

# Federalism

THOSE ANARCHISTS WHICH make up the major part of the movement are in one sense collectivist in the sense that they perceive the anarchist goal as being based upon communities of one sort or another. Anarchist-communists, in particular, envisage freedom and security etc within the context of a solidaristic society. In other words, our goal is not a world of individuals concerned simply with their own well-being, regardless of others but one in which personal freedom can be encouraged and developed for the benefit of all. Freedom comes from, and not in opposition to, community.

It is a misfortune of "collectivist" anarchists that the popular image of anarchism promoted for decades by the mass media is one of isolated individuals bent upon terror. The reality is that in the main, anarchists work in groups and some, like the ACF, seek to build large-scale national and even international organisations. We want a mass anarchist movement. The problems that present themselves, once we reject individualism, is how to organise the movement and, hopefully, a future society which gives the benefits of solidarity with the preservation of individual and collective freedom. How do we, in our revolutionary struggle and the eventual transformation of society, avoid the problems of bureaucracy, elites and power?

To quote from Malatesta, the Italian anarchist, "An anarchist organisation must... allow for complete autonomy and independence and therefore full responsibility to individuals and groups; free agreement between those who think it is useful to come together for co-operative action, for common aims; a moral duty to fulfil one's pledges and to take no action which is contrary to the accepted programme." (*Il Risveglio*, October 15, 1927) In other words, for an anarchist organisation to operate effectively on a principled basis, its members must combine freedom with responsibility, full participation in the decision-making processes with a commitment to carry out collective decisions. No anarchist organisation can be effective if its members act against the collective aims and methods. Equally, however, no organisation can be anarchist without total freedom to take part in the formulation of goals, aims and methods plus, ultimately, the right to withdraw from this process.

## Summit

The usual method adopted by anarchists to combine freedom with organisation has been federalism. This idea is the reversal of the standard form of or-

ganisation in which decisions are made at the top by an élite and carried out by the rank and file. Under a federal system autonomous members of the organisation, organised within groups or branches at the base, make the decisions which are carried out by the organisation. Political power flows from the base to the summit, or rather from the circumference to the centre, since organisation is "horizontal" (ie based on equality) not "vertical" (ie based on inequality and hierarchy). In other words, anarchist organisations should be expressions of the collective voice, not directing centres which control people.

The basic "unit" is the member who voluntarily joins the organisation. Usually a member will be part of a local or industrial group which freely agrees to join a larger unit at say the district level. The district grouping is in turn affiliated to a regional body which is part of a national and ultimately international organisation. For example, smaller collectives take responsibility for their immediate areas of concern, involve themselves in other layers of decision-making and are bound by those decisions. A commune might perhaps decide on the location of a new hospital but the damming of a river which has much wider consequences, affecting several communes, would have to be agreed upon by a federation of communes. So long as each "unit" accepts the goals and methods etc it influences the orientation of the organisation. Should a "unit" disagree with decisions reached, it has the right to leave the organisation. However, if it has participated in the decision-making process, to quote Malatesta again, it has a duty "to take no action which is contrary to the accepted programme" so long as it remains in the organisation.

For a federal system to operate in an anarchist fashion there must be the greatest possible degree of involvement by members, free communication and blocks to prevent the development of leaders (eg rotation and recall of any "officials" and ban on full-time posts). Strictly speaking, there should not be any officials as such. Each layer/segment of the organisation represents its views directly through the organisation's press and through temporary elected delegates. However, in the end, the health of any organisation is a reflection of the membership's enthusiasm and commitment.

Not only the anarchist organisation but also the anarchist world society would be run on a federal basis. There would be a multi-compartmental system of decision-making, from again the local to the international sphere. Each unit would have the right to secede and would have the right to self-determination in respect

of its own affairs. The basic social unit would probably be the Commune or Soviet which would voluntarily federate to a wider body, say the region or the province. Delegates from the communes would at this next level concern itself with issues relevant to its mandate ie regional issues. The region in turn would affiliate to a national body or its equivalent since we expect artificial "nation-states" to disappear in an international society.

## Ideal

So federalism is a straightforward form of organisation which combines the maximum individual and local freedom and autonomy with collective direction. It permits planning on a wide scale on the basis of mutual agreement, whether it be the revolutionary organisation or the anarchist society. Federalism, with its vital right to secession, safeguards the minority from the majority.

However, this is an ideal picture and



federalism alone cannot create or preserve a free society. It must be combined with the elimination of centralised power, hierarchy, authority and inequality. Where these are preserved federalism becomes a sham which would fail its first major test, especially a potential secession.

In theory the Soviet Union was a federation of republics which enjoyed the right of secession. In reality, it was probably the most centralised of twentieth century nations. The self-proclaimed federation of Yugoslavia was (like the USSR) a federation of mutually hostile nations which were united at gunpoint. When in both countries the central authority failed, local nationalisms and rivalries re-emerged and the pseudo-federations disintegrated. These false-federations, based upon social, national and state inequalities, involved none of the essential features of the anarchist vision. Free federation is possible. It is the task of revolutionary anarchists and the working class to create it.

# ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

## L.A. RIOTS



Magazine of the  
Anarchist Communist Federation

50p  
July-Sept  
1992  
Issue 27

YUGO-  
BARBARISM

MALCOLM X

OPPORTUNITY  
KNOCKS:  
EQUAL  
OPPORTUN-  
ITIES

NEWS AND  
ANALYSIS

REVIEWS

LETTERS

ASPECTS OF  
ANARCHISM:  
FEDERALISM

AND MUCH  
MORE



# ORGANISE!

**ORGANISE!** IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF). *Organise!* is a quarterly theoretical journal published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals.

All articles in the magazine are by ACF members unless signed. Some reflect ACF policy and others open up debate in undiscussed areas, helping us to develop our ideas further.

Please feel welcome to contribute articles to *Organise!* — as long as they don't conflict with our Aims and Principles we will publish them. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all.)

Due to summer break, we will be reappearing in October. Deadlines for next issue are 5th September for features and reviews, and 12th September for letters and news.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:  
ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## Organise! Back Issues

Back issues of *Organise!* (from issue 14 to issue 25 inclusive) are still available, from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virus*. They cost 40p & s&e each and include:

- *Organise!* 20: Class struggle in Ireland; Romania; poll tax update.
- *Organise!* 21: Gulf war; Russia in crisis; Brixton.
- *Organise!* 22: Recession; poll tax; warfare state; Commune; Asia.
- *Organise!* 23: Iraq Interview; Greens; ANC; pits; police.
- *Organise!* 24: New World Order; Children; BCCI; Clause 25.
- *Organise!* 25: Columbus; SWP; Filipino Interview; Freedom.
- *Organise!* 26: Women & Revolution; Direct action; US Greens.

## PRESS FUND

THE PRESS FUND exists so you can contribute to the everyday running and production costs of *Organise!* Money is always needed for printing, postage, layout materials and a host of other things. We also want to see *Organise!* produced more frequently, with more pages and with a greater print run. Money is also needed to finance more pamphlets.

### Contributions

Thanks to all those who contributed to the Press Fund this issue:

- £100 London ACF boot sale
- £2 London
- £50 East London
- £2 Middlesbrough.

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## A grand tradition

IN 1925 NESTOR MAKHNO, Piotr Arshinov and other veteran Russian and Ukrainian anarchists in exile in Paris set up the excellent bi-monthly *Dielo Trouda*. Many incisive and analytical articles examining the Russian Revolution and developing anarchist-communist theory appeared in its pages.

In October 1936 the Italian anarchist, Camillo Berneri, in exile in Spain published the magazine *Guerra di Classe* (Class War). This paper printed some important and critical articles on the course that the Spanish Revolution was taking until the murder of Berneri in 1937 silenced it.

For fourteen years from 1956 to 1970 French anarchist communists around the magazine *Noir et Rouge* (Red and Black) developed theory in a multitude of articles and had an important influence on the events of May-June 1968 in France.

Today *Organise!* continues the tradition of criticism and analysis of all the major problems in developing both revolutionary theory and movement. We think that *Organise!* has an important role to play in the growth of a real revolutionary movement. We know from rising sales that many of our readers feel the same.

But we need your support to help keep the furnace burning.

**Sell *Organise!*** Although our sales are rising, we need to keep boosting circulation, so try and take a bundle to sell to friends or workmates. By selling *Organise!* you can help our ideas to reach more and more people.

**Write for *Organise!*** You can help to make *Organise!* yours by writing letters and articles.

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

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

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

For all contact write to: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

## Who We Are ...

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

Aylesbury  
Chesterfield  
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Coventry  
Derry  
Hexham  
Grantham  
Leeds  
London  
Manchester  
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### What they said about *Organise!*

"Its vision of the 'classless society' is rather different from that of Mr Major's."

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*The Organise! Editors.*

"Oh, Yes! Oh, Yes!"

*John Major.*

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I enclose £3 for a four-issue sub, or £6 for a four issue supporting sub. Add 25% for overseas subs or institutions. Return form to: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

# No Justice! No Peace!! Los Angeles Riots

**AFTER FOUR NIGHTS of "riot and looting" resulting in 58 deaths, 4,000 injuries, and 12,000 arrests, have the wrongs been righted? Sociologists and liberals will continue to burn the midnight oil dreaming up half-baked solutions aimed at opening the dead ends of hopelessness into the avenues of infinitely useless capitalist reforms. But little more than a few weeks later, this particular chapter of revolt has already receded from the exceedingly short memories of rich, well-protected and indifferent America — except that is, by LA taxpayer groups calling foul a 0.5% increase in local sales tax!**

As well as being a gross injustice, the jury verdict in acquitting four police thugs of the Rodney King beating gave the stamp of approval to the official city policy of "restrained force". As represented on the video taken of the Rodney King beating, city

policing in the USA is, more and more, simply a euphemism for state-inspired violence of unequal and cowardly application. It was this, along with the frustration born out of unremitting poverty which sparked the anger on the streets of LA.

Protected by massive security, Bush toured the area and promised \$600m in federal aid. If that money is to be seen much of it will be creamed off into the pockets of entrepreneurial businessmen and corrupt city administrators, selling with all the razzmatazz but empty promise of a Wild West travelling medicine-man, a "new" range of band-aids and miracle cream. Within the managerial realms of social work and so forth the availability of funds for projects and ideological campaigns will be directly related to how close they are to the status-quo views of the purse-string holders. The "mopping-up" campaign by the Bush administration is well on course.



The end result of the invested \$600m will be a state version of the revolt as unconnected to reality as the American dream is to the one in five US families living below the official poverty line. But even with all the propaganda machinery at its beck and call, the well-worn ruling-class tactic of presenting events such as LA as mere

blimps, as unfortunate reactions against a perceived remoteness of the justice system, as one of the to-be-suffered checks and balances of a "widely accessible democracy", will be seen by many to be the big lie that it undoubtedly is. The more the US economy fails to live up to its expectations, the more reality







will impose its ugly head into the fantasies of the American leadership.

