

# PRISON RIOTS ERUPT

THE LAST FEW weeks have seen a great upsurge in working class fight back, not just on the streets of Britain during the anti-poll tax demonstrations and riots, but also inside the walls of Her Majesty's prisons.

As soon as prisoners took over the wings of Strangeways in Manchester, burnt and demolished their cells and other parts of the prison, the state and press were ready with stories of bodies strewn around the prison as violent prisoner attacked sex offender. Just what you'd expect from the uncontrollable elements in our society, so they said. We now know this to be completely untrue.

Media attempts to remove any public support for the

prisoners failed as they climbed on the roof and told us the truth. Since then the state has engaged in out and out psychological warfare on the prisoners. They told us that outspoken spokesman Paul Taylor was a convicted rapist, that other prisoners were afraid of reprisals from the 'hard core' if they gave in, and that prisoners were ill with food poisoning. And all this while police and screws in riot gear attempted to regain control by force, and blasted the prisoners on the roof with loud music sirens and firecrackers, whenever it looked like they might be getting the facts across.

The Strangeways riots inspired similar unrest in many other prisons and youth

institutions; Bedford, Bristol, Brixton, Cardiff, Dartmoor, Durham, Glen Parva, Humberside Eventhorpe, Hull, Leeds, Lindholme, Long Lartin, Pentonville, Perth, Shepton Mallet, Shotts, Stoke Heath, Wandsworth. To name but a few!

Whilst the mainstream press have been spreading lies, the Left press have been falling over themselves calling for better, nicer prisons and more screws to 'take care' of them, so that it won't happen again.

An incredible 1 in 1000 people of Britain's population are in prison at any one time, mostly working class people. Are the liberal prison reformers trying to tell us all prisoners want is cleaner cells, longer exercise

periods, and one to one attention from a personal screw?

Of course, some people (like rapists) will need to be reckoned with even in an anarchist society. But prisons are just the hard end of the state which locks away people it can't control. We support as equals in the class struggle, prisoners fighting the state in the the only way left open to them. And they'll need all the support they can get. As we go to press, the outcome of the Strangeways occupation is uncertain, but the prisoners still on the roof must know they face either life sentences in isolation, or worse if the government gets tired of waiting.



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# ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

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# AN ERUPTION OF CLASS ANGER



THE POLL TAX RIOTS \* STRIKING STRATEGIES  
MANDELA \* ECOLOGY AND CLASS \* PRISONS

Magazine of the  
Anarchist Communist Federation

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:

Newcastle, Northampton, Northumberland, Nottingham, Oxford, Rugby, Sheffield, Sussex, Swansea, and York.

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.

Write to: P. O. Box 263, Sheffield S1 3EX.

Birmingham, Blackpool, Chesterfield, Coventry, Co Durham, Essex, Glasgow, Halifax, Kent, London,

As regular readers will have seen, we've been forced to increase the cover price of *Organise!* from 30p to 40p with this issue. This first increase in over two years, has been forced on us by increases in printing and postage costs.

But 40p is still not enough to cover all those costs. If we're to keep the cover price from rising again, we desperately need a regular flow of cash into the Press Fund to help make up the shortfall.

We've added four pages

to this issue (at even more expense!) to allow us to include all the material on the Trafalgar Square riot and the poll tax struggle that we needed to.

This issue's appeal has brought in less than £100 - well short of our regular £250 target. Many thanks go to everyone who contributed.

If you can help us reach the next £250 target, please send donations, by June 17, to:

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

**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 without A&Ps at all). The deadlines for the August 1990 issue are June 17 for features and reviews, and June 30 for letters and news.

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

## Want to know more?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION, SEND THIS TO: P. O. Box 263 Sheffield S1 3EX

Name: .....

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# POLL TAX FURY

EVENTS IN MARCH and April saw the unleashing of working class anger towards the hated poll tax. As local councils attempted to set poll tax figures ranging from 149 in ultra-Thatcherite Wandsworth, to a massive 566 in Labour controlled Haringey, thousands of people took to the streets.

Demonstrations took place in countless boroughs around the country. Meetings were stormed, and as a result, some were abandoned.

\* In Hackney, East London, thousands blocked the main street, and shop windows were smashed in an outburst against the poll tax and the whole rotten system. In Lambeth, thousands massed and fought the police. In Islington, the police brought out their horses against a 2,000 strong crowd. Time and again, Labour councils whined that it wasn't their fault. However, they were still prepared to implement the tax, and denounce those who argued for non-payment.

\* Similar scenes were to be repeated outside the inner-city, in places like Southampton, Swindon, Bath, Bristol, Birmingham, Reading, Norwich, Plymouth, Leeds and Liverpool.

\* And in the Tory heart-lands, there was conspicuous anger against the tax. In Tory-controlled Maidenhead, the town hall was surrounded and bombarded with eggs, stones and pennies. In Walton-on-Thames, in the stockbroker belt, 800 turned out to similar scenes.

\* And in Scotland, it was revealed that at least 250,000 people were behind with poll tax payments, after having paid an initial first payment.

\* On March 31, massive demonstrations against the tax took place in Glasgow and in London - where working class anger was felt in the heartland of upper class decadence.

## Mayhem

Depending on which daily paper you may have read, the 'blame' for such 'mayhem' lies with either the Militant Tendency, the Socialist Workers Party, or mysterious 'anarchist groupings'. The capitalist press love to talk about violence, 'rent-a-mob' and 'outside agitators'. The Labour Party too has talked its fair share of such rubbish. It is typical hypocrisy of such supporters of

the capitalist system, who support the use of armed forces to maintain the status quo, to defend 'our Britain', and then cry foul when ordinary people take action to attack the system that attacks them.

## Apologies

The Labour Party, which is steeped in the tradition of not only respect for law, but also of implementing the law, will never find itself on the same side as the working class - it can only 'apologise' for us when we take meaningful action.

Militant and the SWP are a hinderance to the fight against the poll tax. Militant has been quick to distance itself from any class violence - after all, they are part of the Labour Party. Neither do they see it as productive in their attempts towards total hi-jacking of the anti-poll tax movement.

The SWP, on the other hand, mainly seeks to sell its papers and boost the membership of their party. Yet after so many twists and turns from the party leadership on what to do about the poll tax, it is unlikely that they know what to think about it all.

As for 'anarchists' - we are involved in such activities no more than the thousands of other ordinary working class people involved in genuine anti-poll tax organisations. The media talks of 'outside agitators' because the bosses cannot bear to admit or believe that ordinary people would dare to act without being manipulated by mysterious trouble makers. Such talk of outsiders is also used to attack the principle of working class solidarity.

The fact the not all those involved in Hackney were from that borough shows a healthy amount of inter-borough solidarity. For the ruling class and their supporters it merely indicates the existence of 'rent-a-mob'.

What the hell do they expect when the government tries to impose something like the poll tax? We are not going to sit around debating its rights and wrongs, lobbying our MPs and waiting till the next Labour government get elected. Fighting the poll tax is all about not paying it, and working class people showing we are not fooled by the State.

We are inspired by such examples of working class resistance and we are optimistic too. But this is not enough. It is important that people against the poll tax not be isolated, and that they be involved in non-payment organisation right now.

In England and Wales, it will not be long before we see the bailiffs assisted by police, attempting to invade our homes for non-payment. We need to build on current support and activity in order to create a concrete response to such future attacks on our numbers from local government and the State.

## New ACF pamphlet: Beating the poll tax

Published in mid-February, with the arrival of poll tax bills in England and Wales just a few weeks away, this new ACF pamphlet outlines the kind of collective class action that can crush the Community Charge.

It examines the strength of poll tax resistance in Scotland so far - and exposes the role of the Labour Party in trying to put down this revolt.

It explains the objectives that lie behind the poll tax, and the cynical way whole sections of the Left have tried to move in on, and suffocate, the growing opposition to it.

This is a brand-new pamphlet, completely revised and updated.

Available from: **ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1.**

Please send me ..... copies of *Beating the poll tax* at 60p each, I enclose ..... (Cheques made payable to the ACF)

Name:

Address



# MANDELA: (not) talking 'bout a revolution

NELSON MANDELA'S RECENT release from prison has been the cause of much celebration and massive media hype. However, for anarchists, his release can bring no such joy - as we see the struggle of the black working class in South Africa restrained and controlled even further by the African National Congress (ANC), in the name of a "negotiated settlement" to end apartheid.

Within hours of his release, Mandela was busy spelling out the nature of his politics: "I hope you will disperse with discipline, and not a single one of you will do anything that will cause other people to say that we can't control our own people" (our emphasis).

## Vigilant

Elements of the Left in Britain have not been slow to focus on the reactionary politics which Mandela espouses. They talk of the need to be "vigilant", to "keep a watchful eye" on Mandela. Predictions of a "sell-out" are already resounding.

Yet a brief look at the politics and context of the so-called Freedom Charter and the history of the African National Congress clearly indicates that a "sell-out" cannot be on the cards. For never in the ANC's history has it had a commitment to any uncompromising revolutionary politics. The ANC was born of grovelling for a better deal, and pleading with the ruling class in South Africa and abroad, for a lesser version of exploitation and oppression.

The Freedom Charter states that: "the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industries shall be transformed to ownership of the people as a whole". Even this classic nationalisation clause was disowned by Mandela only a year later in the face of criticisms of the Charter being a 'socialist' programme. Mandela explained that what was meant by this was: "...non-European Bourgeois will have the opportunity to own in their own names

and rights, mills and factories - and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as never before"

## Capital

So, from private capital to nationalisation and back to private capital in a few short breaths - and not a hint of 'anti-capitalist' politics.

