant era of Capital.

This is Lawson's dream, and we can be sure that the IMF, World Bank and many Western governments will be doing their utmost to ensure that it succeeds.

Solidarity

In all of this, there is a salutary lesson to be learnt from the part played by Solidarity in helping to bring about these changes. After the events of the last few months, it could be easy to forget that the origins of Solidarity lie in the industrial unrest of 1980, when workers struck in defiance of the 'Communist' Dictatorship over issues of rising prices and low pay. General Jaruzelski duly crushed the strikes, instigated martial law and outlawed Solidarity.

But Jaruzelski knew that unless his government could solve these problems his dictatorship would face similar uprisings in the years to come.

By crushing workers resistance and instigating martial law, he hoped to solve Poland's problems at the expense of the working class. But by 1988 it was clear that even this harsh repression had failed. This year and last have seen the biggest waves of strikes and industrial unrest since 1980, and workers fought

not just for improvement in wages and prices, but also for the legalisation of Solidarity.

Jaruzelski desperately needed to find a solution, and with the tactics of overt oppression unavailable to him, he chose instead to co-opt the Solidarity opposition to his regime by inviting them to participate in the 'solution'. Solidarity complied.

Talks

Their is no contradiction between Solidarity's role as a 'militant union' and its entering government. It's leadership has always had the political goal of 'social reform' as well as being the legal representative of the workforce. But whatever its aspirations, an organisation collaborating with the State can only negotiate the price of labour, never pose a serious threat to capitalism - east or west.

What followed was a series of round table talks between the 'Communist' dictatorship and the leaders of Solidarity, the results being a deal to allow Solidarity to field candidates in the June elections of this year. At the same time, it was already clear that the Solidarity leadership was becoming little more than a bureaucratised political elite with governmental aspirations, increasingly divorced from the working class that had been instrumental in its creation.

Solidarity's collusion with the 'Communist' regime goes much further, however, than simply helping to form a government with them, for they have also accepted many of the pre-conditions set by the 'Communists' in doing so, including allowing them to keep control of the ministries of defence and the interior, the two organs that helped

outlaw them in the first place.

Profit

More importantly, they have wholeheartedly embraced the ethos of the market and the need to make Poland's 'economy' profitable, undertaking the bulk of this task themselves. George Bush has expressed his desire that - under Solidarity's guide - Poland will become the "America of the Eastern Bloc".

After Lech Walesa had persuaded many workers to call off their strikes whilst the negotiations were in progress, he said of them "I am not going to toy with Poland. I extinguished the strikes and I will extinguish any others", and later "All types of strikes must be suspended", a clear indication that the Solidarity government's priorities lie primarily with regenerating the economy, and maintaining political

stability, not with the well-being of the Polish people.

For the working class of Poland this will be an unmitigated disaster. It will mean that loss-making factories will have to be closed down, industries 'rationalised' to compete on the world market, and a whole package of similar 'austerity' measures will be introduced by Walesa and his cronies. The results are not difficult to predict: mass unemployment and extreme poverty - all imposed by the "people's union".

Foremost among the constitutional methods used to bring about these changes will be the banning of strikes of all kinds, and the control of all industrial unrest by Walesa's Solidarity representatives in the factories.

Tensions

It is difficult to predict how these tensions will resolve themselves in Poland, but for the moment, we can take it that the Solidarity government wholeheartedly endorses the chilling words of Theo Waigel, the West German Finance Minister, when he said of Poland: "It is not just about money. Human capital must be put to work by economic and financial experts as well". ●



"All types of Strike must be suspended." - Lech Walesa.

IMF: stitching up the world economy

IN 1944, UNDER the aegis of political-economists Keynes and White, the Bretton Woods agreement was forged. Prior to the war, the western economy had swung between boom and depression. The agreement looked to solving the problem of capitalism once the war had been won.

Two organisations were formed - the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development).

The interests of the USA won out over those of the deficit countries (eg the UK). Henceforth the world economy was to be based upon that of its strongest economy - the USA's. Thus, the dollar was to become the currency to which all others were pegged. The IMF existed to eradicate protectionism, expand world trade, establish a fixed exchange rate, to police balance of payments problems. The World Bank was initially there to supervise the reconstruction of the major economies after the war.

Plague

It would be easy to portray the IMF and World Bank as evil, but is this really the case? Is it not true that they are simply what the major powers (the Group of 5, the Group of 10) make them? They are simply the messengers, the carriers of a plague born of the greedy needs of western capital.

Behind these agencies is a diseased world view. The fact that the major economies have huge voting strength there is only one part of the story. The agencies officials come mostly from where - need I ask?

Once the war-torn economies had been rebuilt, the rest of the world could be tackled. What was 'sold' to those now decolonised nations was the ideology of modernisation and development. The advanced economies could not expand without opening up all of those other economies. The 'Third World' was developed for those 'advanced' countries.

