

# Against exploitation

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF class societies, which in ancient times replaced egalitarian societies throughout the world, were disastrous for the great mass of humanity.**

Although there were often gains, in terms of increased productivity through improved communications etc, society became divided into haves and have nots. Class societies are based upon exploitation — the process by which the many provide for the greater well-being of the few.

The 'invention' of private property and the explosion of capitalism as the dominant economic system in the last few hundred years brought the process of exploitation to near perfection.

Exploitation under capitalism primarily means that workers are robbed by their employers of the full value of their efforts as expressed in value of the work they do. There is an irony here, since most employers look very seriously at pilfering. Robbery, it seems is OK for the bosses but not for the workers.

Only a portion of the wealth that workers create actually goes to them. The rest goes to the capitalist, forming the basis of profit which in turn leads to the building up of huge fortunes. Even quite small employers frequently leave in excess of one million pounds in their wills.

## Marx

Karl Marx, despite any objections that anarchists might make about his centralism, statism, etc offered some useful insights into how exploitation occurs. Wealth, he pointed out, comes about when the raw materials provided by nature (wood, cotton, coal, etc) are transformed by labour using technology (tools, scientific processes, manufacturing techniques etc). The employer provides the necessary raw materials or part-finished goods, fuel, machines and premises which the worker uses in her or his daily labour. Incidentally, given that the idea of 'private property' is so deeply ingrained in the minds of ordinary people, the provision of factories and machines helps convince workers of the acceptability of their condition.

Workers produce, by using their intelligence, skill, and adaptability, products of a certain value, say £800 each per week, yet earns only £200 each. After other costs



have been met, say another £200; the employer takes from the workers surplus value from each worker of £400. If in the workplace this is carried on many times over, then we can see how firms can make huge profits.

Profitability however, is based on the assumption that there is a demand for the products and that they can be sold. In times of recession this may not be possible. It is then that the workers become viewed as an economic liability and sacked, for the employer sees the worker's labour power as just one more commodity which has a price. As profits fall, fewer workers are needed and they are put on the scrap heap in such numbers as to restore profit levels.

## Robbed

So, the workers are robbed day in, day out. Unfortunately, they are usually unaware of this. Many workers go along with the idea of 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay'. In other words, there is an acceptance of the employer's right to manage, to expect hard work and the system of wage

labour. Their exploitation is by and large invisible to them, though they may be aware of a sense of injustice.

## Embrace

The workers, by and large, accept the capitalist economic approach of seeing themselves as a cost of production, rather than the main source of wealth. In doing so, they are unwittingly accepting the capitalist system. There are many reasons why workers embrace their exploitation. In part it is due to the persuasive power of education and the mass media but also, it is a result of trade unionism.

Trade unions accept capitalism. Their role is not to help bring about its destruction but to operate within it. In doing so they help promote capitalist exploitation. The unions try to improve wages and conditions, and in doing so accept management's right to manage and the employers right to profitability. The process of collective bargaining between workers and management is a recognition of the legitimacy of the system. In other words, at best, the unions pursue a 'fairer'(!) system of exploitation.

In addition, by dividing workers on the basis of craft, skill, industry and class, the unions are aiding the process of exploitation by undermining workers' solidarity. A divided working class is a weakened one. The pattern of exploitation is not an equal one. Where employers feel they have extra scope to extend the level of exploitation they will do so. For example young workers, immigrants and women for different reasons are vulnerable and subject to deep-seated cultural oppressions which are extended into the sphere of work. Despite so-called protective legislation women still earn a lot less than men, even when the work is of a similar character.

Unlike many Marxists who view the process of exploitation in so-called scientific terms anarchists find no room for such 'objectivity'. Capitalism is a system which is morally unjust, corrupting and degrading. The wages system which produces exploitation must be swept away in the movement to destroy capitalism.

As Kropotkin pointed out, all of the wealth of the world which has been produced over the centuries is the result of the efforts of all of humanity. This wealth must be restored to all of the people of the world — it belongs to no-one and everyone.