We need look no further than Mandela's address to the Rivonia Trial in 1964 for further evidence: "It (The Freedom Charter) is by no means a blueprint for a socialist state. It provides for nationalisation of mines, banks, industry, because they are owned by one race only" (our emphasis).

It is clear clear that the conflict is not that the ruling class own the wealth and land and means of production. The problem is that the ruling class is white. It follows that the solution is a multi-racial ruling class.

The reasons for Mandela's release are manifold - and nothing to do the "effect (sic) of sanctions", or "international pressure". The containment of the Black working class in South Africa is a major financial and political burden for the ruling class in that country.

The intensification of the struggle which took place in the mid-eighties was something they could have well done without. Having failed to suppress this recent increase in militancy in the townships and workplaces, the ruling class now realise that another solution is necessary.

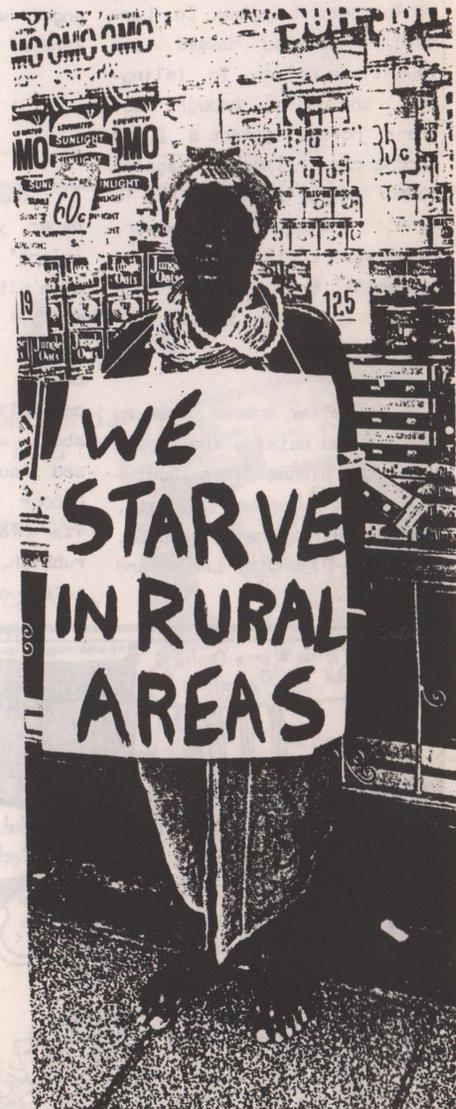
## Leaders

Whilst granting some political power to black leaders, the white ruling class hopes it can retain hold of economic power and thus stay in control of the 'new' multi-racial capitalist state. But to do this, it needs an organisation which is willing to control the black

working class, is willing to do business, and one which will leave alone the white ruling class control over capital.

That organisation is the ANC. The release of Mandela was simply necessary to provide the environment for this to take place.

The white ruling class and the ANC are not locked in a bitter battle. The ANC is willing to provide a smooth negotiated settlement in return for a larger slice of their slice of the cake. Mandela and the ANC are not fools, they are shrewd politicians, their defence of



the "armed struggle", or outrage at the recent murderous activities of the regime, are simply rhetoric in the negotiating game.

"We want Johannesburg to remain the beautiful and thriving city that it is now. Therefore, we are willing to maintain separate living until there are enough new employment opportunities and new homes to allow blacks to move into Johannesburg with dignity", says Mandela.

The refusal to renounce the armed struggle by the ANC is a bargaining chip with the Apartheid State. It is a distraction from the backdoor negotiations with the ruling class. Already the ANC has turned their minimum demand of 'one person, one vote' into a maximum demand which Mandela has described as "negotiable".

## Bitter

Whilst all this is pretty disheartening, it is important to remember that the many sections of the black working class - especially the young women and men who have grown up in the throes of bitter struggle against the racist State - are far from being ANC lap-dogs. Those involved in the struggles of the eighties have experienced the controlling nature of the ANC. During the 1976-7 and 1980 uprisings the ANC was conspicuously absent. It tried to minimise the importance of the uprisings and workplace militancy, calling them leaderless, chaotic and even infantile. And although the ANC had many requests for weapons from the 'Young Comrades' they only came in a trickle and then only to loyal supporters.

They were usually squandered on elite military actions. They changed their tune during the 1985-7 uprising - realising like the apartheid rulers - that internal revolt was the threat to the white State. The uprising was outside the control of the ANC or any political faction. The townships became no-go areas for the police and military, and collaborators received popular justice.

Street and township committees were set up so that everyone in the insurgent communities directly controlled the struggle. This left the ANC and other groups as leaders without followers.

The ANC do face a difficult task. With a major visual role to play they need to 'appease' all sides. Many working class black South Africans are aware

that they have already waited too long, and are not prepared to see the ANC take the struggle from them for the sake of a pot pourri of limited political reforms.

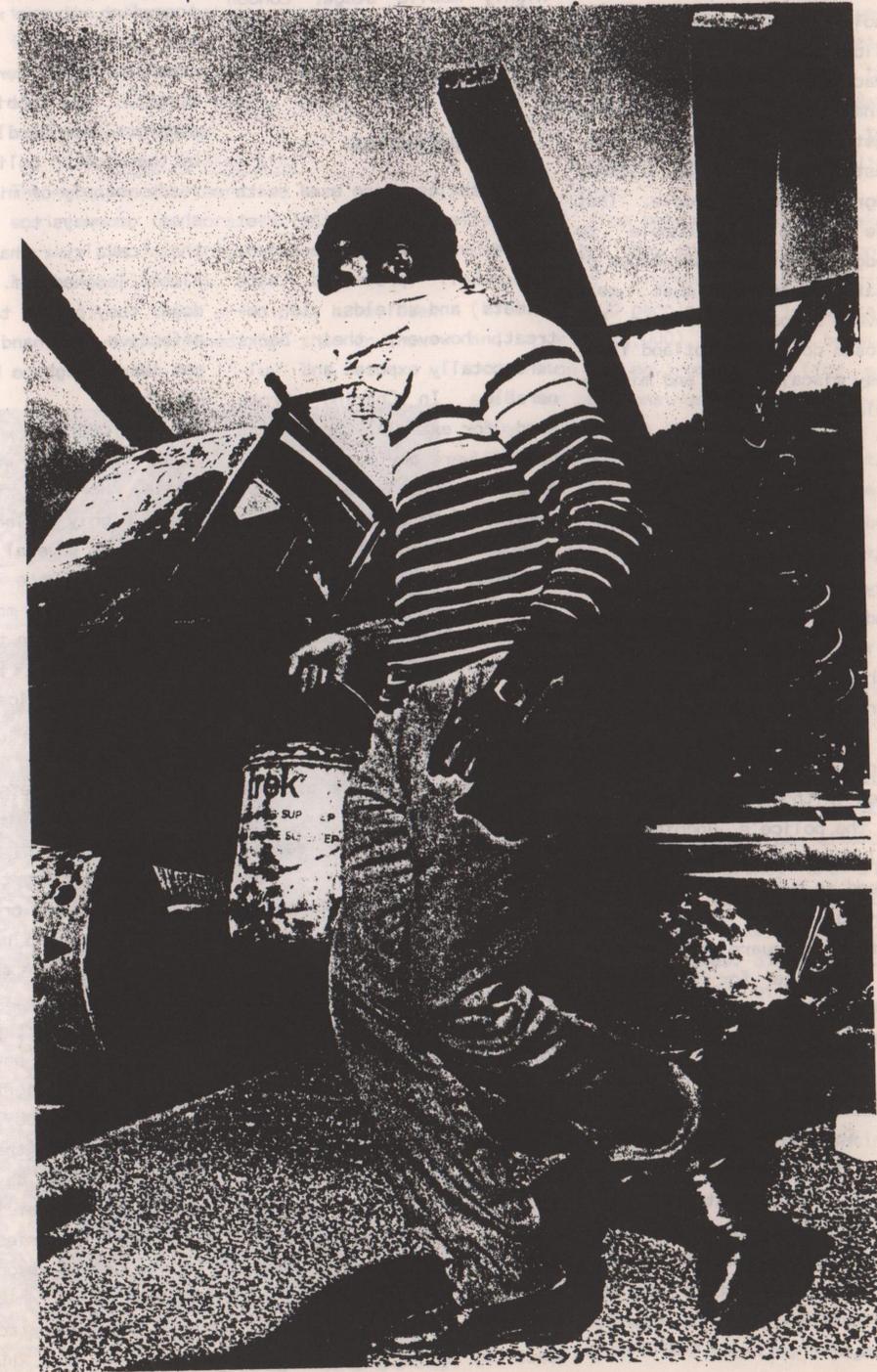
Whilst Mandela calls for a 'pacification' of the struggle in order to facilitate negotiation, black workers have been calling for a strengthening of the struggle, for increased strike action, for mass rent boycotts - for more militancy.

The black working class in South Africa face the continuation of a long and bitter battle, not only against the racist ruling class regime in place at the moment, but also against the ANC - who are willing to do anything to reach

their precious 'settlement'.

The Mandela Myth will grow and grow. He is media and capitalist friendly, and will play a key media role in the future of South Africa.

As anarchists, part of our agenda in practising solidarity with the South African working class, must be the smashing of the Myth and in doing so we can expose the failure of nationalism. A change of boss means no change of exploitation - no change at all. Mass revolutionary action from the exploited, the black working class of town and country, the poor and young people, can still foil these plans for normalisation.



# A RIOTER'S ACCOUNT

## sent anonymously to Organise

EVERYONE WHO FULLY participated in the events of March 31 will agree that they were uplifting.

The sight of tooled up riot police being given a good thrashing, and the sense of liberation from being in control of the streets was almost euphoric.