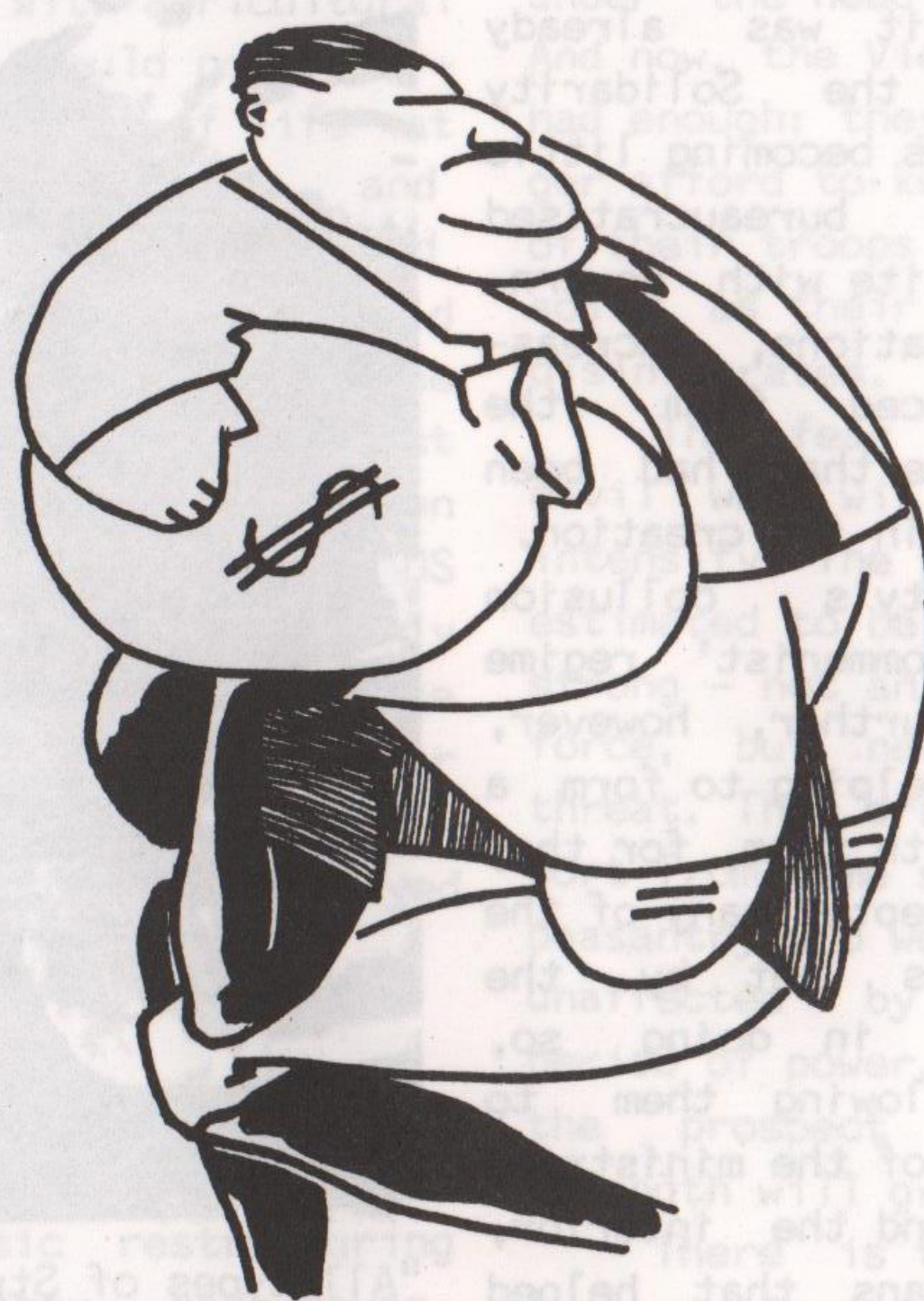
To gain World Bank development assistance, it was necessary to be an IMF member. This meant opening up to penetration by western goods, not allowing domestic industries to grow. The development loans provided for two basic forms of development.

First of all, the growth in cash crop agri-business. Under the cover of

the 'green revolution', a series of western multinationals were encouraged to virtually take over the agriculture of the Third World - Cargill, Unilever, Philip-Morris, Continental Grain, McDonalds, etc. The result being the food-needs of these countries were ignored for export-crop production, to earn cash to re-pay loans.

Secondly, on the industrial front, a whole series of loans were made for projects which made huge profits for western contractors. For example, 30 US-supplied cotton-treating plants for Zaire - none of which work; Westinghouse and others supply the Ing-Shaba power project for Zaire - cost \$1.5b; Maluku steel plant, powered by Ing-Shaba, works at 10% capacity; the coffee refinery doesn't work at all. Zaire has debts of over \$6b. Cronies of Marcos in the Philippines earned huge commissions through a nuclear power project placed on the side of a volcano, prone to earthquakes. Thankfully it will never be operational. The Phillipino people are still paying for it.

Western banks play with the 'Third World'. They hawk loans, looking for business, no matter at what cost. Projects are designed either by western 'experts' or western trained 'entrepreneurs'. Huge loans are given over to the highest bidder, not the 'best' (in their terms). The loan and the project is tied to the government. No reference is taken of the real needs of the people. Officials take huge commissions. Often the whole loan is stolen. The cash is then deposited with



the western banks to be re-lent. When projects fail, the debt is passed on to the poor by the government.

The core countries of capitalism have those areas outside of the club, earmarked for simple tasks - the production of cheap cash-crops, extracting cheap raw materials, etc. They use the IMF and World Bank as non-profit making enforcers. Promotion to the select few is pretty well impossible.

The international division of labour leaves those outside the core, fighting to pick up what crumbs they can - importing exploitation in the form of multi-nationals, western banks, setting up Free Trade Zones, where little is earned, profits exported. Under 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' the poor pay back the mistakes and thefts of the bosses.

Capitalism

The essential problem - the only problem - is world capitalism, not one or more features of that. Many instruments are used, for instance the IMF and World Bank. The systematic exploitation of the whole world must come to an end. It is interesting to note that a particular World Bank project in Zaire has recently hit the news because of its callous environmental destruction.

It is time for those at the base of world society to begin the replacing of world capitalism, and its instruments, with ways of life that are truly free and anti-exploitative. •

1968 - McNamara, World Bank President, emphasised the need for birth-control policies. 30% of Costa Ricans forcibly sterilised.

1973 - Hubert Humphrey - "Food is a form of power. Food is a special dimension of our diplomacy". World Bank official - "We can only help the countries and people who have a better chance of survival, we let others die of hunger".

1980 - Arusha Initiative - "Money is power. This simple truth is valid for national and international relations. Those who wield world power, control money. An international monetary system is both a function and an instrument of prevailing power structures".

Footnotes

'Group of 5': USA, France, UK, Germany, Japan.

'Group of 10': As above, plus Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden.

Militant and other parasites on the poll tax struggle

WHEN NEWS BROKE in late September that over 300,000 people in the Strathclyde region of Scotland hadn't paid a penny of their poll tax (and that many tens of thousands more had only paid one instalment and were already in arrears), reaction from the Labour Party leadership was swift and unambiguous.

"The blame for such high levels of non-payment", Labour local government spokesman David Blunkett explained, "must be placed squarely at this government's door". Blunkett wasn't lending last-minute Labour support to this inspiring level of poll tax resistance. He was doing his best to make it clear whose 'fault' Labour thought it was to that so many working class people felt angry enough to challenge the law and refuse to pay, despite the advice of his party.

Labour controlled Strathclyde region angrily refuted claims from Tory central office that it was the council's fault that non-payment levels were so high.

Revolt

Council finance convenor James Mullin took the suggestion that they hadn't attacked non-payment strongly enough, as a slur on the professionalism of his operation and the dedication of his staff. Downplaying the significance of the revolt Mullin calmly assured the media that he was "not concerned at this stage. The money is coming in. Non-payment figures will drop once we've sent out the reminders." After announcing plans to up the pressure on non-payers, he took the opportunity to restate his council's "sincere and total opposition to the Tory poll tax".