### Racism

"We have a stealth type of racism that manifests itself institutionally within society. It's invisible racism. The same kind of racism that whites would vent on you in the south, kicking you in the rear end, or putting a dog on you or cracking your head open, they don't have to do that, they can use the police to do that. It's invisible, you can't see it. When you go in for a job opportunity and they tell you no, they don't even tell you why, but you know why. And this kind of incident with Rodney King just coalesced a broad range of issues that black Americans have been suffering with and putting an identifiable form to it in the form of a police uniform." (Don Jackson, civil rights activist.)

Racism is an undeniable fact. Its purpose today, in most of the industrialised west, is to establish as a supposed naturalism the superiority of white over black. Racism has always existed. The Crusades, of which Bush's new world army was but the latest instalment of cultural and economic imperialism via a technological superiority of armaments, are just one pre-capitalist example of how rulers are aware of the power of the race card. In this century we just have to look at the Nazis/Jews and also the racist characterisations of the Germans and Japanese during the war to see what sort of benefit the bosses gain from its usage. Even for the US electioneering process now in progress, Bush's use of black prisoners to bounce off their actions an

image totally detrimental to all blacks is considered fair and normal.

Racism is not an attitude that, no matter how comfortable it would be for conspiracy theorists to think so, is a deliberately calculated policy of government. Government colludes with racism, because divide and rule is what makes the money machine churn. Because capitalist society is one based upon the competitive philosophy that produces winners and losers, the losers, isolated and without a cohesive political agenda, begin to view themselves as victims. They look for more victims to heap their problems upon, and so they contribute to the pecking order.

### Purism

This analysis does not, though, in any way justify racism. Any manifestation of racism must be eradicated, for apart from the irrational injustice of such prejudice, nazism will take advantage of any lack of combativeness to push their own foul filth. It is also absolutely necessary for whites to support black struggles.

For no matter how reformist, even nationalistic and inversely racist many black leaderships in the struggle are, for white revolutionaries to retreat into a political purism would be disastrous for at least two reasons.

One, the visible factor of black and white acting together destabilises the racist images. Two, when the black-hate-white rhetoric is seen to be the dead end it is and an anti-capitalist agenda is adopted, revolutionaries should be at hand as friends, not as outsiders.

### Class War, Not Race War

Impoverished workers, black and white, all over the industrialised world are beginning to question the economic situation they find themselves in. Although not yet articulate on a class basis, these workers are refusing to continue believing in many of the instilled cultural values so beloved by the ruling class. Respect for authority, fear of police, thankfulness and piety for a pitiful dole or a welfare cheque; the threads binding the ruling class's thinking processes to individual workers are beginning to slowly unravel and in some cases, snap with a vicious backlash.

The reality of life for an increasing amount of the poor has created a cynicism in spirit, an apathy in actuality. There have been years and years of broken promises made by corrupt politicians extracting taxes like gangsters demanding 'protection' money. The don't-cares are getting more, and the have-nots are slurred as losers and wasters by a ruling-class controlled media. As the economic crisis refuses to slow down, so capitalist society becomes more competitive, more aggressive, more dog eat dog, less the 'dream', more the nightmare or the daily grind. The ruling class lies are becoming threadbare and worn and very transparent.

The cry, no justice! no peace! found its way into the consciousness of poor workers

all around the globe. As well as referring to the LA verdict, how many also took this to be a summary upon their own miserable and soul-destraining daily existence?

### Rebellious Times

It makes little difference if the businesses of our immediate exploiters be owned by white, black, Korean, or any other race. Class activists may well welcome the opportunity to trash and shop. But as we saw of LA the satisfaction of immediate needs and desires allowed the class enemy to organise repressive force. No matter how much food or things the individual "collects", if at the end the conditions which caused the rebellion still exist, are we happy with that? As anarchists, we must answer no. Our first priority is to encourage and develop the revolutionary potential in any rebellious mass. An assault upon the state outposts of capitalist power, whatever their form and however the capitalist media would present it, carries within it a positively forward-looking message that if taken up, copied, understood is of great value.

The practicalities of how to get from here to there need to be thought of. In the absence — for now — of the real thing, let your imagination run riot. And don't keep the results to yourself! To fan the fires of discontent is what *Organise!* exists for. Forward to the leadership of ideas!

## Riots! Insurrection! Be Prepared!



- Good drawing isn't necessary, clarity of ideas is.
- Use explicit symbols, the less words, the better.
- Start stockpiling for appropriate distribution.

# GERMANY

ONE OF THE main weapons in the ideological attacks led on revolutionary movements over the last 15 years is the statement that the working class is no more, is passed away, deceased, is ex-working class. A whole gaggle of fawning intellectuals has pushed this in many a weighty tome, on scores of documentaries and cosy late night chat shows. This has been a shared viewpoint from the Right to the sickening trendies of *Marxism Today*.

### Strikes

However, history often has a pleasant knack of disproving the pet theories of these lapdogs of the boss class. A recent example has been the strikes in Germany.

And so the "end of history" has been shown to be a complete sham. The triumph of "liberal" capitalism and the establishment of a Thousand Years of the Market has not seemed so sure with the actions of the German working class, often held up as a shining example of a "good" and tame workforce.

Up to two million were involved in the strikes which swept through both the public and the private sectors. The trade union bureaucrats in the DGB (German equivalent of the British Trades Union Congress) and the IG Metall (steel workers) and OTV (public sector workers) were forced to call strikes faced with a smouldering anger throughout the German working class. The unions are thoroughly integrated into the Germany economy and are widely regarded as a necessary part of the social structure.

### Control

These strikes were regimented and very much under the control of the unions. The hold of the unions and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) over workers is

an historical fact. The German revolution in 1918 was sabotaged by the ideological hold that they had.

German workers were used to wage increases every year. The unification of West and East has flung this out of gear. The cost of unification was high, and the optimistic view that profits would increase with the exploitation of the eastern market has proved to be ill-founded. Any profits from investment in the East will not be reaped until at least 1996. The East has proved to be a great drain on the economy and inflation and interest rates have soared as a result.

To pay for the integration of the East the German working class is expected to pay by having their wages forced down. But many workers are not prepared to make sacrifices. As one skilled worker said, (*Independent* 30.4.92) "I have worked hard to reach this level and do not see why I should have to sacrifice it now". Sympathy for the public sector workers was high among the engineering and metal workers and they joined their protests. Already 60,000 jobs have been lost in the last year in engineering and metal and 20,000 jobs are threatened at Mercedes Benz.

### Bathtime

The public sector workers have been particularly badly hit by inflation and steep rises in rents and energy costs. One dustcart driver was quoted as saying, "Nowadays I can only afford to shop in the cheapest stores; I only take baths at home once a fortnight instead of once a week".

The public sector action closed down refuse collection, transport and the docks, postal services, and kindergartens. Lightning strikes by metal and engineering workers brought out 130,000.

The bosses have been under the illusion that they would have it easy with the building of a pan-European market. Now, however, things

don't look so rosy. The prospect of a Germany, regarded as the foundation of the European Community, plagued by working class unrest, has been reinforced by the continuing instability in Eastern Europe.

### Aware

For now, the unions have managed to secure a wage increase, much below that orig-



inally demanded. The OTV got a 5.7% wage increase after initially demanding 9.5%. Social stability has been restored, but the German working class is still deeply dissatisfied. It has been made aware of its strength and initial unity between public and private sectors has been built on. In Hamburg 10,000 striking refuse collectors and steel workers marched together. So far, the strikes were limited to the West. In the East however, a number of occupations against redundancies have taken place in the shipyards, steelworks and building sites.

Unity has to be established between workers in the East and West of Germany. The high level of militancy needs to be translated into action and organisation outside the control of the unions. These strikes have been the biggest actions of German workers since 1933. They have terrified the capitalists throughout Europe. Let us hope that these fears are kid's stuff compared to what could come.

### QUICKIES

**Guinness is good for you.** Or so they used to say before trading standards said it wasn't. Then again, "former employee" Ernest (tea-leaf) Saunders, sent down for theft & false accounting, then released due to "incurable" ill health and senile dementia, is now fit as a fiddle (oops). And, just to show there's no hard feelings, the firm has given him a £75,000 a year pension. This clearly proves that Guinness is indeed good for you. Can we assume this treatment is available to all Guinness employees? Can we get it on the NHS?

### No Bad Apples!

Another lot off the hook is the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. What a surprise! An avalanche of people released because of faked confessions etc. And then, just when we thought we had the WMSCS bang to rights (I don't think), we discover there is no evidence. How tight can you get? We demand our scapegoat! Surely one bad apple isn't too much to ask for. That's all that's needed to prove to us the police are doing a damn fine job, a service to the community etc. Now we'll never be able to rest easily, with faith in our police.

### White Elephant

Ooer! Olympia and York, the firm behind the London docklands Canary Wharf monstrosity is filing for bankruptcy and the government refuses to lift a finger to save them. So much for London docklands, the boom town that has never been more than a ghost town really. Now it's just a white elephant since the crash of 1987 Yuppies are too "broke" to move in. While we can have a right good laugh at the Yuppies' misfortune, for the super rich people behind it all, it's just another failed venture. You won't see them pauperised by it or claiming income support. At the end of the day, they'll still be doing very well, thank you! But this sordid episode of ruling class adventurism has meant the uprooting and disruption of the lives of many working class Eastenders. Olympia and York promised a "jobs bonanza" in Tower Hamlets. Unemployment however, has gone up 25% in the past year.

### Fist of Fury

One who didn't get away with it now! Management at French port authorities decided to "rationalise" the system and "modernise" established working practices in the industry (we all know what this means). None too happy about this, the dockers went on strike. In the town of Rouen, some "have-a-go" strikers attacked the head of the freight handling company's trade association. The broken nose and three broken ribs they gave him sets a fine example to us all.



# Tanks for the Memory

**THE FEBRUARY SPLIT in the Workers' Party in Ireland, when six of its seven TDs (MPs) left and formed the originally titled Democratic Left, has left the Stalinoid group feeling bitter and betrayed. (Shame!) At the Party's May Ard Fheis, (Conference) former Party boss and only surviving TD, Tomas Maggiora, described the "split" as "a leadership-led coup against the Party and its membership". The new Party Chairwoman Ms Marian Donnelly, of Derry, however, claimed to bear no "ill will". Whether the rank and file will take such a conciliatory line seems rather unlikely!**

The Dublin Ard Fheis allowed the shrunken party the opportunity both to lick its wounds and to re-affirm its commitment to its vision, if it merits such a description, of "socialism". That "vision" is basically one of parliamentary reformism in the direction of the state capitalism as modelled by the recently collapsed Stalinist police states. For the time being however, the Workers' Party is calling upon the State and domestic capital to invest in Irish industrial development in order to make native Irish capitalists more competitive on the world market!