The police provoked the whole affair. Rather than allow the march to pass off peacefully, they used a combination of arrogance, macho posturing and arbitrary arrests to stir up an already angry crowd of people. That the police were unable to judge the dire consequences of that aggression must mean severe admonitions behind the closed doors of Scotland Yard. They miscalculated and miscalculated badly.

### Opportunity

The demonstrators seized the opportunity, and in often very creative ways took command of the situation. The police's tried and tested methods of crowd control were found wanting. That many of the street fighters were young, poor and very determined in their anger proved to be the police's undoing. We would not be pushed around, indeed in huge numbers we surrounded the police in Trafalgar Square and wrought our revenge for years of Thatcherite hostility. Or-greave and Wapping were avenged.

Psychologically, after the first reverses of the riot police, the demonstrators were unstoppable. Perhaps the single most important factor in the police defeat was the psychological one - a combination of anger, determination

and lack of fear.

The police use of temporary fences was turned against them. Demonstrators utilised them as barricades or as a means of hemming in the police, allowing them to receive their fair share of missiles. At a later stage, when the events moved to their highly mobile stage, London provided a whole host of builders' materials to construct barricades.

### Missiles

Missiles were used with great effect, though the riot police, when facing the crowd, were well protected with helmets and shields. In retreat, however, their backs were totally exposed and vulnerable. In Charing Cross Road, for example, three riot police were obviously terrified at the prospect of missiles from behind, as they passed by a crowd of young demonstrators.

Also, riot police officers' legs are exposed and vulnerable, even when facing a crowd. Their helmets prevented head injuries, which unfortunately was not true for their opponents. Some of the injuries sustained by the crowd came from the demonstrators themselves - as missiles fell short of their targets. Since the uprising was spontaneous, no-one had head protection. This must be considered in the future, though if only a few people are properly protected they will draw the attention of the police. People should throw from nearer the front, to be more accurate. Those present who were used to 'having a go' at the police in areas where they live pointed this out.

The police were taken aback by their inability to

cover the crowd with animals - namely horses and dogs. Cavalry charges certainly cleared the large crowds in and around the Square, but only temporarily as the demonstrators re-grouped in between sorties. Also, the mounted police officers were highly vulnerable to missiles - according to one report over 50% of them sustained injuries. They were an easy target. The mobile demonstrators were hardly affected by the mounted police, with a ready supply of missiles and shop doorways to dive into, the cavalry charges were almost laughed off. As for the dogs, they proved totally ineffective. Dog handlers never got near enough to be able to use them.

Of course, with their vans, the police were highly mobile. However, they were also highly vulnerable to ambush - on several occasions police vans were surrounded and stoned. The mobility of the crowds were in the initial stages at least, the learnt effect of the police clearing Trafalgar Square. With the police tied down in pitched battles, the streets were safe to be looted well in advance of the arrival of the riot squads. Later, as the police pursued them, the crowds fanned out to let affluent London know what the poor and oppressed think. The stoning of Stringfellows night-club brought forth squeals of delight as neon lights crashed to the ground. Mobility must be seen as one of the greatest strengths of the day and resulted in a host of lightning attacks and victories.

The use of arson was more questionable. Whilst the firing of the portacabins in the Square was quite spec-

taular, it did allow the police to use fire engines to move the crowd away from the scene of previous pitched battles. Also, that part of the Square became unsafe as the whole unit could have collapsed on us. The brief burning of the South African Embassy, however, was a delight to behold. It is interesting to note that the windows hide a false facade. The whole Embassy is constructed like a fort. As regards the upturning and burning of cars, they did provide the danger of explosions, and several small family cars were gutted - which is surely to be criticised. But our true enemies - the rich - felt our fury to its fullest.

### Future

In the future, we can be sure, the police will use alternative methods if they start to take heavy casualties. One option would be to use CS gas - but this is indiscriminate and would affect wealthy tourists who swarm around the West End. Plastic bullets may be used next time, but the political costs here are high and their use - like CS gas - marks a display of defeat.

People who watched the riot on TV, or from the safety of the far side of Trafalgar Square (unable to participate for whatever reason) have said the police got what they deserved. Such events give our class confidence, and we learn how to co-operate together and effectively take on the State.

We don't need anyone to organise us, anyone who had tried to take over would have been told to fuck off. We laugh when they try to point to ring leaders, just like we laugh at people who try to take over anti-poll tax campaigns.

The working class is on the march again. We will learn the lessons of battles in the past and defeat the poll tax and defeat the ruling class.

# ECOLOGY AND CLASS

MANY PEOPLE ARE now aware of the massive worldwide problem of environmental pollution and destruction.

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

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

Ecology is science of living things and their relationship to the environment in which they live. There are three central ecological principles:

(1) All life on Earth is inter-dependent.

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

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

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

(3) Unity in diversity.

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

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

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

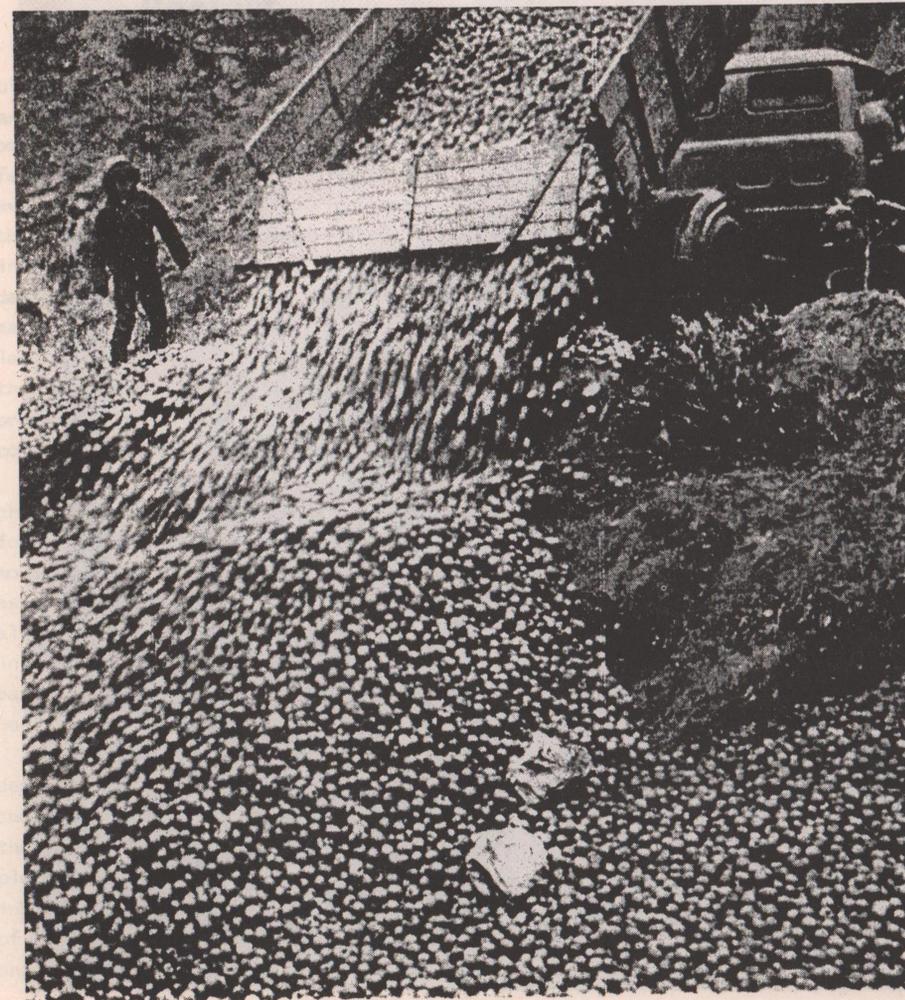
Governments of the industrialised countries signed a treaty in 1987, the Montreal Protocol, agreeing to halve the production of CFC's (Chloro-Fluoro-Carbons which damage the ozone layer, causing global warming) by the year 2000. It's been estimated however that a reduction of 85% is needed to enable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

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

### Protocol

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

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



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

## Rural

The green policies and promises of the mainstream political parties are so much populist window-dressing. Green Parties are superficially more attractive. They have some radical policies such as decentralism, federalism and opposition to leaders. But if they achieve power, they will (like the mainstream parties or Bolsheviks) be running the state, the rule of the few which is the root of the problem. They will also

- inevitably - be corrupted by power as illustrated by the German Green Party: in power at State level they supported nuclear power.

One of their central rules was that no-one could be a spokesperson for more than two years, yet this was vehemently opposed by the first generation of non-leaders such as Petra Kelly when their time was up. In Britain the Green Party (though still in opposition) has refused to support mass non-payment of the poll tax because it won't support illegal action. The 'radical' Greater London Council of Ken Livingstone showed the same lessons: you cannot impose radical policies and people power from above: people must collectively take power for themselves, outside of and against political parties.

Green pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace International do some good practical work (particularly the local groups) but are flawed by their 'apolitical' stance (which means that they accept the state and capitalism) and their single issue

politics.

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

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

What is striking about pollution and environmental destruction is the

scale of it, and the fact that most of results from routine, daily practice rather than 'accidents' or 'disasters' such as Bhopal, Soveso, Chernobyl or the Exxon Valdez Alaskan oil spill.

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

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

## Poorest

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

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

Mass pollution and environmental destruction is the inevitable consequence of a system based on dominating the rest of nature (and therefore exploiting and destroying it). This domination has its roots in the domination of people - class society, where power and wealth is in the hands of a few, the

ruling class, who oppress and exploit the working class majority, and the related oppressions of racism and sexism. Production is for profit not need. It is the ruling class who decide what is produced and how - peasants don't choose to live on the worst land, or grow cash crops, individual consumers can't stop pollution through buying, boycotting or voting.