The Strathclyde figures are the latest proof that the strategy of building mass community based campaigns of poll tax non-payment is winning considerable support in working class areas in Scotland. It shows the willingness of tens of thousands of ordinary people to defy the law, and to mobilise on their estates to challenge the right of their local 'socialist' or Scottish Nationalist authority to rob them blind. And most of all it shows clearly that the attempts by the leaders of the Labour Party and trade union movement to defuse and demoralise the non-payment campaign

- by claiming that there is no hope of victory - are failing.

But if the Strathclyde figures will help inspire confidence throughout Scotland, there remains an enormous threat to the potential success of the community-end of the anti-poll tax struggle. It's a threat that could wreck the chances of a confident and independent working class campaign of resistance winning itself a major victory.

That threat is the continuing involvement, and undoubted influence, of the authoritarian-Left: most notably, the damage being inflicted on the struggle by supporters of the Militant Tendency (publishers of *Militant* newspaper).

Events in Scotland could scarcely show more clearly how openly the Labour Party and its allies in the trade union movement are attacking the anti-poll tax struggle. These events prove clearly that the campaign must assert its independence from, and opposition to, Labour. But left-wing groups (like *Militant*) are trying to ensnare anger over the poll tax, seeking to direct energy into demanding the Labour bureaucracy take up the cudgels and fight on our behalf.

Tying the campaign to the very institutions that want to suffocate the possibility of successful action, is a recipe for certain defeat. But that, of course, would only worry *Militant* - and their ilk - if their reason for being

involved in the campaign was to do with defeating the poll tax. But it isn't.

If we are to counter the effects of *Militant*'s involvement, and help prevent action being derailed by them, we need to be able to expose just what it is that they're up to. That means understanding what their real objectives are, and why they have poured so many of their resources into the poll tax battle.

Thick

Obviously, *Militant* are not the only left-wing group involved, but as anyone involved in practically any local anti-poll tax group in the country will tell you, *Militant* supporters are thick on the ground, and nationally their involvement is streets ahead of their nearest Left-ist rivals.

So what are they about? *Militant* - who deny they are a political party - seek to change the Labour Party from within into a Marxist organisation that will win parliamentary power through the ballot box. They plan to then create their own particular brand of highly centralised 'state-socialism' by simply 'legislating it into existence' through their Commons majority. They have been a constant, though minor, irritation to successive Labour leaderships, practising a policy of 'entryism' - quietly

(Continued on pages 10 and 11)



Militant have helped provide cover for the TUC's attempts at sabotage.

Anarchism in the Eastern Bloc

DESPITE MANY YEARS of repression, the anarchist movement in Eastern Europe is slowly and painfully re-emerging.

Many anarchists were executed, many disappeared into the prisons and concentration camps. The changing political atmosphere in the East, and the growing opposition to the regime, has given rise to new groups calling themselves anarchist.

We have criticisms to make of these new movements - some are deluded by pacifism, non-violence and the 'counter-culture', others seem to want to repeat all the old models of anarchism that have failed - anarcho-sindicalism for example.

But we must remember that these movements have emerged under great difficulty. It is the task of all serious anarchists to give moral and material support to the East European comrades, to make contact, visit, exchange papers, and engage in constructive debate. Through such a debate, and through their own developing practise, a credible movement can be re-constructed in Eastern Europe.

We ourselves must not adopt an arrogant, patronising attitude, but realise that we too can learn from the struggles taking place in Eastern Europe to create an anarchist alternative.



The Polish movement

THE 'NEW' POLITICS of 'Glasnost' seem to have had repercussions that the Soviet rulers did not foresee.

Amongst these is the development of a combative workers' movement, shown, for example, by the miners' strikes in the Ukraine and Siberia. Another repercussion is the development of anarchist and libertarian socialist groupings.

One of these groups is called Obsjina, which means 'Community'. The group was 'officially' founded in May 1987, though it existed for several years beforehand as an underground group. They edit an underground journal that comes out fortnightly under the same name. They publish an initial 120 copies, which are then sent out to fifty towns where they are re-copied, and so on - much in the manner in which most

'samizdat' (underground) journals have been produced in the USSR.

The journal has correspondents in the main towns, and reports on strikes and demonstrations which the Party Press never talks about.

Most of the supporters of Obsjina are students, journalists and teachers, and they are in contact with workers through the Federation of Socialist Clubs and the Democratic Faction. There are many students involved, particularly history students, because they have discovered the truth about the past is not the one described in official histories.

Obsjina does not call itself 'anarchist'. It thinks that the essential aim is to achieve the communist programme - the disappearance of the State and its bureaucracy, the practise

of federalism and self-organisation. The Russian anarchist thinkers like Bakunin and Kropotkin are their chief sources of inspiration.