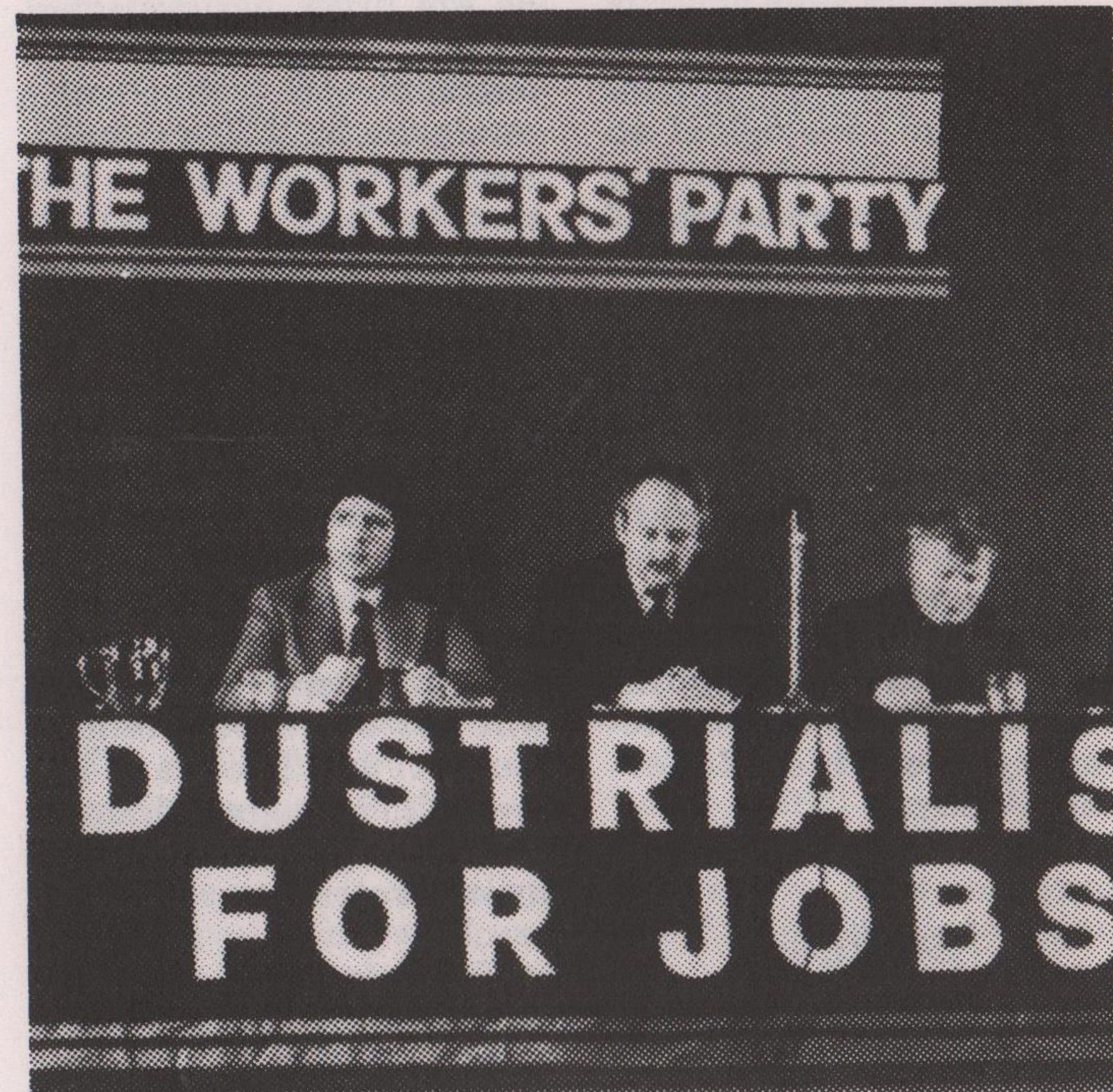
If this doesn't illustrate what Workers' Party "socialism" is all about then their perspectives on the Six Coun-

ties, where they have maintained much of their membership, should speak volumes even more loudly.

Delegate after delegate attacked the IRA, castigating it as "sectarian and bigoted". The assembled "Republican Socialists" (or is it "Socialist Republicans"? ) did not however hear similar condemnation of the sectarian and bigoted State apparatus. Instead the anti-Unionist community was urged to co-operate with the security forces, Chairwoman Donnelly stating that "...nobody has the right to act outside the law"! Of course this should come as no surprise since we are, after all, talking about the Party which considers the non-sectarian, non-bigoted RUC to be the best police force in Europe!

Patently Leninism/Stalinism, which the Workers' Party is a somewhat grotesque example of, has entered a crisis from which it will not recover unscathed. However we would be wrong to think that it is dead and buried (that remains our task!) It is stupid to underestimate the destructive potential of these groups.

The Workers' Party can still draw working class people into its ranks with its talk of "secular socialism" and its apparent alternative to the ghetto of sectarian or establishment politics. The Leninist menace will not go away because the libertarian revolutionaries shout loudly that it is in the dustbin of history. It



is not. The politics of the Workers' Party and left republicanism, like those of the Labourite or Trotskyist Left in Britain must be challenged on all fronts by anarchist-communists. A revolutionary alternative to their dead-end, though sadly not yet dead, politics is what's needed.

## Exciting news from the North!

We are pleased to report that the Irish Anarchist Bulletin *Organise!* has been relaunched after an absence of three years. The Spring '92 edition, produced by class struggle anarchists from across the Six Counties, contains lots of interesting stuff with articles on sectarianism,

the uselessness of electoral politics, the abortion controversy and the disturbing fascist mobilisation in the north.

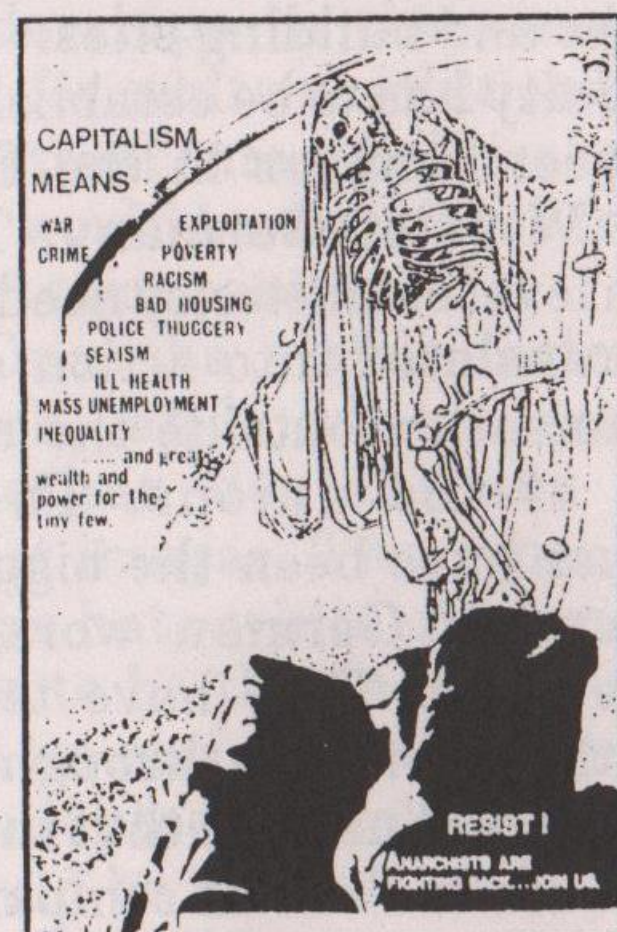
Comrades in the Six Counties are highly optimistic about the potentiality of a significant growth of libertarian communist politics in the area and are slowly but surely building the nucleus of a movement.

The next issue of *Organise!* — British version — will have a full, detailed report on the resurgence of class struggle anarchism in Ireland. In the meantime get hold of a copy of *Organise!* — Irish version — for 10p and SAE from: — *Organise!*, Black Cat Press, P.O. BOX 5, Derry, Ireland BT48.

## New! Reprint due to popular demand!

### The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation

Anarchist communists reject the Leninist model of a "vanguard" party as counter-revolutionary. What then is the role of a revolutionary organisation? This pamphlet sets out to explain. All libertarian revolutionaries should read this fundamental text. 60p including post from ACF c/o 84b White-chapel High St, London E1 7QX.



## Poster

Bundles of this poster can be got from London address. Please send donation. Or get single copy and photocopy 'em.

London ACF have also produced a small concertina leaflet explaining basic ideas of anarchist communism. Again, donation for a bundle to above address. And, not satisfied with this, we've produced 8 different stickers (Anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, homelessness, women, etc) black lettering on red. Again, bundles can be obtained from London address, if you enclose donation.

# PROMISING THE MOON

COLIN WARD, anarchist writer and journalist, explained in an article in *The Independent* why he would not use his vote on polling day. The article showed what anarchists and others know to be true already: that all parties (and I include those which advocate an independent Wales, Zoroastrian calculus, bottom spanking, a united Ireland, enzyme-free washing powders, hanging, and spraying dog-turds green) are the same. Those of us who have been raised to associate the vote — almost instinctively — with the exercise of personal power find it difficult to overcome the notion that the right sort of party with the right sort of policy can, if elected, contribute to our betterment.

Once overcome, however, the truism, "Whoever you vote for, the government always gets in", becomes more than a catchy slogan since to be against government is to be against elections.

But the existence of the recent occurrence of the five-yearly farce has presented more than just an ideological hurdle; it sets out to destroy what anarchists hold to be an essential component of a better society. The right to vote dupes the "democrat" into believing that she or he is changing something and that this is the only way voices will be heard in the political arena. If the government or MP of "choice" has not been elected, then the punter must direct personal struggle into party work, bar-room debate and buying the correct newspaper.

## Distortion

The electoral system shapes and distorts our perceptions and involvement in many ways. Apart from the expensive razzmatazz, an election, like the government which must inevitably result, is divorced from the community with its particular problems and the individual elector and his or her wider aspirations. So great must the diversion factor be that the punter must not at any point between elections think of acting independently. Not only must the individual never shape those forces which affect her or his own life and the lives of those close, but lending voice to wider debate must not be encouraged. All expression must be processed so that it eventually comes out of the mouth of a government spokesperson (or is re-routed into political dead-ends by middle-class liberalism). It is essential that this processing be maintained. It is the mark of twentieth century existence that we consume nothing that has not been processed. Our ability to relate directly to anything in its basic state — like a child unable to relate its milk-shake to a cow, or a fish-finger to the sea — has

become seriously and effectively impaired.