## Technology

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

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

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

Large scale industry necessitates large scale centralised energy production from fossil fuels (Coal, Oil and Gas) and nuclear power, with the consequent waste, acid rain, radiation and global warming. Renewable energy could equally be used.

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

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

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

In Brazil, rubber tappers forged an alliance with native peoples and environmentalists to oppose massive deforestation of the Amazon rainforest by big landowners and business interests. Their success led to the murder of union activist Chico Mendes by hired assassins in December 1988, but the struggle continues.

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

## Class

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

We need to take direct control of every aspect of our lives through social revolution: collectively seizing control of the land, workplaces and streets, and sharing decisions, work and wealth - deciding what is produced and how, dissolving the divisions between and home, work and play, people and the rest of nature.



# THE POLL TAX: The Peasants Revolt

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, the Labour Party, the media and the All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation alike, have declared anarchists to be 'public enemy number one' after the demonstration in London against the poll tax on March 31.

According to them, anarchists in general - but specifically groups like Class War, the Anarchist Communist Federation and the Direct Action Movement - were behind the Trafalgar Square riot and the subsequent assaults on the West End.

According to us, anarchism in Britain has never had it so good. The influence that our ideas have had in the working class has always been misrepresented by the State and the 'State-in-waiting' (the Left-wing parties). The events in Trafalgar Square have caused much speculation about who we are, what we believe, and what we do.

We have worked consistently over the years to introduce our ideas (politics and working practise) into the class struggle in all its forms. Increasingly, we have gained respect for the work we do around various aspects of that struggle, and our ideas have been taken up and put into practise. We support working class resistance to the State whenever we see it.

Over the last decade in particular class struggle anarchist organisations have grown in strength and influence. We are currently seeing a massive upsurge in working class resistance to the State, focused largely around refusal to cooperate with the poll tax. The effectiveness with which working class people take up anarchist forms of organisation is no accident. When resistance to a government necessitates also taking on the 'reformist' and 'revolutionary' Left - as well as the Trades Union movement, the Police and the media - then the time is right for Anarchy!

After the Trafalgar Square riot, given the exciting scale of resistance to the poll tax, and the role that anarchists play (and are claimed to play), the Anarchist Communist Federation would like to State our case on various

issues thrown up for us by the current attention we are receiving.

**"VIOLENCE AND LOOTING IS NOT THE WAY TO MAKE THE CASE AGAINST THE POLL TAX"**

People say that taking on the police and the ruling class has nothing to do with the poll tax. They either believe that the rest of capitalism isn't too bad, but that the poll tax is unfair, or they believe the working class needs leading a stage at a time, through the various battles (NHS, Wapping etc) that we face before their own party takes over.

The truth is that class violence is always effective in getting results, and the working class at its most angry will attack its ultimate oppressor - not the just poll tax, not just the Tories, not just the Labour leadership, but the whole ruling class and those who support it.

The Left has always been terrified of class violence, that is why it seeks to control or crush it. Whenever the working class is at its strongest they tell us to pressurise our 'elected leaders', bring change through the ballot box or restrict our activities to the workplace. This is because they are afraid of class action they cannot control. They try to dismiss class violence as a symptom of Thatcherism, a sign of human unhappiness, but deny it is a part of the real battle against the ruling class, that will eventually sweep them away too. The 'State-in-waiting' cannot allow the working class to dismiss all authority, because that means them too.

Why shouldn't we steal from the rich! They steal from us all the time by forcing us into wage-slavery and making huge profits out of our work. Anarchists have no moral qualms about trashing or stealing the 'property' of people who own hundreds of times more than what they need and what we have.

Why is violence alright in the Eastern Bloc, in South Africa, in Nicaragua, but not here? Why was it alright for Watt Tyler and the peasants in

the 1300s to kill officers enforcing the poll tax, but not for us? Is it because things here are 'not as bad'? Because we have a 'democracy' as a final resort instead? Anarchists treat bourgeois-democracy with scorn. Why should the working class wait for things to get worse, before the Left allow us to fight?

Violence is inevitable in a situation of class conflict - it is also necessary to bring about ultimate change.

At our most angry, those who can will fight, and those who can't will perform the more important role of enabling and supporting those who do.

Battles like Trafalgar Square increase the confidence of the class, and they also teach us to organise ourselves collectively and support each other so it is more frightening for the ruling class than it is for us in times of class conflict.

Violence and looting makes the case against the poll tax, the case for class anger and against poverty, very well indeed. The working class is on the march against the rich, and the Left struggle to keep up.

**"ANARCHISTS ORGANISED THE VIOLENCE"**

No we didn't - and we wouldn't take the credit. Such patronising suggestions that riots on demonstrations, picket lines and on housing estates are organised by 'outside agitators' are simply not true.

Certainly plenty of Trotskyists would like to be accepted by the working



class as leaders, but people always tell them to fuck off and sell their papers somewhere else.

We sometimes wonder if the State believes its own lies, that 'Rent-a-Mob' comes down to 'organise the violence'. The truth is that the ruling class want people to see the 'parliamentary road' as the way to change, and see people opposing that as 'extremists' imposing their views on 'decent people'.

Anarchists throughout the world have been, and are, active in opposing all dictatorships whether Fascist, Bolshevik, Monarchist or Bourgeois-democratic. But in any situation, not least over Trafalgar Square (or the fight against the poll tax in general) if we tried to impose any kind of leadership or manipulate people like the Left does, we would be told to fuck off, and quite rightly so.

The media can produce all the pictures they want of people 'coordinating the violence', but the truth is that people can and do organise mutually and more cleverly than that. Anyone who has been involved in class violence will know how it works, and how unwelcome any 'stewarding' or self-appointed leadership is.

Rioting is only one form of class anger - generally speaking only the young and able bodied without children to look after get involved. This does not negate the legitimacy of the violence - as communities throughout the world fighting the State know. The State organises the working class to fight for it in war time, and fools or forces it

into supporting the war effort. When the working class fights the State, men and women united by class, not by colour or nationality, are involved and supported by the rest of the class because they choose to.

Unlike many marches, the majority of people who were on the London demo, and involved in fighting back against the police, were not in political parties, or apologists for Labourism. They were people affected by the poll tax. Many among them, anarchists too, were well used to fighting the police. The joy of this occasion was that we were hitting the State where it hurts - wealthy areas. They aren't just outraged because Militant didn't steward us well enough and we routed the police, but because we interrupted the rich at play!

**"VIOLENCE AND 'ANARCHY' WILL PUT ORDINARY PEOPLE OFF FIGHTING THE POLL TAX"**

The truth is that working class people are sick and tired of being told to wait for a Labour government to get rid of the poll tax, or wait for the Tories to give in. They are glad to see the pressure increased and the pace livened up a bit.

This is why the strength of non-payment is so great. In Scotland, the poll tax has been resisted for over a year now - non-payment is a success! As it enters its second year, people's confidence has increased by seeing the English and Welsh working class so angry.

Campaigns have grown - not shrunk - since the start of April. People don't believe the State lies about the 'violent minority', they have no faith in the State and are glad to see it opposed, as demonstrated by the massive anti-poll movement.

Many working class people in England thought the anti-poll tax campaign was full of moralist, middle class Lefties - like CND or Anti-Apartheid. Now they will get involved because they see it not as a 'protest' campaign, but one of direct action and resistance.

What certainly will put people off is Leftist politics dominating campaigns, and the refusal or reluctance by many Left groups to support those involved in violence against the State. What horrifies them further is self-appointed leaders of campaigns threatening to shop people 'involved' to

the police. But what else would you expect from the enemies of the working class?

**"THE POLICE STARTED THE VIOLENCE - BUT PEOPLE SHOULDN'T HAVE CARRIED IT ON"**

Why do people always have to use the notion of police brutality as an excuse for attacking them? Of course they are violent and push us around - that's what they are there for! Anarchists are never afraid to advocate people, en masse, 'having a go' when there is any chance of getting away with it. It's important that this happens.

The middle class Left is afraid of class violence, they always say 'the police started it', 'the police didn't let me have my rights in custody', etc. They always present working class people as victims of police brutality.

When do the working class get the credit for fighting back? Only when we credit ourselves! Anarchists aim to show the police as vulnerable, so that people know they can be defeated.

Sure, the police very often provoke the actual violence in a situation of mounting class anger (as at Trafalgar Square), but going on about it implies that the class isn't angry enough to take on the State unless the State decides where, when and how it will happen, and this simply isn't the case.

**"ANARCHISTS AND THE LEFT SHOULD UNITE AGAINST THE POLL TAX"**

The Left often accuses us of being sectarian because we aim to expose the destructive role they play in struggles. We do this to stop them disempowering the class, so that struggles like the one against the poll tax stand a better chance of succeeding.

The Left are always on about uniting, but they engage in working class struggles for political gains to their own organisations, and so always end up in-fighting over irrelevant issues to 'prove' their point.

Anarchists are not part of the Left. We oppose cross class collaboration, so-called 'revolutionary' vanguards and those who pretend we can 'vote away' the ruling class. We are the enemies of any State leadership. Like most of the rest of the working class, we have a healthy mistrust of party politics.

The majority of people fighting the poll tax are ordinary people. The Left

try to make meetings and anti-poll tax activity as boring and bureaucratic as they can in order to control them, and people often feel alienated by this process and don't get involved in organising themselves, however committed to non-payment they may be.