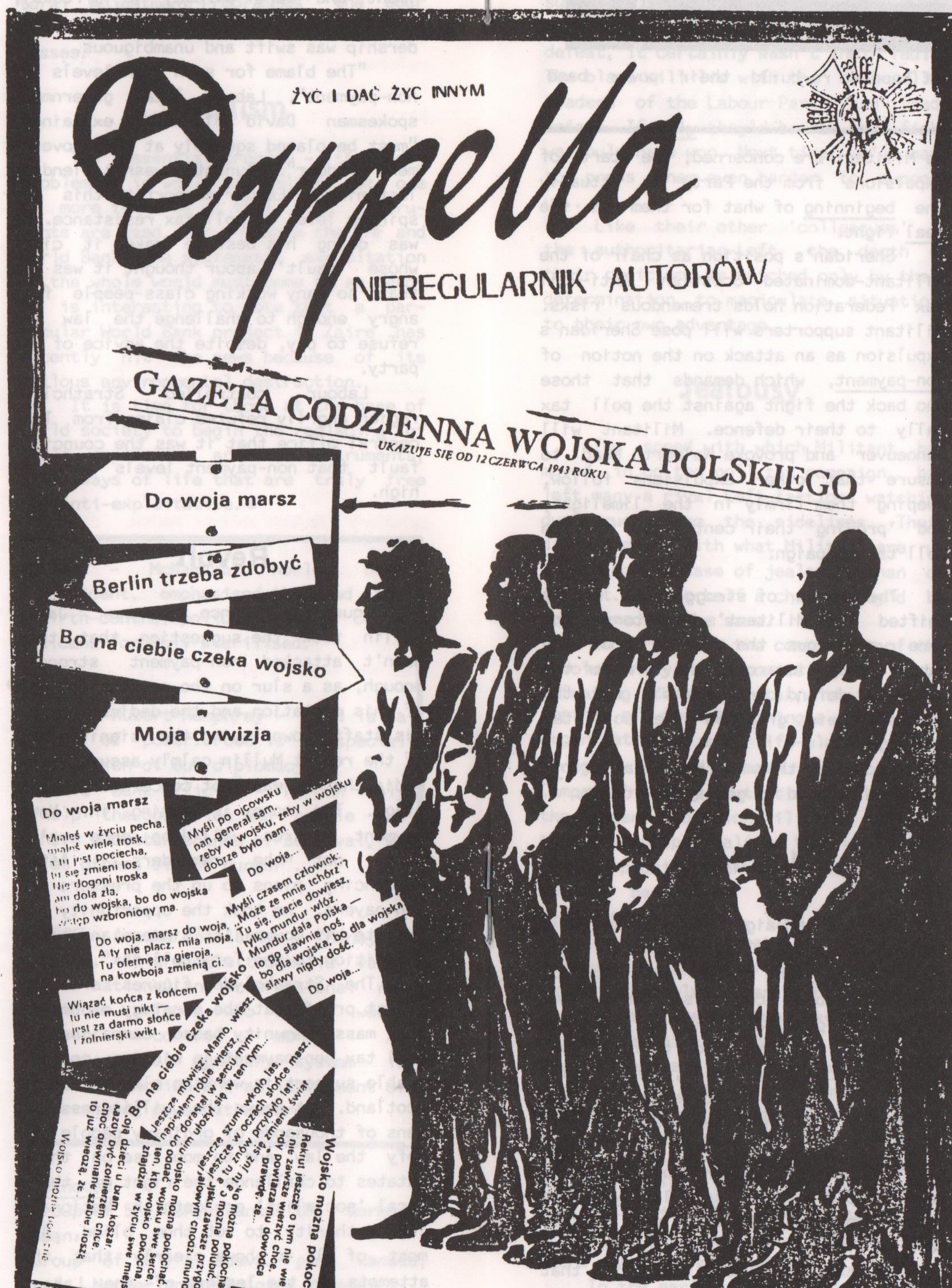
The Democratic Faction is in close contact with Obsjina, and works inside the official Communist Youth organisation (Komsomol). This was unthinkable a few years ago, but under Glasnost the Komsomol does want to be seen as a monolithic organisation. This has given a semi-official status to the Democratic Faction, (though recently the Central Committee of Komsomol has announced that it was a menace to Komsomol and the Soviet State).

There is also the Confederation of Anarcho-sindicalists (KAS) which has

members in thirty towns. They too participate on other informal local groups.

The Obsjina has called for an international conference of libertarians to be held this Autumn to help break down the isolation of the Russians comrades.

Outside of the developing movement, other occurrences have been favourable articles on Kropotkin in the literary magazine *Sovetskaya Kultura*, and on Nestor Makhno in the literary paper *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. Makhno was an important figure in the anarchist movement which attempted to establish free communism in the Ukraine, fighting both Tzarists and Bolsheviks, before it was crushed by Lenin's Red Army.



'A Cappella' - Polish anarchists applying their politics to anti-war work.

Russian revolutionaries

THE 'REVOLUTION' OF August 1980 in Poland against the 'Communist' authorities was a catalyst for the re-emergence of anarchism, which had disappeared from view in the late 1940s.

It was in the student-world in particular, that attempts were made to recreate the movement. These attempts were not exclusively intellectual: some clubs of anarchist thought were founded, the most important being the Anarchist Self-Education Club 'Sigma', of Warsaw University.

The ideas of professor Leszek Nowak had some popularity. Some of the student movement was influenced by anarchism, in particular the NSZ (Independent Union of Students).

Anarchist

From August 1980 to December 1981 was the period of the rise of the independent union NSZZ Solidarnosc. Some of its members like Bujak in Warsaw were influenced to a certain extent by libertarian ideas, but soon the federal structure of Solidarnosc was rigidified, and centralisation developed in its midst. The military coup on December 13 1981 ended open activity, and the streets became the setting for clashes between State forces and the working class.

In this context, the Movement for an Alternative Society (RSA: Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego) was founded in July 1983. In its paper *Homek* the RSA criticized the tactics of the Polish opposition, calling for a struggle against the military institution, and the total abolition of the Army.

It declared that "all power is bad... power must be abolished through building social organisation outside the State - outside of all States, not just the Communist State". A partisan of Nowak stated that "the only way to freedom which is open to citizens of socialist countries is to anarchise society".

In May 1985, the RSA urged demonstrators to resist the police who were attacking the crowd in Gdansk. A little later, the most highly-regarded underground journals like *Przegląd Powszechny* of Gdansk, and *Tygodnik Powszechny* of Warsaw announced the birth of an anarchist movement in Poland. Issue 6 of *Przegląd Powszechny* published an interview with 3 members of RSA who severely criticized the social and philosophical positions of Nowak, who they considered a 'quietist'.

However, RSA - working under difficult conditions, and with little in the way of funds - soon collapsed. An informal anarchist movement continued to

work in various underground structures, and *Homek* continued to appear.

Anarchist ideas began to circulate amongst youth in the punk counter-culture. Several thousand leaflets on anti-militarism and anarchism were distributed at concerts by RSA members during 1983-5. New anarchist groups emerged: Poznan RSA, Szczecin RSA, Independent Initiatives in Warsaw, Jutro ('Tomorrow') in Lodz, and many others.

Today, after the collapse of RSA, many anarchists are working within the Freedom and Peace Movement (WiP: Wolność i Pokój). At first only the Gdansk group took anarchist positions, explained in their paper *A Cappella*. Now anarchist ideas have spread throughout WiP. WiP was principally working against compulsory conscription to the Army, but also took up ecological struggles, fought against the death penalty, and for 'free circulation' abroad.

Federal

Other groups exist outside WiP, for example the Warsaw group, which produced the paper *Katania*, linked to the Federation of Fighting Youth (FMW).

The latest initiative is an anarchist co-ordination: MA (Miejsce Anarchistyczne - 'Intercity Anarchist Liasion'). The first leaflet put out by the organising group, called for the setting up of a federation, and for an end to isolation. Groups and individuals in 20 towns have given their support to MA, in Poznan, Szczecin, Wrocław and Cracow, amongst others, despite the first conference being broken up by the police.