## Trap

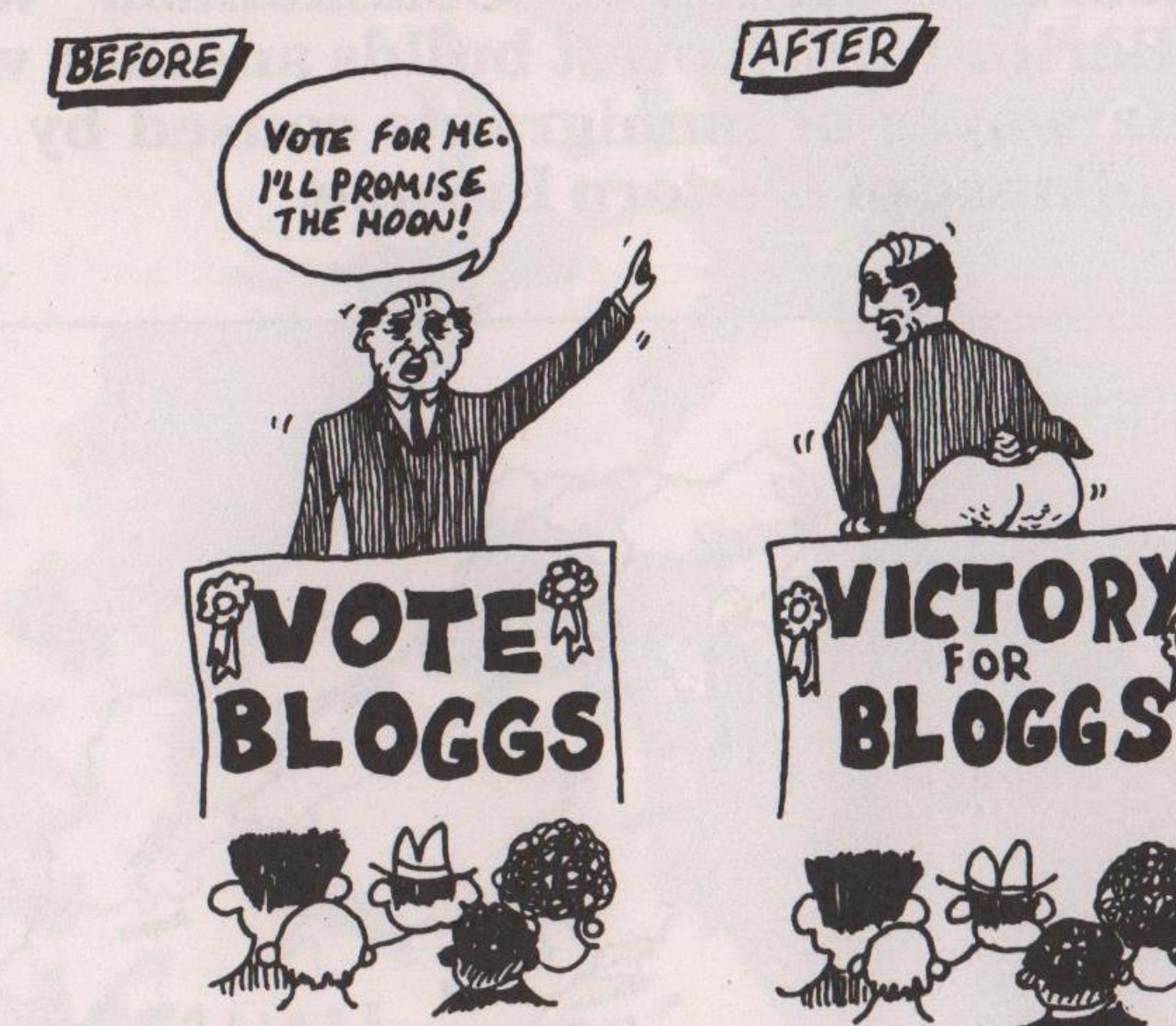
It is self-evident that there cannot be as many parties as there are issues. For this reason, the focus on some issues (PR, tax, NHS) diverts the punter from others that are not shunted to the forefront of media debate. Gaetano Piluso writing on

gender and racial origin as well as those of class, status and, of course, wealth. But more significantly, protest about the system is rendered impotent, since criticism of the system is merely interpreted by one party as condemnation of the other. Within the either/or presentation of false choice, to find fault with the NHS means wanting to privatise it. To criticise Labour equals Tory support. In the battle against schools "opting out", we're fighting for the supremacy of plainly deficient LEAs in the running of education.

But the sickening strength of ruling-class propaganda is such that even some of those who did not vote and would not vote find it hard to dissociate themselves from the proceedings. The underlying assumption that a vote for Labour, whilst meaning more of the same as far as working class welfare is concerned (high defence bills, prescription charges, immigration laws, troops into Ire-

land etc, etc) would have at least pointed to a measure of dissatisfaction with the system, some desire for something different, a belief that what is wrong ought not to continue, still endures to weave its persistent ideological spell. But all this viewpoint does is give concessions to the belief that Labour's supposed traditional voters do believe that Labour represents a more humane management of capitalism, when, in fact, evidence of this is very elusive, except that is within the rabid day-dreams of most of the Trotskyist sects. If there is an underlying cynicism to be detected amongst the class it is that which we, as libertarian revolutionaries, must build upon. There is no room for offering may-maybes and half way accommodations with capitalism. Those that are already the forgotten ones, the alienated in this society, need steadfast and solid friends.

The option of choice between all pro-capitalist parties is a false one if the goal is a lasting and irreversible change for a better world. We must encourage the refusal to exercise those "democratic rights" which only lend a legitimacy to the rotten system. Refusing to vote, in countrywide and local council elections, refusing to pay the poll tax or that which follows, refusing to give information or help in any form whatsoever to the panoply of blood-sucking bureaucrats and middle-class liberals making our lives a misery — all these actions are important practical steps. Build the culture of refusal and resistance!



education in *The Raven 16* remarks: "It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that it is possible to overcome oppression on one level while not changing the very structure of society. In its hierarchical form, society allows for and, in fact, calls for the domination of the powerless by the powerful. By compartmentalising the different forms of oppression, a new hierarchy is formed which inevitably acts to safeguard the structure of society by focusing attention on "social problems" rather than on society itself." (Nurturing the Radical Spirit).

Other issues are tackled identically by all main parties. Those looking to a change of government to answer a problem — teachers fiercely opposed to testing, for example — are thereby disenfranchised. Other issues are not raised in the manifestoes — medical care in prisons, safety in merchant shipping, nutritional content of school meals — and the voter can only hope that a change of regime will bring about a change of attitude.

## Management

But the greatest value that the electoral system brings to capitalism is the way that it allows viewpoints to be categorised and managed. There is tactical voting where voting is encouraged for a party which has no real following and poll-based predictions where voting is encouraged for parties whose supporters fear that victory is not certain. Voting patterns are managed using the pressures of locality,



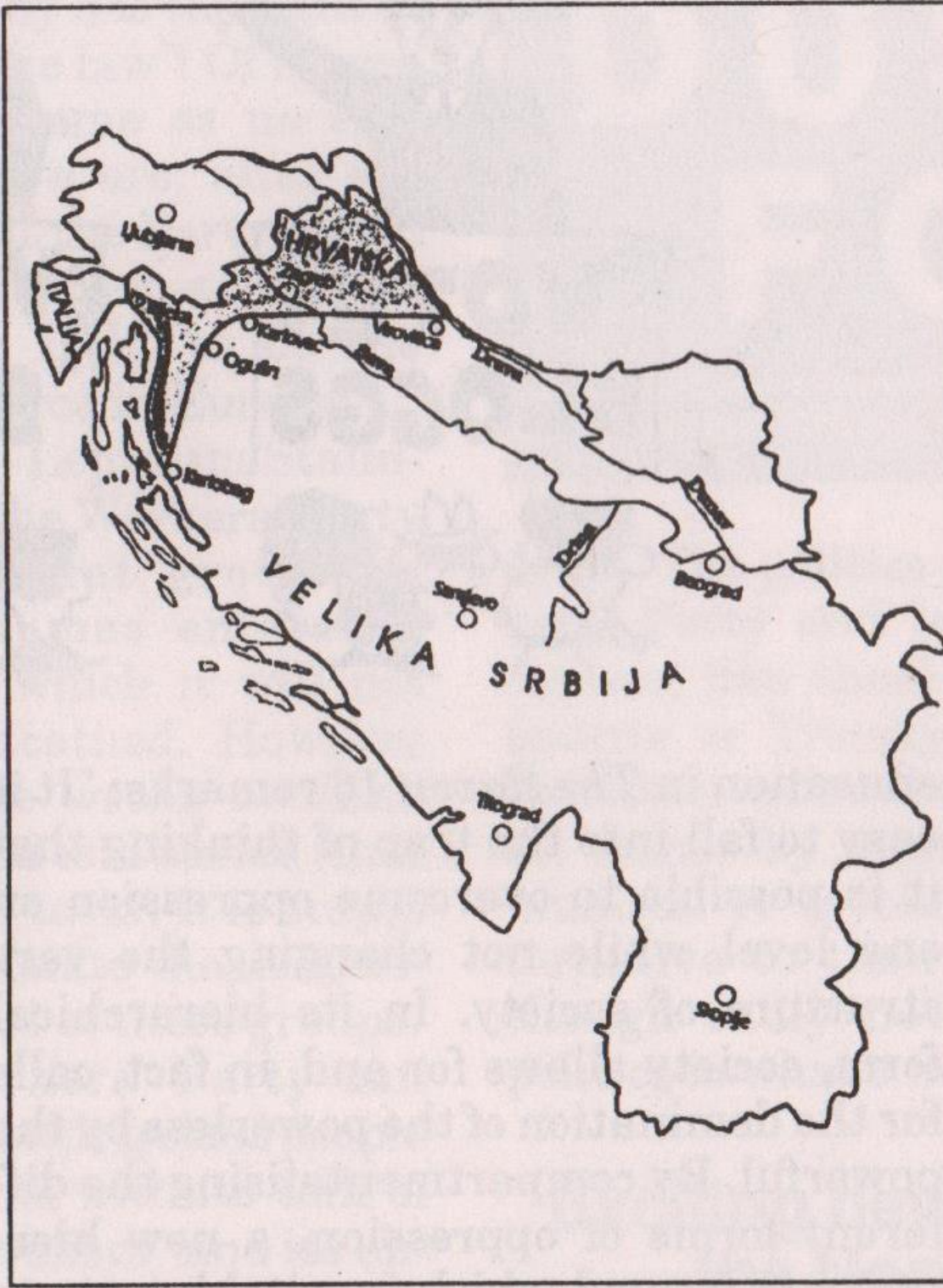
# YUGOBARBARISM

**YUGOSLAVIA HAS BEEN pulled into a horrific civil war, where the different factions of the emerging bourgeoisie (Croat, Serb, Slovene etc) have whipped up nationalist hysteria to draw the different populations behind them. The crisis in the Yugoslav region illustrates the degree of decomposition of the organisation of world capitalism: civil war and barbarism as a consequence of the New World "Order". This latest war is at the very borders of Western Europe. A Europe of "Civil Liberties" and "The Rights of Man" celebrated the fall of "Communism" with the symbolic fall of the Berlin Wall. Now it builds another wall to protect itself from the waves of immigrants caused by the economic and political collapse of Eastern Europe.**

The frontiers of Croatia since 1945



Croatian territory desired by Serb nationalists



As with the Gulf War, disagreements have appeared among the partners of the Western bloc. The Yugoslav crisis has aggravated the conflict of interests between the European and US states and between the European states themselves. The United States, continuing in its role as world policeman, declared that it would not tolerate the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The newly emergent ruling class of Serbia, determined to forcibly maintain Yugoslavia under their own domination, could not undertake its military offensive and defeat of the Croats without the implicit assent of the United States. At the same time, the US blocks the interests of Germany, its most dangerous rival in Europe. The German ruling class and state, through their geographic and historic situation, intends to re-establish its spheres of influence both to its east and to its south. The disarray of the ex-satellites of the USSR, as well as Russia, allow it to build these spheres of influence more quickly and strongly.