Leftist forms of organisation are elitist and empire building, which does nothing to make people enthused or inspired about coming out of their homes to organise with others of their class. The most exciting and effective actions nationwide against the tax, have not been inspired by Left politics. The very notion of non-payment as the major strategy, as opposed to industrial disruption, is one that comes from a distinctly non-Leftists tradition of rent strikes, and is one that the Left tail ended when it was clear how widespread it was becoming.

The Trafalgar Square riot was the most memorable battle with the police since the Miner's Strike, the '81 riots and the Wapping dispute. On all occasions the class were not afraid to take up the challenge. On all these occasions the Left were nowhere to be seen - except selling papers. As organisations, they were entirely irrelevant. It was a good job there were so many of their placards at the Trafalgar Square rally, however. For the first half hour there was nothing else to throw!

The Left are the enemies of autonomous working class organisation and action. Militant in particular, hold the theory that the 'disaffected' working class, the 'lumpen proletariat' (the homeless, criminals, uneducated and the most poverty stricken) are quite likely to 'flare up' occasionally. They believe this 'backward layer' must be contained

until they can control it. They will come out with many arguments against anarchism, but what it comes down to is the fact that our ideology recognises the revolutionary impulse of the whole class. We expose Militant's fear that this 'layer' will seize the day and realize the irrelevance of Militant, the Labour Party and the whole lot of them.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) are making their own bid for leadership of the struggle, only less cleverly than Militant as they failed to recognise the capital they could make at the start. Along with most of the Left, their strategy is to get working class people to call on the TUC, Labour Party councillors etc to 'lead the fight'. They know that these people will 'let the class down', and the need for a better leadership - themselves - will be 'proved'. This tactic diverts energy away from the real fight against the poll tax, and disillusiones and even further disempowers working class people who are fighting back for themselves. This is why we oppose and expose it whenever we can.

At the end of the day, the class will reject 'their' leadership. One effect of community based anti-poll tax campaigns is to bring this time closer, as the tax is defeated.

**"WHO ARE ANARCHISTS AND WHAT IS THEIR ROLE IN THE ANTI-POLL TAX STRUGGLE?"**

The kind of anarchism with a tradition of organisation as part of the international working class - the kind the ACF advocates - is 'class struggle anarchism'. We oppose 'life-stylist' anarchism, where people think they can change society by 'dropping out', like the hippies in the '60s, and create a cultural alternative without a revolution.

Class struggle anarchists believe in organisation and close coordination in the working class. We are in revolutionary organisations like the ACF and Class War, although much specifically revolutionary activity goes on outside these groups. The Direct Action Movement, a 'syndicalist' anarchist organisation, are also class struggle anarchists, but we have some differences with them over the effectiveness of setting up alternative trades unions, which is their aim.

What really worries the State and the media is that you can't tell a class struggle anarchist from any other wor-

king class person.

We exist to expose the State and inspire the struggle against it. We see it as counter-productive to try to 'lead' this struggle, but we try to influence it with our ideas. Similarly, we don't impose a leadership on our movement. If the Left and the media find this confusing, that's their problem. Our methods come from historical experience in struggle. The State does not and cannot understand how we organise, because it can't lock up our leaders (as we have none).

Our role in the struggle against the poll tax is to encourage activity that takes its strength from the direct involvement of working class individuals, in the communities where we live, and the places where we work. It is hard to inspire people with the confidence to fight the State, as capitalism teaches us to leave 'change' up to other people. But any struggle - not least where a strategy like non-payment is involved - needs the direct input and mutual solidarity of the people concerned.

The ACF totally supports such confrontations with the State as Trafalgar Square - as they give the working class the confidence and skills needed to overthrow the ruling class. They teach us to show our anger and enjoy our class strength. Although life under capitalism is a bastard, we can change if we refuse to let them intimidate us.

What the State, the Left and the media choose to ignore, is that anarchists don't seek the job of 'co-ordinating' or 'organising' such action. We recognise the responsibility of the working class as a whole to respond to capitalism. Unlike Trotskyists and other Leftists, we don't think it needs us to do it for them, as though we were the conscious brain of a class too stupid to use its strength without leadership.

It is capitalism that isolates us, and makes it hard for us to act together. Anarchist communism is about showing people their collective class strength, towards overthrowing all rulers and all forms of capitalism, and organising instead for mutual benefit.

Our role is to encourage dissatisfaction and resistance wherever it raises its head, and to inspire other working class people with self confidence (through things like fighting the poll tax), and the desire for revolutionary change.

# Polish anarchists begin to organise

THE POLISH ANARCHIST Federation (AFP) was set up on November 11 1989. It consists of at least 19 local groups, in 13 towns - which, for a newly emerged movement, is a considerable success. Nearly all these groups publish magazines or papers.

On January 12, anarchists shouting 'Down with capitalism', 'We don't want price rises' and 'Turn Kuron into soup' (Kuron - a former 'dissident' - now Minister for Labour in the new Polish government) interrupted a session of the Senate (Polish Parliament) in Warsaw for fifteen minutes.

The AFP is widely regarded as the main revolutionary force opposed to both the 'Communist' bureaucrats and the Solidarity advocates of austerity measures.

Evidence for this can be found in the following interview with Josef Pinior: a leading member of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution (PSP-DR) - which has been translated from a French journal and re-edited.

How do you explain the evolution of Solidarity?

I don't think it is possible to talk about the evolution of Solidarity as if it were a single unit, united by a single programme. On the contrary, Solidarity is today deeply divided.

On one side, we have a new bureaucratic set-up, around Lech Walesa, which is trying to turn Solidarity into a classic reformist union.

On the other hand, there is the Solidarity made up of the rank and file, trying to address the problems that the majority of Polish society is facing: the questions posed by the struggle against 'pauperisation', etc.

If the leadership of Solidarity continues to oppose the struggles being led by the rank and file - strikes and wage-demands - sooner or later there will be open conflict between the two groups.

Do you think a revolutionary alternative to Solidarity will emerge in Poland?

I have no doubt that such an alternative is likely to appear. Why? The system which reigns throughout the Bloc cannot continue. Gorbachev knows this perfectly well and this system is now confronted with a turning-point.

The leaders of the emerging 'opposition' movements dream of a 'capitalism with a human face'. You know of the proposals of the International Monetary Fund for Poland: as throughout the world, we are to 'tighten our belts' to meet the costs of economic reform. I am certain that the majority of workers, of society, will not accept pauperisation. We cannot allow ourselves to. The Poles are ready to fight.

You cannot solve the crisis by accentuating social differences. The people that economic reform will throw onto the street are going to struggle. They will defend themselves with strikes and demonstrations, and this resistance will come from all the rank and file structures of Solidarity.

Rank-and-File Solidarity, is the real workers' movement, it's also getting involved in all the opposition groups that are being created at the moment. I think that in these strikes, in these wage struggles, a revolutionary consciousness will be born, and with it a search for an alternative way to organise society, destroying once and for all, all vestiges of Stalinism.

The ideas of workers' control over production, and the creation of grass-roots democracy will flourish. This new socialist alternative, because it will be confronted by the experiences of Stalinism, will naturally have anarchist elements within it. It will necessarily be an alternative based on self-management.

Can you give a brief sketch of the present Polish opposition and its different tendencies?

Starting off with Rank and File Solidarity, the factory committees, where a process of re-evaluation is going on, a new consciousness can be seen in the new structures that are directly political and in new thought that

is explicitly left-wing.

It is the same for the anarchist groupings which have been organised, and which are becoming an important element on the Polish political landscape. There is finally the effect that this radicalism has caused on Fighting Solidarity, which has not yet arrived at a clear political position. This is a group which separated itself from Solidarity, mixing very different elements in its programme, including self-management and 'social solidarity', with the free market and parliamentary democracy.

It seems that we are seeing in the last few years a questioning of traditional religious and nationalist ideas held by the Polish workers' movement and by the young. What can you tell us about the emergence of these anti-authoritarian currents?

Young people are a very important element in the Polish political scene. Growing up under the State of Emergency, they've experienced tear gas and tanks on the streets. And now they see no future for themselves. They cannot find housing or well-paid work - they have no future other than hunger.

This generation is clearly opposed to the leadership of Solidarity as well as to the Church, and - of course - to the government itself. It realises that all these forces share the aim of 're-modelling' young people, to help maintain the system of exploitation and domination.

This spontaneous rejection led to an influx of young people into the new opposition groups. The PSP-DR, the anarchist groups of Fighting Solidarity are 80-90% made up of people under 30. While the Church and its following exercised an enormous influence on the young generation before August 1980, the young opposition is completely made up of those outside and the Church and sometimes actively opposed to it.

The first signs of anti-clericalism are appearing - and will develop. This



Continued over

# Creating a Hungarian

# anarchist movement

AFTER POLAND, A second anarchist movement has developed in Eastern Europe: in Hungary.

In 1986, the idea of creating anarchist groups was raised during a meeting. But, if the interest in anarchist ideas was already important, there was - as yet - no feeling for the need to organise.

At this time, some anarchist ideas were being expressed through the underground paper *Egtajak Kozoth* ('Between the Cardinal Points'). In 1988, twenty people met in Budapest, to form an anarchist group, calling it *Autonomia*. Three other groups were formed: Eger, Nyiregyhaza, and Szekeskshervar.

*Autonomia* holds weekly meetings, devoted to both theory and practice. It takes an active part within the Hungarian opposition. Several of its members were among founders of Hungarian Solidarity (Munkasszolidaritas - 'Workers' Solidarity'). It participated in the giant demo of March 15 1989, when between 90,000 and 100,000 people turned out in Budapest.

It gave full support to the struggle against the hydro-electric dams on the Danube.

What hopes for the movement? A lot of time has passed since the workers' councils of 1919 and 1956. In reaction to the totalitarian system there is often a systematic rejection of all structures that are too rigid and hierarchical. This attitude can sometimes become complete apoliticism, or even a kind of nihilism.