In the workplace too, there seems to be some development of anarchist activity. An anarchist paper *Spartakus*, is produced by dockers in Gdansk, and denounces the manoeuvres of Lech Waśsa and his section of the leadership of Solidarnosc.



Anarchists at Solidarnosc demo.

(NEXT ISSUE: Hungary's anarchist movement re-emerges).

POLL TAX PARASITES:
(Continued from page 7)

joining the Party and then kicking up a stink.

But as Kinnock's Policy Review has swept to one side the feeble forces of the Labour Left, they have found themselves unable even to shore up their traditional power base in the local constituency parties. When the dream of 'municipal socialism' came to an abrupt end with the abolition of the Metropolitan Authorities, it deepened the demoralisation that had followed the messy defeat of Liverpool's Militant-controlled Labour council, in the rate-capping struggle. They sank into the doldrums. Membership slumped, the paper's circulation crumbled. Things for the whole of the Labour-left looked grim.

Militant struggled on, desperate to find a new campaign that would give them the chance to re-group their forces, and that would provide cover for them to launch a major Labour Party membership drive, that could re-build them their power base.

Then came the poll tax. Militant's central committee under gurus Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe realised the potential that this held for the Tendency. It was decided that 'intervention' in the emerging poll tax campaign was to take priority above all other issues. Other minor campaigns were dropped. The decks were cleared.

Scratch

It was decided that the most fruitful area for finding party recruits (for both the Tendency and the Labour Party itself) would be in building 'community', as opposed to workplace, organisation. Militant's industrial base had never been very impressive, and pushing 'community' organisation - most of which needed building from scratch - gave Militant the opportunity to impose their own organisational forms on the campaign from the start.

It was overwhelming for that reason - and not because of political ideology - that the decision to build for 'mass community non-payment' was taken, in priority to workplace campaigning.

The intention, then, from the start was to use the growing resentment over the poll tax to push the issue of Labour Party membership, and to channel anger away from the need to build autonomous class action, and toward placing what were known to be futile demands on the Labour bureaucracy to 'take the lead'.

Scotland was to be their first battle ground. In most Scottish constituencies, Labour enjoy massive electoral



Under cover of the poll tax fight, Militant hope to re-build their power base inside the Labour Party...

support. But often, where the seats are safest, the active membership of the local Party branch is at its smallest. It's not difficult, therefore, for a determined band of 'entryists' to stage a mini-coup, kick out the unsuspicious old guard, and install their own supporters in Branch positions. Stage one of this plan, means carving out some local-support on the ground. On the pretence of building support for the poll tax fight, Militant supporters went to work.

Door-to-door canvassing with poll tax materials netted good results. Slick sales talk won some people over not only to join Militant's brand new local 'anti-poll tax union', but to fill in a Labour Party membership card on the doorstep. The usual promise was that enough 'real' socialists could be won over to the Party, even 'spineless Kinnock' would have to stand up and fight the tax.

Alarm bells sounded at Labour Party headquarters in Walworth Road when suddenly bundle upon bundle of membership applications started pouring in from Scottish branches that no-one had heard a peep out of for years. Smelling a rat, Labour Party officials on several occasions have suspended local branches, while they investigate 'alleged irregularities' in the membership procedures.

This has been, of course, exactly what Militant have been hoping for. They are then able to draw anger and energy away from the poll tax campaign, into defending the branch against this 'witch-hunt' against 'socialists inside the Party'.

Militant could scarcely contain their delight when, in late September, their poll tax commander-in-chief Tommy Sheridan was finally expelled from the Scottish Labour Party. Their 'disbelief' and 'outrage' at him being booted out was, as always, well rehearsed. As far

as Militant are concerned, the start of expulsions from the Party is actually the beginning of what for them is the real fight.

Sheridan's position as chair of the Militant-dominated Scottish Anti-Poll Tax Federation holds tremendous risks. Militant supporters will pose Sheridan's expulsion as an attack on the notion of non-payment, which demands that those who back the fight against the poll tax rally to their defence. Militant will manoeuvre and provoke Walworth Road to ensure that other expulsions follow, keeping them firmly in the limelight, and 'proving' their centrality to the poll tax campaign.

The arena of struggle is neatly shifted into Militant's territory. The more vociferous the attacks from the Labour Party hierarchy, the 'greater the need to defend our leaders', and the tighter their grip on the poll tax campaign.

At least this is their plan - if they are allowed to get away with it.

Unfolds

As the campaign unfolds, so will the chronological list of demands they seek to rally the forces they control around. 'Labour councils: don't implement the poll tax', will be followed by demands that they don't fine non-payers. Once this fails, they will demand that Labour councils call off the bailiffs, and don't take non-payers to court. Once that it turn fails, they will demand that Labour councils don't send people to jail. And lastly, that Labour councils free those people they have imprisoned. The ritual condemnation of the Labour Party's 'sell-out' that will follow each stage of this programme, is as predictable and pre-

planned as is the next demand in the list.

Soon after this list has been exhausted, Militant will decide there is little more mileage to be made out of the poll tax campaign, and - counting up the tidy pile of membership applications that their work has earned them - they will move onto more lucrative pastures, taking their footsoldier-supporters with them. As they pull out, they will attempt to shut down all the organisations they established or were in control of.

But surely, given the level of their involvement, if the poll tax campaign were lost, wouldn't that damage Militant's credibility and weaken their support? Not a bit of it. They will argue that if the fight went down to defeat, it certainly wasn't their fault. The blame will lie with the weak-willed leaders of the Labour Party and trade unions. If only they'd backed the fight we would have won. Next time, we'll have to press them even harder to support us...

Like their other 'colleagues' on the authoritarian-Left, the depth of their cynicism, is matched only by their determination to manipulate situations to their own advantage.

Jealousy

The speed with which Militant has moved in on the poll tax campaign, has left many a rival Left-faction watching dumbstruck from the sidelines. Their disagreements with what Militant are up to are more a case of jealousy, than of disgust. Given half a chance they'd be doing exactly the same.

So strong was the commitment of the Revolutionary Communist Party to defeating the poll tax, that within months of them launching a new front organisation to suck life-blood from the struggle - the 'Smash the Poll Tax Campaign' - they shut it down. They saw the extent to which Militant had got things sewn up, realised this would mean meagre pickings for themselves, and so moved back to more reliable 'recruitment-issues', like Ireland.

The tactics that Militant have employed in pursuit of their objectives have in themselves been highly damaging. On a local level, where they have been unable to seize control of local poll tax initiatives, they have set up their own parallel groups: appointing their own members to committees that award themselves the power to make decisions and speak on behalf of the whole local campaign. 'Rival' (ie independent, genuine) anti-poll tax groups have then often been squeezed out, ignored and, where possible, poached from.