This disturbs its European partners and the plans and interests of the United

States. The German state from the beginning of the Yugoslav crisis was quick to demand the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. It wanted a Franco-German "peace-keeping" force, to increase its influence, and insure the independence of Croatia. It was the German state that first suggested sanctions against Serbia, through the EEC. These suggestions were at first blocked by the long term allies of the United States, Great Britain and Holland.

## Slides

The longer the different fractions of the ruling class squabble over their own interests, the more Yugoslavia slides into the barbarism of civil war.

The incapacity of the European states to solve the Yugoslav crisis after 3 summits at the Hague, six peace conferences and more than a dozen cease-fires, shows the conflict of interests of the European boss classes in applying a common strategy. These contradictions highlight the chronic weakness of the EEC and its at-

tempts to create a bloc independent of American capitalism. The last conference at Maastricht tried to sort out "the differences that still exist" and to give the EEC a "political personality". It attempted to develop a common strategy for the European bloc which can insure the defence of its interests, (even if these interests are not always the same) and strengthen European capitalism.

Even if the Yugoslav crisis is "solved", we can be sure that other outbreaks whipped up by nationalist rabble-rousers will demand a direct intervention of the "Great Powers". If there is one thing the European and American boss classes can agree upon, it is that no "independence struggle" will escape their control. If that is true for today, it may well collapse under the weight of conflicting interests of the different "allies". This has happened already to some extent: Italy, Germany, and Austria jumped the gun in recognising Slovenia and Croatia, against the wishes of the rest of the European "Community".

## The Vultures Gather

Slovenia was seen as a juicy morsel because it was richer than the other republics and could provide a healthy supply of cut-price skilled workers for the EEC. In recognising Slovenia, Austria was making a gamble. It wished to increase its influence in the area, and had to put aside its worries that the Slovenes in the Klagenfurt enclave of Austria would be manipulated into demanding unity with their fellows over the border. Similarly, Italy wishes to increase its influence in the area, using Trieste as a focus, but has to remember that the Italian-Slovene border could be put in question by the new Slovenian state. Already the fascists of the MSI, as well as the "patriots" of the Italian Socialist Party are expressing their fears about this.

Egged on by the manipulations of the Western powers, some of the East European states are making their claims. Hungary has stated that the predominantly Hungarian region of Vojvodina—in Serbia—never agreed to the Yugoslav union and was forcibly incorporated. Romania, for its part, has its eye on the Romanian-language villages of the Serbian Banat. Bulgaria has never accepted the establishment of the Macedonian republic, and wants to incorporate part of it into its own nation-state. Greece, for its part has claims on Macedonia, as well as wishing to stop any Macedonian claims on Greek Macedonia! The Greek tourist board has put a number of ads about Greek Macedonia in British papers. This was not to promote British tourism there, but to as-

sert its right to the area, and to show how Greek it was. The Greek state has closer links with the Serbs than any of the other EEC countries, arguing against the sanctions and allying with the Serbs to stop any pretensions of the new Macedonian nation-state.

Turkey, too, wants to assert its influence in the area. As well as building up its links with the Turkic states of the ex-USSR in Central Asia, it hopes to penetrate the Balkans by supposedly "defending" the ethnic Turks and Moslems in Bulgaria, and the Bosnian Moslems. The Albanian nation-state for its part has its eyes on Macedonia, the Kosovo region, and northern Greece.

The Balkans are indeed a danger for the "New World Order". Not only could the civil war there drag in other powers, but it could aggravate the tensions between the US and the European powers, as well as the newly-emergent powers like Turkey. That is why it is seen as having to be contained. The "Great Powers" couldn't care less about the bloodshed there, they are worried about their own interests.

## Slobo

The Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic started his career in the Communist Party structure in Yugoslavia, the League of Communists. Through his defense of the Serbs in Kosovo province, and his aggressively nationalist stance, he was able to come to power in Serbia. He dreams of replacing Tito as the great leader, whilst accusing the latter of betraying and humiliating Serbia "aided by the conspiracy of the Vatican and the Comintern"! The first stage of his bid for power was to desert the sinking ship of Yugoslav federalism, to purge the League and to set in motion an "anti-bureaucratic revolution", involving public meetings of solidarity with the Serbs and Montenegrins of Kosovo. This ended with the fall from power of several politicians who had refused to submit to him. He also managed to engineer the fall of the governments of the autonomous regions of Vojvodina and of the Montenegro republic. The banning of his "meeting of truth" in Slovenia was a pretext for an economic declaration of war with a Serbian boycott of Slovene products. In Kosovo, his strategy was to be naked repression. This backfired because it created a total unity of the Albanian population, and even the Kosovo parliament, composed as it was of good "communists" voted through a status of republic. Milosevic then had to rule this, and autonomy for Vojvodina, as out of order. The Albanian language in the schools and the media was completely suppressed.

Milosevic could manipulate the central parliament through his three votes of Serbia and that of his Montenegrin satellites. This allowed the Serbian state to mobilise the army against the other republics, aided by the Serbian militarists in the



ranks. In the other republics, where like in Croatia and Slovenia the market economy had penetrated quicker, the aggressive politics and conservatism of Milosevic, along with the economic crisis and the first disillusionment with economic liberalism provoked a re-birth of nearly forgotten nationalism, and a desire to move closer to Western Europe. In Croatia the regime had been severe in its suppression of anything smacking of Croat nationalism. The May 1990 elections led to victory for the most nationalist of the parties. The new Croat government consisted of the most number of ex-political prisoners as well as the largest number of WWII anti-fascist partisans than any other in Yugoslavia. A new regime was established, based on traditional values and the church, the model of Western democracy and the free market. Serbs in Croatia were given a status of national minority. Milosevic whipped up the reaction of the Serbian minority, referring to imminent genocide and the events of WWII.

## Retreat

In Slovenia, the Yugoslav Army had to face a humiliating retreat, but the precedent was used to invade Croatia, with the "defence of the Croatian Serbs" used as

justification. The insurgent Serbs of Knin, backed by the Army, waged an "anti-fascist" war, in reality a war to create a Greater Serbia.

In the long-run both Serb and Croat nationalists may agree to a dividing up of the other Republics like Bosnia-Herzegovina. Whether the obscenities of this war continue is up to the working class wearied by war and economic hardship turning against the nationalist ruling cliques. This development of a revolutionary opposition is made more difficult by the repression of the Yugoslav anarchist movement. Many have been forced to flee to Italy, France and North America, whilst others may have been murdered and others infected by nationalism. Nevertheless, resistance is there, both in anti-war mobilisations and in desertions. 25,000 members of the Hungarian minority abandoned the country to escape conscription and 170 refused military service in Vojvodina. In Serbia two deserters were sentenced to prison for 15 and 9 months for "resistance to their superiors" whilst others fled abroad.

In the face of civil war and slaughter, we re-affirm the watchword of the revolutionary movement: unity and internationalism of the working masses against the barbarism of the bosses and nationalist demagogues.



# LABOUR PAINS

**THE ELECTION RESULT** produced deep, deep gloom among the assorted leftists, be they social-democratic like the Socialist Movement, Euro-communist, like the Democratic Left, Stalinist like the Communist Party of Britain and the *Morning Star* newspaper, or Trotskyist like as in Heinz (57 varieties).

In all of their papers (with exceptions like the Leninist, Revolutionary Communist Group) they time and again urged



the working class to vote Labour "without illusions". This across the board support for the Labour Party shows how much the Left is tied into the whole rotten stinking system. Instead of trying to encourage self-awareness within the working class, they aim to increase illusions in the Labour Party. Despite everything, despite

the Labour Party's obvious anti-working class record in and out of government, they once again urged a vote for a party that is a capitalist party, implying that such a vote would be a working-class vote.

The Socialist Workers Party showed utter confusion in their analysis of Labour. Over the years they have described Labour as a Party of the trade union bureaucrats and their rhetoric has involved an apparently more anti-Labour approach than more orthodox Trotskyists practising entryism in the Labour Party, even though it was always a call for "vote Labour without illusions" that the SWP fell back on when it came to the elections. But now in an Open Letter to the Militant parliamentary candidates in the last election (25/4/92), they refer to the Labour Party as being "built out of successive strike waves — the New Unionism of the early 1890s, the syndicalist revolt before 1914, the great strikes at the end of the First World War", abandoning their previous analysis. This is in order to suck up to Militant and the Labour Left, in a desperate attempt to recruit more party fodder.

## Break

But our class, the working class, can only fight the appalling attacks it is suffering from the boss class, by developing independent forms of struggle and organisation. And independence means a real break with Labour, which has been involved in the administration of the British capitalist system since the early decades of this century.

To urge a vote for Labour, even if weak-

ly qualified by "without illusions", is to create illusions. In the absence of independent working class organisation, any working class vote for Labour shows the lack of confidence and self awareness prevailing at the moment.

The Leftists know that as soon as elected, Labour would have continued the policies of the bosses. They think that we need to be led through another "educational" experience of another Labour term of office, as if the last five Labour governments haven't been educational enough! They freely admit that a Labour government would be followed by a struggle between it and the working class, in which that government would have to be overthrown. In the meantime of course, working people would have to vote for a government which they would then attack. Logical, eh?

The regular round of elections means the sabotaging of working class struggle. Instead of building for independent struggle, the Leftists urge a suspension of the struggle, in order to scuttle off to the election booths and file in one by one, one of the most alienated, individualised acts under capitalism!

The whole of the Left has been thrown into disarray, disillusion and depression by the Tory victory. This will contribute to their further decline. We on the other hand, anarchist communists committed to helping our class establish self-consciousness and independent organisation, are not discouraged. We have no illusions, either in a Labour victory or in the realisation that the building of a revolutionary movement will not require extreme patience, dogged determination and ceaseless agitation and propaganda.

For a lowdown on the Labour Party, read our pamphlet, *The Myth of Labour's Socialism*, 60p including post from ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, E1 7QX.

# Malcolm X and Black Nationalism

**THE IDEAS OF** the black militant, Malcolm X, have become popular again both through rap records and images of him on T-shirts and posters. Black separatists like Louis Farrakhan have claimed him as their hero (when in fact Farrakhan had been one of those in the Nation of Islam calling for his death!)

And yet a quick look at the man and his ideas reveals a much more complex figure than the black nationalist so often portrayed.

Malcolm X started out life as Malcolm Little, the son of a Baptist preacher in Nebraska. At the age of 23, serving a prison sentence for stealing, he came in contact with the ideas of the Nation of Islam (the Black Muslims) led by Elijah Muhammad, and through painful effort began to educate himself. After several years, he was released, and by 1954 was



the Muslim Minister of the New York Temple of the Black Muslims. He changed his name to "X" to stand for the African

family whose real name he could never know.

He spent 12 years with the Nation of Islam. During that time he attracted much greater media coverage than Elijah Muhammad, due to his charismatic personality. This aroused Elijah's jealousy, used to running the Nation of Islam in a dictatorial fashion. The Nation of Islam was run by Elijah like a State-within-a-State. By divine right he headed a Church-State. He alone appointed the Ministers of each Temple. The aim of the Nation was a completely separate black economy, with its own farms, groceries and restaurants.