Nevertheless, the development of the movement points to the clear revival of anarchism in Eastern Europe.

## Hungary - Background.

AT THE END of the 1970s, the 'goulash socialism' of Hungary began to run out of goulash. It was the end of the 'Hungarian economic miracle'.

During the next ten years, the development of the struggle seemed to follow the development of inflation. And now, for over a year, the situation has accelerated, the economy has dived, tension has mounted and the rulers are vacillating.

On March 15 1988, 15,000 people (compared with 1,000 in 1985) marched to commemorate the 1848 uprising, and - by association - that of 1956 against the 'Communist' Government. People coming out onto the streets began to realise their power, and to rid themselves of a feeling of isolation. The following year, between 90,000 and 100,000 demonstrated. The 'Communist' Party, in the face of this mass movement, has been compelled to grant reforms and to destroy its own political monopoly.

Many political groups have emerged. A fortnight after the 1988 demo, the Fidesz (Young Democrats) was formed - an important organisation, uniting different political tendencies of the young opposition.

In the Autumn, the SzDsz was born from the Network of Independent Initiatives. At its origin, it was a loose co-ordination designed to encourage the circulation of information between the many 'informal initiatives'. Now, it was

felt that a more structured organisation was necessary. The SzDsz (Federation of Independent Democrats) united the great majority of well-known personalities of the intelligensia. It is a fertile forum for ideas, but its influence is limited to 3,000 people amongst the intelligensia, nearly all in Budapest.

Since 1987, a 'Counter-Parliament' organised by dissidents has existed in Budapest. This mutated in Autumn 1988 into a forum largely dominated by right-wingers. Within it there are three tendencies - liberal, conservative and populist. This Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) groups 15,000 people together, and is more influential than the SzDsz with its solid network of local committees.

## Parties

The Party of Smallholders has also re-formed. Before the 'Communist' takeover, this group was important in a Hungary that was essentially rural. But now with massive industrialisation, this Party has no future, unless it breaks with its exclusively peasant role.

Other groups that have emerged include the Hungarian Party of Independence (extreme-right wing) who support Christian and Nationalist values. There is also a Nazi Party - the Hungarian National-Socialist Party - led by some old-timers of Hungarian fascism, who control a hundred skinheads who regularly attack Jews and Gypsies. They

Here, the anarchists are in the workers' movement. Radically opposed to Walesa, and all compromises between the leadership of Solidarity and the POUP (the Polish Communist Party). They are often with us in the front-line of strikes and demonstrations. This is only the beginning of this movement and we shall soon see how it will develop, but in any case this libertarian current testifies - in my eyes - to the renewal of the Polish workers' movement.

The AFP (Polish Anarchist Federation) has the problem that it's a movement composed essentially of young people cut off from the Polish anarchist tradition, and which often have 'anti-

organisational' reflexes. It has grown in a very short time from a few dozen to around 500 militants. The movement organised a demonstration to commemorate the Kronstadt Rising which drew several thousand people in Gdansk.

Anti-nuclear actions in Gdansk and Poznan in April and May 1989 drew 10,000 people and stopped the construction of a nuclear power station. International contacts have increased, especially with other East European countries.

In August 1989 a demonstration against the Berlin Wall was organised on the same day in Poland and in Hungary in co-operation with the Hungarian libertarian group 'Autonomia' in Budapest.

are a tiny minority, but a recent poll showed that 80% were in favour of a Hungary 'free' of its 150,000 Jews and 100,000 Gypsies.

The Trotskyists are working within the Group for an Alternative Left. Their ideas, and their rhetoric of 'workers' councils', could have some influence amongst Hungarians - but are hindered by a language little different from that of the 'Communist' rulers. They are developing international contacts, and plan to create a Revolutionary Workers' Party of Hungary.

Finally, the Hungarian Social-

Democratic Party wants a Swedish-style set-up. It was created by old Social-Democrat militants who were meeting together to campaign for the 'rehabilitation' of some of their comrades, shot by the 'Communists'. There is a fairly strong current amongst the young which supports this group, and it could become the second force of opposition behind the MDF, if not the first.

But the opposition is not limited to political parties. Some intellectuals are grouped within the Union of Scientific Workers (TDDSz). The independent

union Munkasszolidaritas (Workers' Solidarity) is more important. It was born at a meeting of SzDsz for the workers. It limits itself to defence of workers' interests. It refuses all links with political groupings, but also refuses any vision of a new society.

It is no more than a large committee, several hundred strong. But it could be an important force if the economic situation becomes more aggravated.

Strikes have taken place in the mines and in industry. The 'Communist' bureaucrats, terrified by the spectre of 1956 and the Polish strikes in August 1988, gave in to the demands. The ecologist movement is relatively strong in Hungary, concentrating on the struggle against the hydro-electric dams on the Danube. But it has failed to take up the struggle against nuclear power.

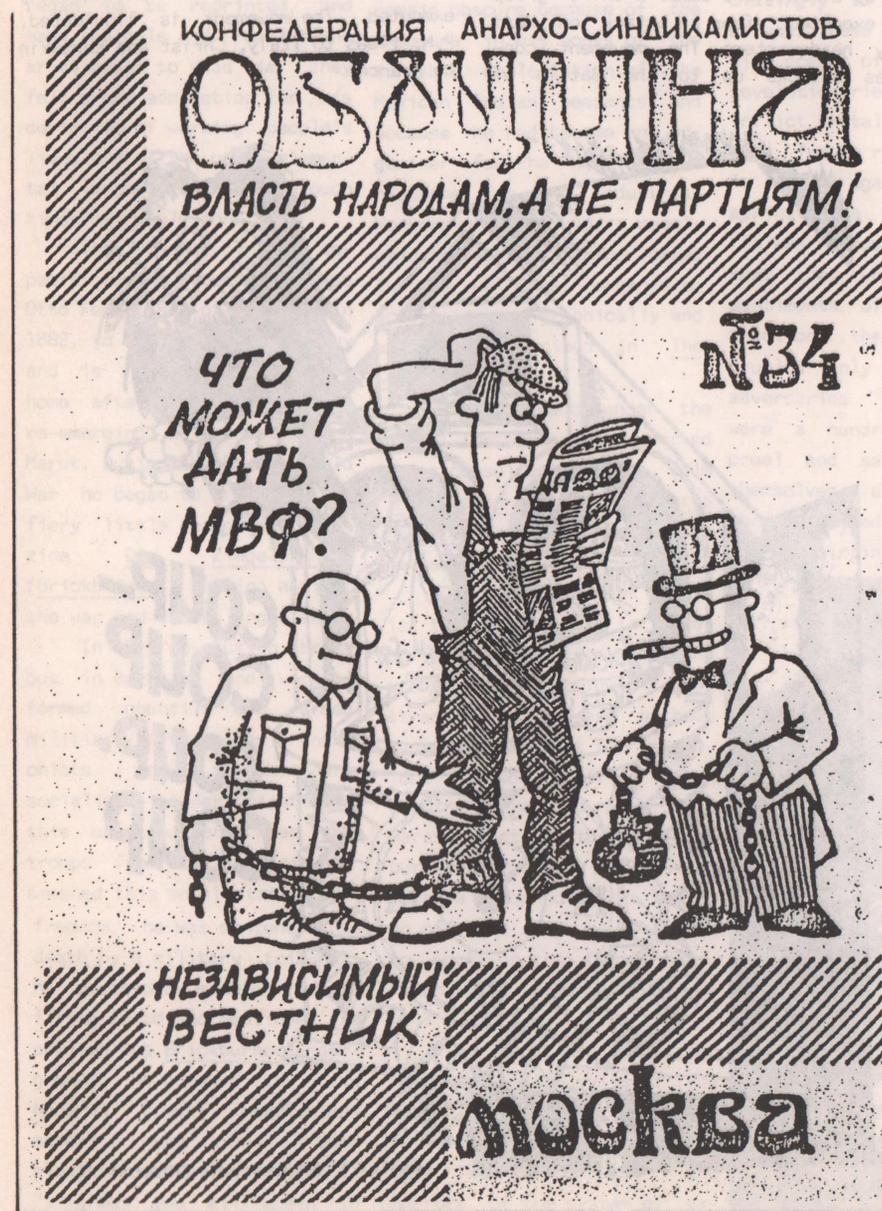
In May 1989, the tensions within the ruling party came to a head, when a group of four was placed at the head of the political bureau. These were among the most well-known 'reformers' within the Party (Pozsgai, Nemeth) alongside a more moderate reformer (Nyers) and a 'conservative' (Grosz). However, this compromise failed, and an alliance of 'ultra-reformers' and the 'moderate' reformers led to the dissolving of the party, and the establishment of a new party - the Hungarian Socialist Party - pledged to social-democracy and rejecting all allusions to communism, and democratic centralism within the Party.

## Promises

The new Party hoped to dump the conservatives and rally most of the membership. However, only 70,000 have joined (10% of the old Party membership), whilst an equal number, rallying to the conservatives, have kept the old name Socialist Workers Party.

The new 'reforming' Party has so far retained its 'cells' in the factories and in the 'workers militia' and its leadership is a compromise between 'moderates' and 'ultra-reformers'.

In the first round of Hungary's complex multi-party 'free elections' on March 25, all parties with their roots in the old 'Communist' government



Continued from page 13

phenomenon was very visible in the campaign against the Bill banning abortion, which the Church has tried to get through Parliament. A left-alternative, composed of the PSP-DR, anarchist groups and feminist groups, developed during the struggle against the Bill.

Can you talk more precisely about the anarchist groups in Poland?