In the early stages, Militant have often been careful to disguise their

operations - calling public meetings about the poll tax in the name of fictitious 'community' groups, etc. They have packed out subsequent meetings with supporters, who've voted each other onto 'executive committees' who from then on seek to run the show. Their supporters 'offer' to act as contacts for the campaign, to take responsibility for compiling address lists, and so on. Once their stranglehold has been established, they let their true colours gradually emerge.

Machine

By swinging the resources of the party-machine into action, Militant have undoubtedly won themselves a significant power base in the poll tax campaign in Scotland, and have now set their sights on doing the same south of the border.

They are now trying to win support among local groups for the national front-organisation they are launching: the All-British Anti-Poll Tax Steering Committee (guess whose planning to do the steering...). They're currently trying to scare-off (or absorb) other groups attempting to establish similar federations, including the London Federation of Anti-Poll tax Groups. The London Federation's hope to 'work with' the Militant-Federation in organising practical projects (such as demonstrations) seems doomed from the start: Militant have no intention of sharing power with anyone!

Militant's interest in mobilising working class people is in building tightly-stewarded 'pressure groups' that exist simply to lobby the bureaucracies of the Labour and trade union movement, and that have no power of their own. They will do all they can to prevent the poll tax movement breaking free of the straitjacket of those bureaucracies, and asserting its own agenda.

Throughout the campaign Militant and the rest of the authoritarian-Left have rallied to provide cover for, and give credibility to, every attempt by the Labour/union bureaucracies to head off the fight. Rather than exposing absurd token actions - like last year's infamous 'tea-break against the poll tax' strike - as acts of wilful sabotage, Militant have enthusiastically endorsed them, suggesting simply that the TUC could 'go further'.

At every turn they have sought to take the initiative out of the hands of working class activists, and give it back to the very forces that want to destroy the chances of a real battle against the poll tax.

So what can be done? Firstly we need to remember that Militant's

influence - and that of the rest of the authoritarian-Left - does not stretch through anything like the whole of the community-campaign.

We should be aware that many community poll tax groups have already told the parasites to pack their bags. We should be in there constantly exposing Militant's hidden agenda, and encouraging groups do have nothing to do with them and their ilk. And we should be highlighting the fact that the successes so far of the Scottish campaign have been despite - not because of - their attempts to hijack the struggle. Militant's claim to have 'built' the mass non-payment campaign is as laughable as the SNP's (Scottish National Party) hamfisted bid to take the credit.

As for organisation, we should argue that the power in local anti-poll tax groups is held at street-level, and that mandated delegates from small local groups, make decisions for the area campaign. Leaving power with an open meeting of 'activists' - answerable to non-one except themselves - is wide open to manipulation. Left-parties can easily arrange to 'pack-out' the meeting on a given night, and swing the vote their way.

There are already signs of a 'fierce backlash' growing against Militant's parasitism. Non-aligned activists in Edinburgh have already come together to plan "to attack Militant head on" over their attempted stitch-up of the Scottish poll tax federation, and to plan - if necessary - to break away and form a genuine, autonomous network.

Twinning

A new 'twinning' initiative, (launched by anarchists, libertarians and poll tax activists in England and Scotland) aiming to put Scottish and English/Welsh poll tax groups in direct touch with each other, is a welcome development - by-passing Militant's attempt to become the sole 'clearing-house' for such contact. Through it groups can pool experiences, exchange speakers, and build solidarity.

We must constantly be aware what Militant - and their like - are up to, and organise to prevent them from wrecking the fight. We can best do that by encouraging the anger that exists over the poll tax, to grow into organisation and action that remains directly in the hands of the only people capable of defeating the poll tax: the working class. •

Contact: 'Twinned against the poll tax' (English Section), Box 5, Hiziki, 15 Goosegate, Hockley, Nottingham.

Against the War

BAREFOOT GEN, Keiji Nakazawa; Penguin Original, 6.99.

PENGUIN BOOKS HAVE published a remarkable comic-strip story about life in Japan during the latter part of World War Two. First published in Japanese for children, it has been reprinted in other languages, in order to demonstrate the full horror of war - particularly the devastation caused by the atom bombing of Hiroshima.

The book is absolutely gripping and can be read at a pace of knots. Its constant exposure of the violence of the militarised State, the cowardly brutality of its patriotic supporters, and the pressures to conform are clearly and frequently demonstrated.

War, militarism and nationalism had similar parallels in Britain with its hounding of conscientious objectors, and the internment of foreign nationals. Working class and peasant Japanese people, however, seemed to have suffered extreme

privation and hunger as the nation's resources were directed to an ever more desperate war effort.

The actual devastation and suffering caused by the atom bomb is brought out in a very direct way. The reader is witnessing events as they happen.

Having praised it so far, there are some strange and worrying aspects to the

book. For instance, extreme physical violence towards children by their fathers is treated as a normal, everyday occurrence. The central character, the child Gen, for example, is variously punched by his father, and at one stage, strung up by a rope!

It is difficult to know whether these are true reflections of Japanese life in the 1940s (and perhaps now)

or the product of the author's imagination. Equally, wife battering as shown in the book cannot in any sense be acceptable. In the book, though, women are generally presented as very strong characters.

Despite the above reservations, *Barefoot Gen* is very enjoyable, at times very funny, but definitely indispensable reading for those who want to stand up to militarism and its poison.

barrier against the Vietnamese, a firm base for the resistance, and to 'legitimize' the governmental coalition in exile - recognised to this day by the United Nations.

During the dry season 1984-5, the Vietnamese launched an offensive against the camps within Cambodian borders, in order to destroy them. In doing so, they forced the camp population across the border.

The Thai government does not recognise these populations as 'refugees' but as 'displaced persons', and they are robbed of even the most elementary 'human rights'. The Thai army - violent and corrupt - and the military fractions of the resistance, rule their camps as they wish, with indoctrination, militarisation and compulsory

conscription, raising taxes on foodstuffs, etc.

The camps are rife with black marketeering, rackets and highway robbery. All of the camps are less than 8kms from the border, some only a few hundred meters away - within easy range of the Vietnamese cannon which have a range of 30kms.

One of the most perverse effects of international aid to the camps has been to contribute to the reconstruction of the Khmer Rouge's armed forces - to the extent that they may well be able to re-take power when the Vietnamese withdraw.