The friction between Malcolm X and Elijah was seen in other ways. Malcolm became increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of militancy and the conservatism

*Continued on page 14*

# Opportunity Knocks!

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES POSSIBLY employ more workers than any other sector of the economy. In the past few years the councils, whether Labour, Tory or Liberal-Democrat, have competed with each other when advertising job vacancies to declare that they are "equal opportunity employers". Why, after years and years of radical-right Toryism is such an apparently progressive slogan like "equal opportunities" so popular?**

In part the answer lies in the fact that essentially oppressive systems often assume radical or pseudo radical slogans. Fascists in particular have been keen to borrow symbols, slogans etc from the left eg. the nazi red flag and Mussolini's "National-Syndicalism". Liberal-democratic states such as Britain do not shrink from cloaking reactionary strategies with superficial "radical" glosses. So we have a racist immigration system co-existing with race relation laws that ban racism! John Major's adoption of the slogan of the "classless society" is a similar device which is closely related to the idea of equal opportunities. What is remarkable about these is not their novelty (they've been around before) but the fact that some middle class lefties have fallen for them, hook, line and sinker.

The "classless society" and "equal opportunities" are both aspects of an old capitalist idea which early nineteenth century Liberals brought in to advance the life chances of up and coming capitalists at the expense of the entrenched aristocracy and establishment. Another term for them is the "meritocratic society". None of them have anything to do with equality but are devices designed to ensure *inequality* on the basis of unrestrained individualism. Hierarchy, differences in wealth and power are all to continue but are to be more open and flexible, allowing those with "ability" to gain access to the elite. Entrenched privilege is supposed to give way to the free movement of individuals up and down social and economic ladders on the basis of their efforts and abilities.

Strangely, this competition is not meant to apply to the inbuilt privileges of the Royal Family, the House of Lords, the public schools, the "old boys" networks etc. No, equal opportunities is to apply to

the public sector, primarily to increase competition within the middle class, teachers, council managers, social workers and the like. Real power, that of the establishment/ruling class remains untouched.

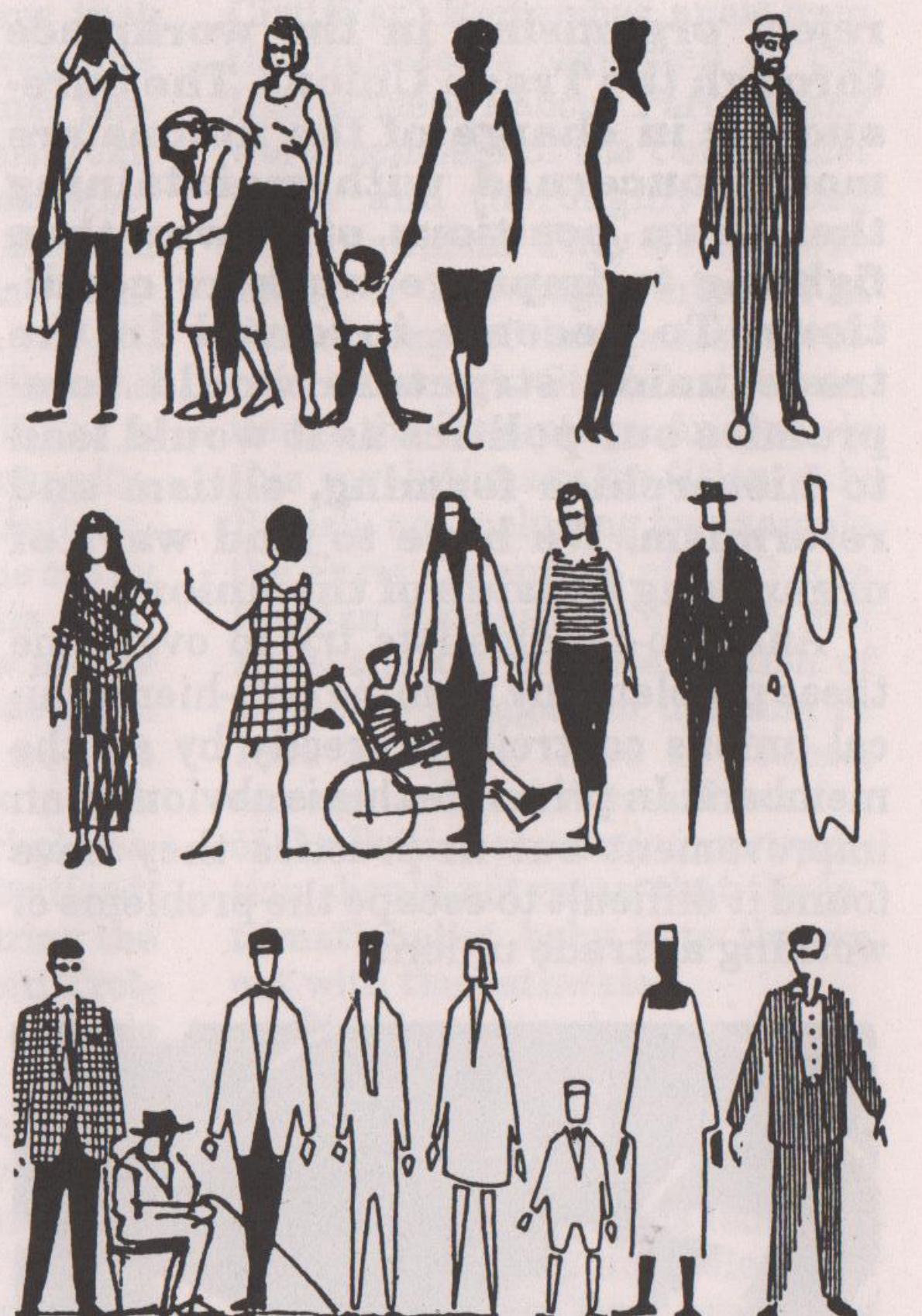
## Cynical

The major determinant of success for people without wealth is education and as any sociological study will show, the main purpose of education is not to create equal opportunities but to erect hurdles so as to ration the personnel available for the plum jobs in our society. The middle class is aware of this and manipulates the state system to its advantage. The working class is so cynical about educational prospects that it has largely given up on the school system. Equal opportunities (in the 1950s and 1960s in education it was known as "equality of opportunity") will be sustained by the tiny number of working class children who do succeed in entering the middle class. Their success will be used as an ideological weapon to "prove" that equal opportunities exists. Those who "fail" will believe it is their fault. After all, hasn't everyone got the same opportunities?

Within the middle class equal opportunities is a vehicle for individuals to gain greater power and income for themselves. Of course, they don't believe in equality at all; they want to open up management whilst preserving unequal status and income. They want to get to the top. They feel that the barriers to their promotion are unfair—skin colour, sex etc aren't valid reasons for blocking their promotion. Within local authority structures, say a secondary school, teachers concerned with "wrongful" exclusion for themselves have no interest in the appallingly paid ancillary staff—cleaners, caretakers, technicians, kitchen staff etc. Equal opportunities are generally pursued without regard for the class system which operates within institutions, hence arguments for more women, black, gay managers, *not* the ending of income and status differentials.

## Lavatory

As a system, equal opportunities provides an industry for middle class intel-



lectuals from "minorities", giving them well-paid, high status jobs. One local authority in London recently advertised a post for a Women's Officer at £34,000 a year. One wonders how much the woman (almost certainly) who cleans out her lavatory will earn or how much real difference she will make to women in low-paid jobs. Race relations bodies provide a similar function of institutionalising and compartmentalising real issues relating to inequality. These detached experts develop systems of communication and language which are designed to exclude those very people that they claim to represent.

All in all, equal opportunities are a confidence trick designed to conceal the massive inequalities in our society. They can never really work because of institutionalised class differences. If they could be realised, they would be equally unacceptable, since an elite class based on wealth and power would give way to an elite based upon luck, aggressiveness and crawling to the boss. Equal opportunities may help local authorities smarten up their image, but they do nothing to relieve the distress caused by a society in which necessarily there are very few winners and very many losers.

The only sense in which the term might be used is in a society where class, sex and race privileges have been abolished, where genuine freedom exists and where individual and social freedoms are given the widest expression. Then, equal opportunities might mean a generalised system of plenty which could allow and promote self-fulfillment. Until that day, fight equal opportunities whilst fighting racism, sexism and class oppression.

11 *Organise!* No. 27 July-Sept 1992

## MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!

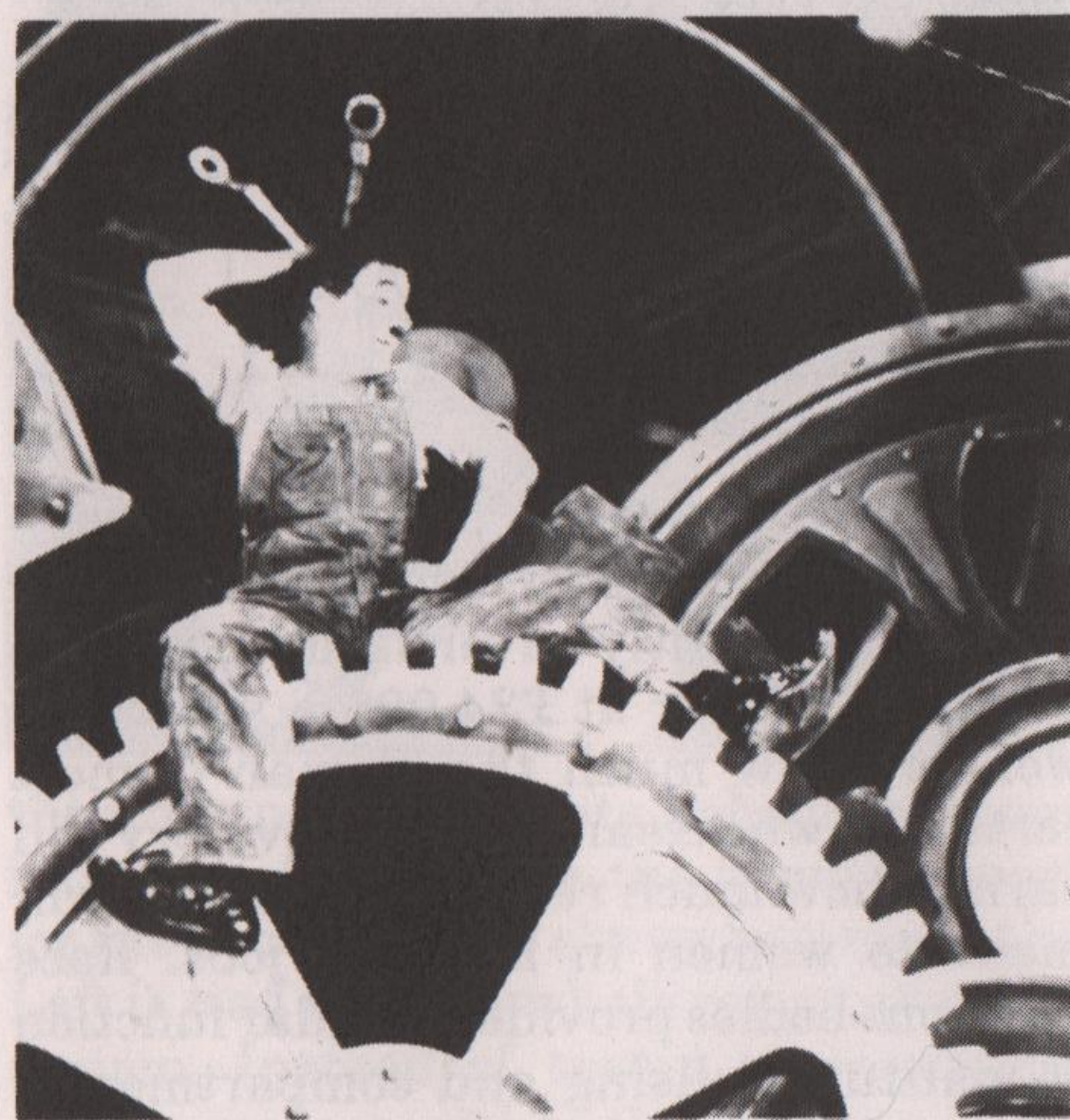
24 Track cassette 1.50 + p&p. Includes tracks from Doom, E.N.T. Hellk-rusher, Embittered, Slander, Armed Relapse, Decontrol, Bone Idle, Forethought, Filthy Charity, and Nailbomb. Some of proceeds will go to ACF press fund. Orders through ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.