These groups appeared in many towns throughout Poland. The PSP-DR collaborates very closely with them. The most important groups are in Gdansk and Warsaw where we let them use our office.

# B Traven: the voice of anger

performed badly, with many leading party figures suffering humiliating defeats.

In the second round, on April 8, the 'centre-right' Democratic Forum fared best - winning 165 of the 386 assembly seats. The Forum announced plans to form a 'grand coalition', probably including the rightist Alliance of Free Democrats and the Smallholders Party.

Socialist Party candidates won only 33 seats, with the hardline Stalinist Socialist Workers Party being all but obliterated. The Socialist Party is in a very weak position to scabble for a place in the coalition.

The ex-'Communists' gamble - that by offering to share power they could avoid losing it all together - seems to have gone badly wrong.

## Hungary - the Past...

1907 - The journal Tarsadalmi Forradalom appears, advancing anarchist communist ideas up to 1911. One of the editors is Ervin Batthyany (born 1877) who after having spent a long time in England - where he met the anarchist thinker Kropotkin - devotes himself to work with agricultural workers. With other young anarchists he breaks away from the group of Eugene Heinrich Schmitt - Tolstoyan pacifist - to create a popular libertarian organisation.

A group led by Ervin Szabo (1877-1918) opposes its collectivist programme, and believes that the movement should be built on the lines of French anarcho-syndicalism.

1914-1918 Szabo organises coordination of shop stewards in key factories with anti-militarist movement initiated by Galileo Circle, composed of socialists and liberals. At his funeral in 1918, thousands turn out. As a result - and because of the Russian revolution - the Budapest Soviet is set up, but crushed by reactionary forces. Many anarchists are killed, but many also rally to the new 'Communist' Party, fooled by Lenin's apparent libertarian rhetoric. Among them are Tibor Szamuely, the anarcho-syndicalist Rabinowicz and Otto Korvin. Many of these later perish in Stalin's purges when exiled in the USSR.

The fascist Admiral Horthy sets up a regime and continues the liquidation of anarchist groups.

1944 - Anarchist groups re-emerge around the veteran Torockoi (who was 80 in 1945). The first libertarian action is against German forces, by an anarchist student group. One of them, surnamed Christ (!) - a 15 year old poet(!) - is

captured. In prison he meets comrade Aton M of the Hungarian-Yugoslavian anarchist group Bacska ('the South') which is a hundred strong, and is one of the most important resistance groups.

October 1944 - Christ and the Russian anarchist Alexei Korsakin are freed after ther Szalazi coup against Horthy.

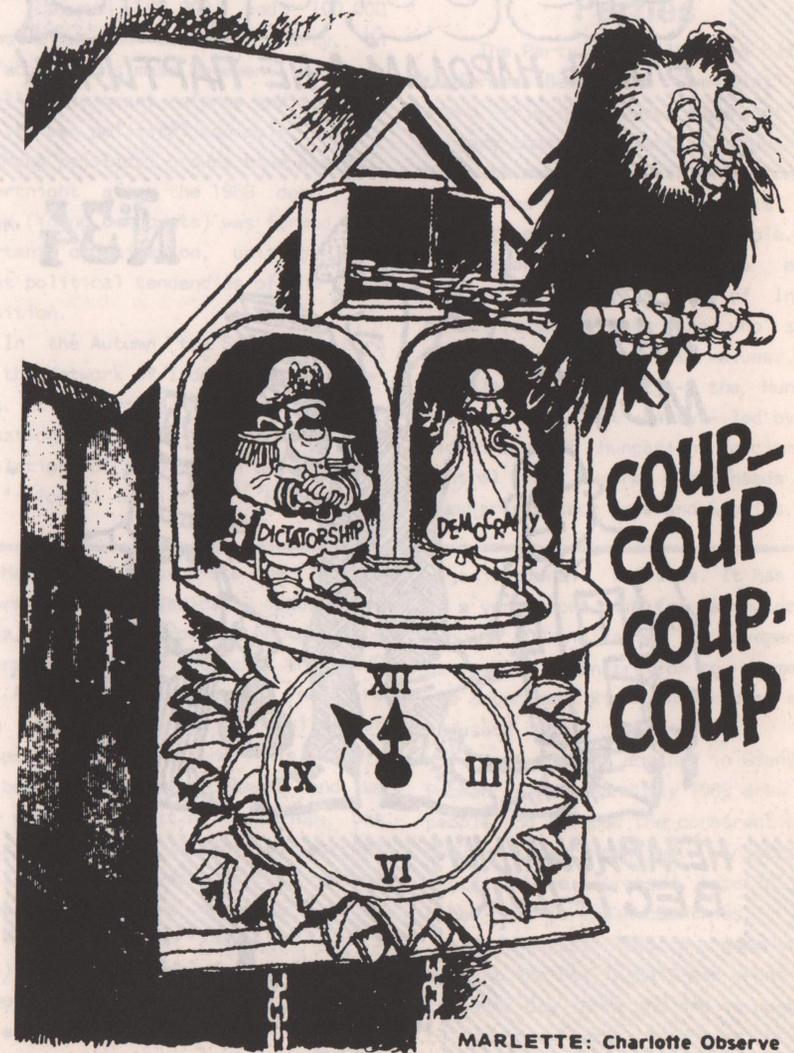
They make contact with Torockoi and with P.M. - a student who had set up an anarchist group supported by the 'Communists'. They start to harass the Nazi and Fascist military, adopting the legendary red-belt of Korsakin. They refuse unity of action with 'Communists', who denounce them to the Germans - who arrest 67 militants including P.M. His group splits, and two thirds go over to the 'Communists'.

Korsakin's group - wearing red belts - attack and destroy two units of the Hungarian river fleet, in central Budapest. The following night, Christ's group - Sz. F. ('Libertarian Youth') blow up a munitions dump. A third group are executed after an attack on Nazi Party headquarters. The movement continues attacks up to the Battle of

Budapest, which claims 200,000 lives. The movement decides to safeguard its forces for the political struggle to come after the expulsion of the fascists.

July 1945 - The movement regroupes. Three tendencies emerge. P.M.'s group wants a working arrangement with the 'Communists' against the ruling class. Torockoi's group wants the legalisation of the movement, Korsakin's and Christ's groups want to continue the armed struggle against the State and the Russian troops. Torockoi's views gain majority. A print-shop is set-up, and propaganda distributed. The movement has 500 militants, and its influence spreads.

'Communists' then ban the movement. Torockoi dies after arrest. Four anarchist students open fire on Russian troops, and die in the fighting. In the factories of Csepel island, anarchists lead the only strike after liberation from the fascists. Thirty workers, including 24 anarchists, are subsequently executed. The movement is liquidated. P.M. flees to Italy, Christ and Korsakin to France.



"MY BIOGRAPHY WOULD not disappoint you, but it is my own private affair, and I want to keep it to myself. I do this not out of egotism... the biography of a creative person is completely unimportant. If the person cannot be recognised in his works, then he isn't worth a damn, and neither is his work", B Traven, letter to his publisher.

B Traven was the author of The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (made into a film with Humphrey Bogart) The Death Ship and many other novels written between 1920 and 1940.

In the sixties his books began to be reprinted, and many radicals and revolutionaries began to read him. They felt great admiration for his depiction of working people's lives and of the great elemental forces than run through times of revolution.

The shadowy Traven appears to have been born as Otto Feige, son of a potter in 1882, in what was then Germany and is now Poland. He left home after military service, re-emerging as the actor Ret Marut. During the First World War he began to bring out a fiery little anarchist magazine Die Ziegelbrenner (Brickburner), railing against the war and the ruling class.

In 1919 revolution broke out in Bavaria, and workers formed councils and armed militias. with other anarchists and revolutionary socialists, he participated in this uprising, and when the troops from Berlin viciously smashed this manifestation of freedom, he was sentenced to death by a military tribunal. He escaped by minutes from a firing squad and continued to publish the Brickburner underground. He greeted the "six hundred honest revolutionaries" who had been slaughtered by the soldiers, "I greet you all again in

death! All of you, without a single exception, not even excepting the so-called 'murderers of hostages'. All of you died for the sacred cause of human progress; and all of us make mistakes."

He left Europe in 1924, arriving in Mexico. Here he claimed tha he was American, born in Chicago of Scandinavian immigrants. About this time he began to write his books, adopting the name B Traven. The first of these were published in Germany.

Not until he was on his death bed did he admit he was Ret Marut. He had wished to remain obscure because of the exposure in his books of the terrible exploitation of the Mexican Indian peasants and because he had become an organiser for the 'Wobblies' - nickname for the Industrial Workers of the World, a revolutionary workers' union based in the US (His organising activities are graphically and amusingly described in The Cotton-Pickers).

He masqueraded under the name T Torsvan and even worked as a consultant on the film The Treasure of the Sierra Madre - never revealing that he was the author.

One of his finest books is the Death Ship. In hard-boiled style, it tells the story of an American sailor stranded in Antwerp without papers. He becomes the stateless person shuffled from country to country and harasses at all turns by the bureaucracy and by the police. Because he cannot get a job on an official ship, he is forced to work on the Death Ship, which runs arms to whoever will buy.

The book is a brilliant exposure of the evils of the Nation State and national frontiers. The Death Ship itself represents all the horrors of the system of ex-

ploitation - militarism and profiteering out of war, and the utter degradation its sailors suffer. Yet through the agonising conditions that they face, we see them preserve their humanity and their willingness to resist.