And for the displaced-poor and oppressed of Cambodia, that could mean leaving the misery of the camps, only to return to the horror of the 'killing fields'.



Anarchy, Syndicalism and revolution

THE LETTER FROM PH (*Organise!* 16) responding to an article on rank and file potential (*Organise!* 14) tended to oversimplify, as did the original article.

PH feels, as I do, that improving pay and conditions at work are too central to the lives of generations of working class people to be dismissed as counter-revolutionary just because unions wage those struggles (the article might imply this).

If PH believes a revolutionary union could integrate that centrality with our final aim of libertarian communism, he should have shown how an anarcho-syndicalist union could really be revolutionary (it might want to be; it might think it is; but that doesn't mean it is). It does look like wishful thinking when such big gaps are left in an argument.

However, several points remain to be made. A factor in the development of unions was the recognition that an organisation persisting in time across generations of workers would stand more chance of being able to retain advances made. Spontaneous groupings of workers would have to fight every battle over again, from scratch. This is not just an empirical, intellectual judgement - it is also engraved in the hearts of those families who have strong union traditions, remember

what their recent ancestors suffered, and who no longer suffer quite so much.

So, to read that a demand for a 35 hour week (or any other union demand) is "really a demand for... more humane management" sounds fairly pathetic. Who else but an 'ultra-leftist' would describe the demand to live when faced with an armed copper's gun as "really a demand for a more humane police force"? Absurd and outrageous? Well it is an appropriate analogy.

I agree with the spirit of the ACF's analysis of unions, but it is spoilt if such miserable interpretations are possible. Less extreme generalisations might be wise.

In some contexts, unions have had positive effects including in some revolutionary periods. Of course unions always have serious shortcomings - every organisation of struggle has faults - and sometimes these are decisive. Even when unions so play positive roles the reasons can be external as much as anything else (eg if events move before the union has been completely crippled by elitism or bureaucratic inertia).

Anarcho-syndicalists, such as the Friends of Durutti in Spain, knew that a specific anarchist organisation was necessary. Revolutionary or anarcho-

syndicalist unions need mass membership to be effective (in their own terms) - but most members would not be anarchists and would be able irreparably to change the theory and practice of the organisation.

Critically, unions cannot behave appropriately in times of revolution. Most critically, revolutionary periods have seen all manner of workplace organisation. What has been sorely lacking has been a clear and sufficiently loud, clear, consistent and respected voice from the heart of the working class arguing for free communism against the parties and power brokers.

That is what the ACF should aim to become, a task not made easier by unnecessarily alienating those in the union tradition.

You could argue that the whole history of working class struggle has been profoundly counter-revolutionary since it taught capitalism and the State how to beat us. It's true, in its way. But its not a political analysis, is it?

Unions will be around in one form or another until revolution triumphs. Sometimes they will have their uses, often they will be counter-productive. It is important that our political commitment is not devoted to them

- I hope the ACF continues to explain why, without resorting to simplistic generalisations that reduce complex matters to an illusory choice between good and evil.

WL
Gateshead

Workplace obsessed?

I ENJOY *ORGANISE!*, which is an improvement on *Virus* and has the potential to be a good paper once you've finally sorted out your 'aims and principles' and applied them.

Your criticisms of anarcho-syndicalism, for example, seem to me to be far too vague. What is the 'fundamental nature of unionism'? Are we talking about bourgeois unionism or anarcho-syndicalist unionism? Why confuse the two? How would the ACF organise in industry?

Do you not accept that anarcho-syndicalists have learned the mistakes of Spain, et al, and that your workplace-obsessed view of anarcho-syndicalism is out of date?

Fraternally,
RE
Avon

Editors reply: (With regard to the above two letters) As W.L. points out, "unions cannot behave appropriately in times of revolution", and we apply this criticism as much to syndicalist unions as to more obviously reformist trade union structures (See 'What is the potential of rank and file action?' *Organise!* 14). This is not purely because we respond to anarcho-syndicalists as 'workerists' as R.E. suggests, but because the syndicalist structure is not one that can automatically be shunted into arenas like 'community' or 'women's struggle' just because it's exponents have realised that resistance to the ruling class doesn't end at the point of production.

If the article in question makes the issue appear too simple, it's a problem of only having a limited amount of space. We hope the authors of the letters will be interested in attending our dayschool so we can look at the issues in greater depth.

Tin Tin

I'D LIKE TO briefly comment on the unfair review of the Tin-Tin story *Breaking Free* (*Organise!* 16).

Rather than the plot being implausible (ie a spontaneous rank

NEWS AND ANALYSIS continued from page 4

Cambodian refugees

DURING WINTER 1978-9, after four years of Khmer Rouge bloodshed, Pol Pot's regime fell before the Vietnamese invasion.

Several hundreds of thousands of people, liberated from terror - but not from war and famine - fled towards the Thailand border. By December 1979, half a million had congregated there.

Very quickly, under the auspices of the Thai government and the United Nations, camps were set up. With the exception of Khao I Dong - under the control of the High Commission for Refugees of

the United Nations - all the camps are controlled by different factions within the anti-Vietnamese resistance: Khmer Rouge, FLNPK (right-wing nationalists) and Sihanoukists (nationalist followers of Prince Norodom Sihanouk).

The interests of the Thai government, of the anti-Vietnamese resistance, and of all those who support them (most notably the United States and China) combine to pin down the camp populations to an existence that is virtually that of prisoners.

All this in order to create a human strategic



"Our Labour" - CNT poster proclaiming the collectivisation of the car industry during the Spanish Civil War. But how do we get beyond simply self-managing capitalism?

and file revolt against exploitation), there are in fact plenty of historic examples of such happenings. The most recent revolt took place in Tiananmen Square, and what about Hungary in 1956 or Paris 1968?

If one was to point to a weakness in the story, it is the weakness of all such revolts. They threaten the system, but cannot - on the basis of pure spontaneity - overcome it. It is precisely at this point that anarchist propaganda (the 'leadership of ideas') is vital to signpost the way forward, and it is at this point that the story breaks off.

As regards another of the reviewer's criticisms, yes, racism, sexism and homophobia are dealt with in a brief and simplified way - how refreshing! How clear to those, especially the young, who come across these ideas for the first time.

Tin-Tin is fun. It is also good basic anarchist propaganda.

CP

London ACF

AUTHOR'S REPLY: WHEN referring to the plot of Breaking Free as "implausible", I meant in terms of the escalation of protest and action from to the death of a worker, to a revolutionary situation.