# Organising in the Workplace

**AS ANARCHIST-COMMUNISTS we reject organising in the workplace through the Trade Unions. The bureaucrats in charge of the unions are more concerned with maintaining their own positions of power than fighting to improve workers conditions. To become involved in the trade union structure would compromise our politics as it would lead to hierarchies forming, elitism and reformism. We have to find ways of organising outside of the unions.**

Anarcho-syndicalists try to overcome these problems by forming non-hierarchical unions controlled directly by all the members. In principle this is obviously an improvement but in practice they have found it difficult to escape the problems of working as trade unions.



As these organisations are confined to the workplace only, they tend to concentrate on work orientated demands such as better wages or conditions. Whilst these are obviously necessary, revolutionaries should be broadening the struggle and raising expectations, not just concentrating on simple economic demands.

To function effectively as unions is at odds with anarchist communist principles. For a union, winning demands means dealing directly with the bosses — negotiating with them to try and create a fairer form of exploitation. It is surely a contradiction to claim to be for the revolutionary destruction of capitalism if you've just finished having a business meeting with the bosses. Having people to negotiate with the bosses leads to the creation of leaderships and hierarchies — an obvious example of this is the Spanish CNT at the time of the Civil War. The flaws in this organisation led to a leadership being formed which then proceeded to make many mistakes, one of the most notable being entering the Republican government as ministers. This can't just be blamed on the individuals, the fault also lay in the organisation which allowed it to happen. As anarchist communists we

have to find ways of working which do not allow power structures to develop, yet enable effective agitation to be carried out.

## Outside

Only by working outside of unions can we do this. Unions are by their very nature reformist and as such should be left to reformers. It is possible to be a revolutionary and to be a trade unionist, but not to be a revolutionary trade unionist. It may be possible to do useful work as a member of a trade union, if only by using meetings as a forum for putting our ideas across to the more militant sections of the working class. We should however be careful to avoid being drawn into the union bureaucracy and it is evident that the main thrust of our activity should be outside of the unions.

In the immediate short term the first step towards workplace organisation should be the linking up of anarchist communists within an industry to form a network. This should be broad based to try and bring in as many people as possible. The networks should include all the people involved in the industry who would be interested in bringing about anarchism — not just people involved in working for the industry but as far as possible consumers as well as producers. For example if an education industry network was set up it would include teachers, technicians, office staff as well as students and pupils.

By bringing in as many people as possible the networks will not become dominated by one section and so will be more orientated towards the wishes of the community.

## Starting

The obvious starting point of a fledgling industrial network is to begin producing propaganda. It is easy for only a few people to make and distribute leaflets, or put up some posters giving an anarchist view point on a particular struggle.

There are, unfortunately, problems with openly disseminating anarchist propaganda at work. Bosses will not look kindly on this and when in a position of weakness it may be necessary for anarchists to only carry out low key work to avoid victimisation. Comrades from outside the workplace may help overcome this. This outside help could come from within the network eg — comrades could demonstrate mutual aid by distributing leaflets outside each others place of employment.

When it becomes possible a paper concerned with the industry could be produced to be sold to friends and colleagues, as well as others concerned with the industry. As the propaganda takes effect and the networks grow it will be possible to move onto more long term objectives. In particularly large or class-conscious workplaces Anarchist-Communist workplace groups can be set up. Whilst these will retain their involvement in the wider network they will be able to focus more closely on the issues at hand and be able to react immediately to any developments at work.

A group can also have an educational role, injecting useful ideas into a struggle. It can show people that real and lasting victories can only come about by people directly taking control of their own lives — without leaders, be they company director or union bosses. As people learn the lessons of past struggles they will develop more effective methods and a workplace group of Anarchist-Communists would encourage and be active in this, whilst themselves learning through experience at the same time.

We can see that by organising at work we can fight effectively on one of the main battlefields of the class struggle. It is vital for revolutionaries to agitate in every area of life, showing how capitalism attacks us in all areas. By organising in the community, both inside and outside of the workplace we can work to bring about our ultimate goal of social revolution.



# ACE

## Anarchist Communist Editions

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

*Making Progress.* Describes how and why the ACF was formed, and the continuing evolution of our ideas and practice. A "beginners' guide" to ACF! 30p & SAE.

*Manifesto of Libertarian Communism* by Georges Fontenis. A key text of anarchist communism. Though flawed, the best features need to be incorporated into modern revolutionary libertarian theory and practice. 60p & SAE.

*Myth of Labour's Socialism.* Labourism, the ideology that holds the Labour Party together is decaying. This pamphlet explains why, and examines what opportunities will be opened up by the collapse of the Labour myth. 60p & SAE.

*Anarchy in the USSR. A New Beginning.* Edited by Phil Ruff. ASP. £3.80 pages.

This pamphlet is a handy introduction to the rebirth of the Russian anarchist movement. It consists mainly of documents drawn from anarchist and syndicalist organisations, as well as an account of workers uprisings in the 1960s by a Russian anarchist.

Unfortunately many mistakes made by the anarchists during the Russian revolution appear to be being repeated. "Synthesis" organisations like the Moscow Union of Anarchists, combine mutually incompatible groups like the Revolutionary union of Anarcho-Communists, the Christian Anarchists(!) and the "dissident anarchist fringe".

The Anarcho-Syndicalist grouping KAS (Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists) calls for a "system of stateless market socialism with mixed forms of property". In fact, some of the KAS leaders have been compromised by their dealings with the trade unions and attempts by elements of the fragmented Communist Party to construct a British-style Labour Party. Andrei Isaev, for example, quoted in the pamphlet, has become chief editor of the paper of the Moscow Federation of Trade Unions, besides attempting with the head of the Socialist Party, Kagalitsky, and various union bureaucrats to help set this Labour party up.

The most important and interesting document here is by Vadim Damier who broke with KAS and fights for an anarchist-communist position in the group IREAN (Initiative of Revolutionary Anarchists). As he says, "I am for direct action and against the free market... I envisage a federation of free communes... this federation would be on the basis of solidarity and would decide on where, how, what and when things should be produced. Through such co-ordination a libertarian communist society would be achieved."

*Poll Tax Rebellion.* Danny Burns. AK Press and Attack International. £4.95. 205 pages.

The sinking of the Tory flagship, ironically enough involving the Battle of Trafalgar Square, is well documented in this account by Danny Burns, a non-aligned member of the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation National Committee. He describes the growth of the movement, neighbourhood organisation, the town hall demonstrations and riots, Trafalgar Square, anti-bailiff work and the role of groups like Militant. The denunciation of the actions of the Trafalgar Square rioters by Militant leaders like Sheridan and Nally is well covered. Perhaps even more important is how the All Britain Federation and some of its component Anti-Poll Tax Unions were manipulated, gerrymandered and

packed. Others were genuine expressions of ordinary people's determination to resist, and in some of these, forms of organisation developed that empowered all concerned. For example, as an activist in the book says, "We rotate the chair at every meeting. People take the chair now who would never have dreamed of taking chairs of anything. That's the beauty of it. It's great. It's become like a social education."

There was mass support for the anti-poll tax movement, particularly in Scotland. However, the book tends to let euphoria get in the way of political judgement. In some areas, local anti-poll tax groups after possibly fairly large public meetings initially, received very little support and depended on the activities of a few. The packing of anti-poll tax groups by Militant did lead to demobilisation in some areas. These issues are not adequately dealt with.

As the book says, the defeat of the Poll Tax was a great moment in British working class history. However, the author is quite sanguine about capitalism carrying on "pretty much as usual" and notes how much capitalism has fragmented society by breaking up communities and work-place organisation. However, capitalism has also created a potential for strengthening neighbourhood communities with the less well-off being ghettoised in the inner city and suburban estates. Resistance was built up through the informal networks of these areas. The book argues that these will remain for some time as the strongest bases of action and should focus on more than one issue.

There does seem an overly optimistic hope that these informal organisations thrown up by the anti-poll tax struggles will provide the nucleus for a new community-based mass movement. Unfortunately, the truth is that a demobilisation has taken place since the defeat of the Poll Tax. Many anti-poll tax groups have disappeared completely, others are empty shells and, meanwhile, large numbers of people are still being pursued for non-payment. The series of cosmetic legislation put through by the Tories gave the impression that the Poll Tax was finished when, in fact, it is still there and many are unable to pay and are being pursued by the State with dogged determination.

On the positive side, never were so many people in Britain involved in direct confrontation with the law. Many were involved in political activity during the struggle. Many women, as had happened before with the miners' strike, were galvanised and transformed. As one woman activist is quoted as saying, "I just cannot return to being just an ordinary housewife". Before the movement, many working class people unquestioningly paid their bills. All

this has changed. This feeling could, for example, be mobilised to resist rent rises.

We realise there is a general demobilisation and lack of struggle at the moment. However, unlike the Labour left and the vanguard parties, we know that sooner or later mass movements will reemerge and we must prepare for that. We think society can be transformed, unlike those who, as Jim Kelman, a quoted Scottish activist says, believe in "compromise and negotiation".

The book clearly describes the struggle in the community as a basis for advocating community-based mass struggle. Unfortunately, though partly borne out by practical experience, this reinforces an unbalanced view of how struggle can and should develop. As anarchist-communists we have always argued for struggle in both the community and workplaces, with neither being prioritised. This was our strength during the anti-poll tax struggle when Trotskyists and others were arguing for workplace struggle to the detriment, and despite the material evidence to the contrary, of the effectiveness of community struggle. Unfortunately, in reaction to this discredited approach, Danny Burns goes too far in the opposite direction. Resistance to capitalism and the State must be, and we think will develop, in both the estates and neighbourhoods and in the factories and offices.