Six books - The Jungle Novels - deal with the lives of the Mexican Indian peasants - how they are fooled, exploited and beaten by the landlords, and their servants, the police and foremen. They deal with the horrific conditions in the lumber-camps and build slowly and excruciatingly to a revolutionary climax. These books are filled with scenes of brutality; and revolutionaries in their turn inflict brutality on the bosses. Traven raises his voice in anger again and again, against the obscene set-up. "It was no fault of the rebels that they were animated by sentiments of death and destruction...they gave proofs of cruelty only because their adversaries and oppressors were a hundred times more cruel and savage than they themselves, and such proofs were provided only to safeguard their interests".

Traven fully appreciates the power of mass action. As one of revolutionaries says, "If you are in mass, you begin to be worth something. With the mass you possess a thousand heads and two thousand rigorous arms; and when you're in mass, you have the superiority... the strongest lion is disarmed when he faces ten million ants, and is compelled to abandon his prey which he wishes to capture. You are the ants, and the bosses are the lions".

Traven writes with intimate knowledge of working lives especially the Mexican Indians. His books aren't pretty. They are not about refined, cultured people with complicated psychological problems. They are about the wretched of the earth. They are about class struggle. they are about revolution.

As the sailor Stanislaw says in the Death Ship, "There is justice in this world. Heaps of it. But not for sailors, and not for working men making trouble. Justice is for the people who can afford to have it".

Many of Traven's works are available in paperback.



## How can ambulance crews win?

YOUR ARTICLE ON the ambulance dispute in *Organise!* 18 raises some important issues. Here are some comments on them.

In your comments on the move towards all-out strike action (under the subheading "Push") you argue that such a move would be "fraught with dangers", and say it would be better to concentrate on spreading the strike to other health workers. You also say that an all-out strike would undermine support. There is a basic contradiction in saying ambulance workers should not strike because they could threaten working class people's lives and then going on to advocate strikes by other health workers. Surely strike action by these other workers could also threaten life?

What you don't mention in the article is that low pay in the ambulance service had led to understaffing before the dispute, which was already resulting in people dying unnecessarily. The pay dispute was in part aimed at rectifying this situation.

### Anarchist

The strategy of the unions involved was to build public support (the same strategy which failed in both the News International and P&O disputes). You seem to have partially taken this strategy on board. We would say that, as ambulance workers are primarily part of the working class rather than some 'special case', they should use all the tactics which revolutionaries would recommend to any other group of workers.

Your recommendation that the ambulance staff should have concentrated on spreading the dispute to other workers rather than on escalating their own action is too abstract. Secondary picketing is illegal and the union would have attempted to stop it. Your recommendation therefore assumes that the ambulance workers are mostly anti-union. In reality the reverse is true.

That is why wildcat strikes, which would have been a first step to breaking the unions' control, should have been supported by you. In any case, we would say that it is virtually a principle of class struggle anarchism that you support the rebel workers against the union leaders.

There are also tactical reasons why the strikes should have been supported. Firstly, it is important that action is taken as rapidly as possible. A war of attrition only helps the bosses. Secondly, workers are more likely to strike in support of your cause if you yourself are on strike. Finally a nationwide strike would have strengthened the am-

balance workers because management would no longer be able to keep them divided by suspending some, whilst others were still working.

The basic position that we put in our leaflets was to spread the dispute to which ever workers would be likely to strike in solidarity. This included health workers but also other workers who have more 'industrial muscle'.

We hope that these comments will help further the discussions about what our orientation towards strike action should be.

Yours in struggle,  
The former member of the  
ACF 'M4 Corridor' Group  
B M Makhno  
London  
WC1N 3XX

**AUTHOR'S REPLY:** Thanks for your comments. Here are a few of my own.

You seem to take two 'facts' as self-evident truths. Firstly, that the maintenance of accident and emergency cover was 'holding back the dispute', and, secondly, that its withdrawal would guarantee the ambulance workers a swift victory.

I think both these views are flawed. To begin with, though I want to look at the arguments that underlie your assertion that there is a single 'group of tactics' which we should recommend to all workers.

Our article utterly rejected the unions' 'special case' argument - a strategy that set out to isolate ambulance crews from other health workers. But it's no use pretending

patients, but if workers asserted their direct control over levels of 'emergency cover' on the wards and elsewhere, that risk would be minimised.

There's another difference to the kind of dispute strategy we should argue for with different that every single group of workers can and should follow an identical course of industrial action in each and every dispute.

Workers punching out Monster Munch shapes in a crisp factory are hardly in an identical position to nurses working in a premature baby unit. They're both groups of workers, both undeniably part of the working class - but in different economic circumstances. We'd argue that crisp workers in a dispute should walk off the line, shut the factory and spread flying pickets to other plants and suppliers. Your blanket argument would lead you to argue that those nurses should switch off the incubators and walk off the ward. It would mean telling workers in nightshelters, or in women's refuges to lock the doors and kick the residents out onto the streets. It would mean telling benefit and dole office workers to shut up shop, and stop the sending of giro to the unemployed.

We shouldn't mimic the Left's myopic worldview that supports any sectional action by a group of workers, regardless of the consequences that action might have on other sections of the class.

Certainly, it's often impossible for groups of workers to take action that doesn't have an impact on other working class people. The crews' withdrawal of outpatient cover certainly inconvenienced many patients. But there's an obvious distinction between pulling people out of car crashes and saving heart attack victims, and routine work on the wards - it's just plain puerile to suggest there isn't. Action by other health workers might affect

groups of workers. We'd never advocate that - faced with a lock-out - those Monster Munch workers should re-occupy the factory and start up the production lines again themselves. Neither should printworkers, car workers, steel workers, builders, or any other group of manufacturing or production workers involved in a strike seek to keep the wheels of their industry turning.

But the situation in the ambulance dispute was blatantly different. We should totally support the crews' seizure of their stations, vehicles and equipment, and back their efforts to run an accident and emergency service direct to the public - completely outside the control of the Service bosses'. This has nothing to do with seeking to maintain 'public support' as you seem to think - it was the course of action most threatening to ambulance bosses, most likely to win support from other sections of the class, and a good position from which to appeal to other groups of workers for solidarity action.

### Unity

Where it happened, crews' seizure of the service clearly panicked ambulance bosses who threw everything they had into trying to put a stop to it. Why did they do that unless they feared the consequences of seeing such action spread? Had that happened nationally, it would have succeeded in uniting the crews and put them all on the same footing.

Had the Tories then moved in to try to shut down a national accident and emergency service that the crews were running themselves, the resultant carnage would have been directly the government's responsibility, and the spotlight would have been on them, not on the crews.

But to return to the 'assumption' that I began with: why would an isolated all-out strike have given the crews that crucial bit more leverage to tip the scales their way?

In manufacturing and production industries the strength of any group of workers is plainly economic. The damage they can inflict on a company's profits through a strike can force a 'better deal' from their bosses. Ambulance workers have near-zero economic clout. Unless we believe that the Tories fear 'outraged public opinion', why should an all-out ambulance strike force the government to back down? Would their 'concern for humanity' bring them back to the negotiating table? As the body count rose - who would be liable to crack first - Thatcher or the crews?

Is it not also likely that faced with one Hillsborough-type incident, and an all-out strike would crack as crews responded to a major emergency?

You're right that most of the more militant ambulance workers were in support of an all-out strike as a way to bring the dispute to a head. But there was practically no talk of this being the pre-cursor to spreading the strike throughout the health service and to other groups

of workers beyond. The demand - whilst against the wishes of the unions' leadership - was (as our original article stated) still locked in the confines of trade unionism. It reflected more a sense of desperation than of a rising tide of conscious militancy. The overwhelming ballot vote in favour of a universally hated settlement was later proof of this.

### Spread

Calls to spread the dispute to other workers were far from 'abstract' as you claim. For a start ambulance workers were never going to win on their own, and we shouldn't peddle the myth that they could if they only acted 'militantly enough'. Secondly, the health service is teeming with anger, resentment and bitterness - there's a huge groundswell of opposition to all manner of government plans for the NHS. The ambulance dispute could have been the focus to turn that anger into generalised action on all fronts. Of course secondary action is illegal and, certainly, the union would move against it - but should revolutionaries simply 'go with the flow', and not challenge workers' acceptance of the union?

The article welcomed the growing split between many of the crews and the union negotiators, but it's hardly a 'principle of class struggle anarchism' to mutely and uncritically tail-end rank and file feeling if we think it's focusing in the wrong direction.

You're dead right that a 'war of attrition only helps the bosses', but that wasn't what we were advocating. You're right too over the need to unite crews in national action. We agree. But I'm unsure whether you think the ambulance crews could have won by themselves or not: at one point you say the idea of '...spreading the dispute to other workers... is too abstract', but later you say that such a strategy is you're 'basic position'.

### Decisive

It wasn't the maintenance of emergency cover that led to the defeat of the ambulance dispute. It was the crews total isolation from other health service workers, and the lack of widespread, effective solidarity action from other workers. It was the fact that despite Roger Poole's deep unpopularity, workers' resentment towards 'the union never resulted in a decisive break from it.

We can only hope that the bitterness left by the appalling settlement, and the politicisation of a traditionally 'moderate' group of workers, provide a better basis for building the kind of action needed to win the next ambulance dispute.

WE WELCOME LETTERS on all subjects covered by *Organise!*.

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

## 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. Women's oppression pre-dates capitalism and cannot be solely explained in terms of class. Anarchist communism will not be achieved without abolishing sexual oppression. However, women are divided across class lines and therefore should not attempt to form a united women's movement. But working class women, may in times of struggle, need to organise autonomously and they may at times feel more united as a sex than as part of a class. The unity between working class men and women will be stronger in the long term than the interests that women have cross-class. However, this unity must be based on full equality.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide,

ethnocide, and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class.

We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

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

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

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

The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours.

The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions

from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchist 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.