'Leadership of ideas' is vital, but to is organisation, and that is something Breaking Free neglects.

And while the approach to racism, homophobia and sexism may be "refreshing", it doesn't offer any tactics for challenging them - especially in their institutionalised forms.

Yes, Tin-Tin is fun, but it is still not serious propaganda.

Workers against apartheid

THE ISSUE OF workers sanctions is a contentious one in the anti-apartheid movement. The idea of workers taking industrial action against South African imports and exports is one that makes the fight in Britain a class issue. If the campaign against apartheid is just one of consumer boycotts and moral outrage against racism, it is simply in the arena of the middle class do-gooders.

In Leicester, two workers at Granby Plastics told their boss that they would not work on an export order to South Africa for 'Nyloil', a product used in the mining industry. They were promptly sacked.

The point has been made that taking individual action against

the economy of South Africa has no impact, and that they would have been better off backing down and remaining in work so that they could agitate about the issue amongst the workforce.

But the workers, Ross Galbraith and Gary Sherriff, were faced with a reactionary and racist workforce and had no luck whatsoever persuading them to take action against the order. They decided that they had to make a stand on their own.

The effect of the sackings has been to greatly increase the awareness of people in and around Leicester about what is happening in South Africa. The press coverage has been phenomenal, and the issue is being discussed in other workplaces. A march staged at 8:00 am on Thursday 12th October to the factory drew 100 people.

It is only by workers being prepared to make a stand on such issues that other workers get the confidence to do the same.

Support has come from many quarters in and around Leicester, including many anarchists. They need a lot more publicity, fund raising and support nationally, however, and they are always keen to travel and speak at meetings about the issue. The next major event will be a march in Leicester on the 9th of December. The contact address is :-

South African Solidarity Committee,
c/o Unemployed Workers Centre,
138, Charles Street,
Leicester.

C.T. Nottm. ACF.

Oligarchy?

REGARDS YOUR REPLY to RSW's letter about the issues raised by Michel's book 'Political Parties' (Organise! 16):

Firstly, Michel does not confuse anarchy with chaos when he states that anarchists organise "in defiance of their own principles".

By this, he meant that the pragmatic requirements of organising, and the psychological attributes and role requirements of those who make decisions, mean that all attempts at organisation except on a very small scale create oligarchies.

This "ironlaw of oligarchy" happens because effective decisions can only be made by small groups. The larger an organisation, the smaller the proportion of its members who can be active in running it. Further, large organisations require complicated rules, which give those who already wield power greater

opportunities to impose their wishes on the rank-and-file.

It is in that sense that anarchists, concerned about these problems, organise in defiance of their own principles.

Regarding delegates, my copy of 'Political Parties' says that they "acquire a moral right to that office": RSW and Organise! misquoted this phrase as "require a moral right". I suspect this misquote led your answer astray.

With this strange phrase, Michel was emphasising that the apathy and indifference of the great mass of people is linked to their need for guidance and direction. In a large and complex society, any change can evoke anxiety. So, the advances of continuity and accumulated experience will often seem to outweigh the less tangible benefits of rotation - in the minds of delegates and non-delegates alike.

Michel depicts oligarchy as an inevitable feature of human society, not hierarchy, and he doesn't ignore the social organisation of capitalism. He says that many features of society and human nature, which anarchist blame on capitalist social organisation, are actually nothing to do with capitalism. They arose inevitably as society became larger and more complex. This view need not imply any anthropological belief in the primacy of hierarchy and enterprise.

Michel equates oligarchy with injustice. He offers a simplistic critique of leaders and their personal qualities, and takes their presence in an organ-

isation as proof that it is oligarchic - and therefore unjust. But he does raise problems for anarchists, in our organising and in our conception of the anarchist society. For example:

1) In a repressive state, the need for clandestine organisation heightens the tendency to oligarchy. What do we do about that?

2) When we become a mass movement, how can we make sure that any oligarchies which develop are accountable and/or impermanent?

3) Without money, forced labour or the free market, how do we check the power of groups/individuals who will co-ordinate the supply and distribution of resources?

Perhaps Michel is right, and so we should build an anarchism based on the recognition that oligarchy is inevitable? Is a society of overlapping oligarchies necessarily hierarchical? Perhaps access and accountability matter more than the elimination of all hierarchies? Maybe information technology can solve all these problems? Or maybe it can't and the green anarchists have been right all along?

We must seriously debate these issues. Neither anarchist ideology, nor the glib refusal to consider the elements of a working anarchist society lest we are thought to be a vanguard, should stand in our way.

In solidarity,
JC
Nottingham

WE WELCOME LETTERS on all subjects covered by Organise!.

Those for the next issue should be sent to the address on page 2 by December 29th.

Please try to keep letters to around 250 words - otherwise we may need to edit them.

All letters must carry a full name and address, if the author wants their piece pub-

lished. We don't (unless specifically requested) print your address in Organise! - but we may need to contact you ourselves. Letters without a name and address won't be considered.

We endeavour not to alter the meaning of a letter if we have to cut it, and apologise if this occurs. Edited letters are marked at the end with a (*).

Organise! back issues



Back issues of Organise! - and its forerunner Virus - are available from ACF (London), c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1.

Aims and 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 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.

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

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 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 organisation will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

8. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try

to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called 'socialists' or 'communists' we do not want power or control for our organisation. We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method. We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.●

♣ ACE Editions

ACF pamphlets are available from: ACF c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

ACE NO 1. Basic Bakunin: The ideas of Bakunin, one of the founders of class struggle anarchism. (50p inc p&p).

ACE NO 2. The Poll Tax and How to Fight It: Soon to be reprinted and updated, this pamphlet describes the effects of the poll tax, the inevitable failure of the Labour Party and Unions in fighting, and shows how to build effective strategies for collective action that can scupper the Tory flagship (50p inc p&p).

ACE NO 3. The Libertarian Communist Manifesto: A translation from the French of the Fontenis document outlining the need for coherent class politics and a strong anarchist organisation to influence the revolutionary process (60p inc p&p).

Also Anarchism as we see it: The original pamphlet outlining the theory, politics and direction of the ACF (50p inc p&p).

I/We are coming to the Anarchist Communist Federation's Day School, at Conway Hall, London WC1, on Saturday December 2.

Name/s:

Address:

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I enclose 1.50 (unwaged), 2.50 (waged) for each registration (cheques may payable to 'ACF'):

I enclose details of my creche requirements:

Please return form to: ACF (London Group) c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1.