*Unfinished Business: The Politics of Class War.* AK Press. £4.50. 186 pages.

The Class War Federation argue in this book for the "re-creation of an independent revolutionary organisation within the working class, under the control of no-one but themselves". It explains the politics and structure of the CWF and has sections on Capitalism, the State, Class, Class Struggle and Revolutionary Organisations. As it modestly points out, it does not claim, like a left-wing party, to have all the answers. It is written in a clear style, as devoid of jargon as possible. Indeed, though it does not explicitly say as much, it is in many ways an excellent expose of anarchist-communist ideas.

The section on capitalism accurately describes the workings of the system, taking in consumerism and the role trade unions play in the maintenance of capitalism. Perhaps more attention could have been paid to the development of state capitalism in the USSR and its satellites, China, Cuba and Vietnam. Any idea of class struggle revolutionary theory must be emphatically divorced from the sham of state capitalism masquerading as "communism".

Class War enthusiastically reminds us of the traditions of the British working class which have been too often ignored by the Left.

A minor quibble, and it is minor, would be the omission of the Diggers, much more radical than the Levellers in the English Civil War and the uncritical mention of the "volunteers that went to fight fascism in Spain during the Spanish Civil War". Remember, apart from the volunteers organised by the Independent Labour Party, many were members of the Communist Party and thoroughly imbued with Stalinism. They were unwittingly or knowingly involved in the sabotage of the Spanish revolution through Stalin's international, the Comintern. And why is this revolutionary tradition only British, not including for example the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the German Revolution of 1918, the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and May 1968 in France, amongst others? A re-affirmation of the British revolutionary tradition should not mean that the internationalist baby gets thrown out with the bathwater.

The book makes no bones about the problems facing a potential revolution. It correctly criticises most of the anarchist movement (more of this later) for its ineffectiveness and selects an excellent passage from Arshinov's *History of the Makhnovist Movement* to highlight this. It counters the charges of anti-intellectualism levelled against the CWF by saying that "our aim is to make everyone an intellectual". It draws out the better points of the Organisational Platform of the Libertarians ie theoretical and tactical unity, collective responsibility and federalism, and endorses them. These and other passages are remarkably close to the positions of the ACF. We might not endorse words like "self-management" (which could imply a form of self-managed capitalism) and we would not be so eager to use Nicaragua as an example of revolutionary struggle (you have to separate out the Sandinista government from any popular organisations that developed there, whilst asking how much the latter were manipulated by the former). Overall, however, the comrades of Class War should be congratulated on this book. We hope the criticisms made here are received in a comradely and constructive way, in the spirit in which they were given.

But hang on! I hear many readers now cry. If you agree as much with the politics of Class War, why aren't the ACF and CWF in the same organisation? The fact is there remain many differences of approach, and there is a problem with the ideas expressed by Class War in this book actually being translated into practice. But, yes, the development of ideas in the book is a healthy development and who knows what kind of dialogue could develop in the future?





### Secret Ballot

Dear comrades,

Why does "Big Brother" keep a secret ballot?

Demokrassy prides itself on the fact that the ballot is secret. Even this pandering to the people is a lie as I found out on the 9th April. The voting clerk provides you with a ballot sheet including a number. This number is also on the stub and behind the stub they also write in pencil a coded number for your address. So much for a secret ballot. The ballot provides those in power with all the secret voting information they need. When you vote they cross off your name from the list. So they know whether you vote or not and which party you vote for.

I was considering voting Labour but when I saw the amount of voting information the minions of "Big Brother" have I reverted to type and scored a black cross over the whole voting form.

It's the same old story, one people, one country and three potential führers, but which one will it be, or will they all have to thrash about in a "hung" parliament. I'm tempted to say if you have a hung parliament why not take the opportunity to hang all

the power-crazed bastards once and for all, but being a rationalist humanitarian, how about putting them all on the dole and making them pay poll tax as well!

Yours in freedom,  
A.A., Edinburgh

### Money?

Dear *Organise!*

In your article (issue 26) 'After the Revolution' you state about councils being operated on anarchist communist principles. "Equality of income" is mentioned. Surely in an anarchist communist society money which is a means of exchange will be abolished and people will take from society according to self determining needs and give according to their ability. The alternative of equal income is unworkable as how can anyone possibly decide what each individual gets in terms of a monetary reward?

The article goes on to talk about equal access to the resources and products of society. I think instead of equal access you should use the words free access.

There may well be some things especially after the revolution which will have to be rationed, however that will be the least of our problems, as we will have to get down to the work of making sure essentials such as food, good homes, healthcare, etc are freely available throughout the world.

By and large I enjoyed reading your magazine which is refreshingly different from the Lenin-

ist/Trotskyist drivel which makes me very cross.

For communism/anarchism

D.M. (Manchester)

### Letters from Abroad

Dear comrades,

Thank you very much for your magazine. I think that your magazine is very good. I read other magazines which are published by other anarchists in the West but your magazine is the best. With our magazine I can't compare it. You have very good articles about economy and other articles are interesting too. But, on the other hand, I think your magazine has too few articles about the anarchist movement in Europe, especially Eastern Europe. Some of your articles will be translated and published in our magazine *Autonomie*.

Our address in Prague is:

*Autonomie, CAS, Box 223  
111 21 Praha 1, Czechoslovakia*

Dear comrades,

Hello from Russia!

I'm a Russian anarchist, a member of a little anarchist group in a little town near Moscow. When my friends and I have read No 25 of *Organise!* magazine, then we have understood that we agree with ACF Aims and Principles and that much views and opinions of ACF coincide with ours... Our group is very little (consists of 6 members) and begun its activity 3 months ago. Unfortunately we

have very little information about anarchist movement in other countries. Can't you help us and send something about anarchists in other countries and (of course) additional information about ACF? We are particularly interested in the Anarchist Communist Federation's views on the last events in Russia, Boris Yeltsin's role in them and the last events in Afghanistan.

M.S.

*Chernogolovko, Moscow Region.*

Dear *Organise!*

I've bought one of your issue (No. 24) and I've found it very good. Especially the texts which speak about anarchist theory. In France we have anarchist newspaper but all their articles are based on actuality and none about the history of anarchy or its thoughts. I know that actuality is important and must be seen through a critical point of view but it must not be the only subject in an anarchist magazine in my opinion. To conclude about this point I would tell you: "Continue the theory articles!"

I do a 'zine *L'épingle Noire* and do my best to change "their world where I've been bought" (demonstrations, pasting-up in the streets, promotion for anarchist newspapers; "Courant alternatif", *L'épingle Noire*...). For the third issue of my 'zine I've already done an interview of one member of the Class Struggle Anarchist Network (from England of course).

Y.L., Guichen, France.

## MALCOLM X

Continued from page 10.

and corruption of the Nation's leaders. The Nation had consistently criticised the civil rights movement for their non-violent methods, but Malcolm X saw that they were able to pull out large numbers of black people, and wished to become involved in the demonstrations.

The final break with the Nation came with the position taken by Malcolm X over the assassination of President Kennedy. He stated that those who enslaved black people through violence would often die violently, and saw no need to mourn. Elijah Muhammad had wanted the Nation to remain quiet on this question. Malcolm X was forced out in March 1964.

He now set up a rival group, Muslim Mosque Inc, and after a pilgrimage to Mecca, the Organisation of Afro-American Unity, which was on a political, non-sectarian basis.

He was an independent leader of his own movement for only one year, before he was shut down, probably by Black Muslims, themselves possibly manipulated by the CIA. His 12 years as a faithful servant of Elijah Muhammad have to be divorced from his brief later period.

What he did do was drop the idea of a separate black nation in America. This

took place slowly, and only a month before his death was he able to state that he no longer believed in a black State in America. "I believe in a society in which people can live like human beings on the basis of equality". In an interview printed after his death, he pointed out that he had not been using the term for several months, adding; "But I still would be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the over-all philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of black people in this country".

However, this process of development involved him in a number of illusions. He travelled through Africa, the Middle East and Europe and remarked that, "All of the countries that are emerging from under the shackles of colonialism are turning towards socialism... It's impossible for a white person to believe in capitalism and not believe in racism. You can't have capitalism without racism". He developed anti-capitalist positions, but was fooled by the "socialist" rhetoric of the newly emergent African states.

### Ballots

Similarly, his position on parliamentary activity was far from abstentionist. "Don't be throwing out any ballots. A ballot is like a bullet. You don't throw your ballots until you see a target, and if that

target is not within your reach, keep your ballot in your pocket".

Malcolm X was developing his ideas. As he himself said, "My whole life has been a chronology of changes". Perhaps further development would have moved him in a more revolutionary direction, perhaps not.

He was breaking with black nationalism. Unfortunately the number of revolutionary anarchists in the black working class was very small, and could not act as a powerful influence on his ideas.

The body of ideas he developed is not coherent, because of his constant evolution towards an anti-capitalist position. While the black nationalists claim him as their own, it can be seen from an examination of his ideas that he was moving beyond such a position. As he stated just before he was murdered, "I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those that want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don't think that it will be based upon the colour of the skin, as Elijah Muhammad had taught it".

Next issue: *the Black Panthers, Black Nationalism and the Black American anarchists.*

# Aims and principles

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

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

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

3. We believe that fighting racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class women and black people as cross-class movements hide real class differences and

achieve little for them. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

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

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

7. Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow. Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution.

In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons about self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation. We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method.

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

## JOIN US!

War, exploitation, crime, poverty, racism, mass unemployment... If you're a reader of *Organise!* you'll know how rotten to the very core the system is. You have the capacity to critically question, to look the real world in the eye. You're not a dodger of the uncomfortable issues, and you've long ago given up believing in the hype of the politicians. You understand that whatever its weaknesses, the working class united cannot be defeated.

If, on the other hand, you're a Tory or Labour supporter, and if you're still reading this, you're kidding yourself. Get serious or keep riding the train to hell. We're here to derail it.

If you're a Trotskyist and you're feeling sad, we don't blame you. For years you got radical, attacked Labour... and then were told to vote for Labour "with no illusions". Are your leaders for real? Do yourself a

favour and ditch the leadership mentality.

### The next step

The major political parties are only interested in maintaining the system. The vanguardist revolutionary groups are experts — in sabotaging struggles for their own party-building ends. What's needed is a credible alternative to the twin horrors of the 'free' market and state-managed socialism, otherwise known as state capitalism.

### Forward

We need to build a movement, organising in class struggle groups both locally and nationally. This enables us to work more effectively, co-ordinating our activity and supporting each other so that we are the credible alternative. Such an organisation would begin to make its presence known through effective propaganda and action whilst developing its



theory in a lively, dynamic way in interaction with practice. This is the kind of organisation the ACF is building.

The ACF works towards a social revolution, not to seize power itself, but participating in a revolutionary process as working class people, to assist the class as a whole to destroy the present system and build a free society run through mass decision making.

We urge all those who agree with our aims and principles to join our organisation, the better to take part in this coming about. Write to our national address for details. Apply for membership. Now's the time!