870 AF/ACF

# ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

50p

Oct-Dec  
1992  
Issue 28

## MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

### It's a rich man's world



## INSIDE:

Earth Summit, Recession, Black Nationalism, Fascism, Detective Fiction, And Much More!

## Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation



# ORGANISE!

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

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

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

Deadlines for next issue are 20th November for features and reviews, and 27th November for letters and news.

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

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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.

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

£50, Portsmouth ACF benefit; £150, London; £10, Bristol; £15, Stoke; £6, Camberley; £1.50, West Midland, £60+, Sheffield.

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

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- *Organise!* 21: Gulf war; Russia in crisis; Brixton.
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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.

# Ermmm... what is ERM?

**THE RECENT PANIC over the pound and the accompanying cries of doom are yet another example of the absurdity of the system we live in.**

Most people probably have no idea what's going on and see the value of the pound as a sign of the country's virility. On a more basic level, the fall of the pound makes people think of higher interest and mortgage rates and a deeper recession with more job losses. We are made to feel helpless against the power of the economy, accepting sacrifices as inevitable. This helplessness is aggravated by the veil which hides the working of the economic system. People do not actually understand what has happened and why. We just wait to see the consequences for our own lives, leaving the government to sort it out for us.

So what actually did happen? Joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) meant that Britain had to keep the pound at a certain level compared to the strongest currency in the system — the German Mark. If fewer people wanted to buy pounds to buy British goods or to invest in British banks, then the value of the pound would fall. To keep the pound at a high value, and in line with the Mark, the British state treasury would have to intervene and buy pounds with its own reserves — or the government could put interest rates up to try to get the capitalists and speculators to buy pounds.

The latter route would mean that businesses would have to pay more on their loans and house buyers would have more to pay on their mortgages. Some businesses might collapse, others might stop expanding, leading to increased unemployment. Fewer houses would be bought so workers in that area, eg the building trade, would lose jobs. Also, a high value on the pound would make British goods appear more expensive so the export industries would be in trouble.

So despite all the problems caused by a high pound, the

government followed this policy for two reasons. One, high interest rates and a strong pound attract money into the City of London — which is a massive influence on any government and has often dictated policy. Secondly, the Conservatives have always made inflation their main target, even if this has meant unemployment and industrial collapse. By keeping the pound high, imports would become cheaper, costs to firms would be held down and the prices in the shops would not rise so much. The government did succeed in keeping the inflation rate low, but at the cost of a massive rise in unemployment. Even the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) was calling for lower interest rates, even if it meant a fall in the value of the pound.

## Falling pound

The pound did fall, drastically, but against the government's wishes. If Britain had been a strong economy with British exports being bought and investors thinking they could make money here, then the pound would not have fallen. But since we live in a capitalist economy, if no one wants to buy something (in this case pounds) then the price of it falls.

But things are even more complicated. Only about 10% of pounds are bought because people want to buy products in Britain. The vast amount of currency bought and sold is done by currency speculators who buy a currency at a low level and sell at a higher level — thereby pocketing the profit and making a killing. Therefore, though Britain's exports and industries do not attract much money, the crisis was bought about by speculators who sensed the pound was weak and got rid of their pounds while the value was still higher. With billions of dollars at their disposal the money sharks of the world's finance centres were able to shrug off the Bank of England's £40 billion intervention. These were minor compared to the resources of the world cur-



Mixed signals... A French trader joins the bidding as the future of the ERM hangs in the balance.

rency markets who do nothing but shift money around and make yet more of it for the rich bastards who can afford a speculative lifestyle.

## Hardship

People of many political tendencies would agree with the above description of events. The difference is that as anarchist communists we have a totally different view as to what should be done. In the next few months, political parties will come up with various proposals. The Thatcherites will shout that they were right — you cannot "buck the market". If the 'market' wants to sell pounds, it will do so. You just have to let things be, accepting the consequences, no

matter what hardship this entails. They are supported by their friends in the City who have made and will continue to make a lot of money out of others suffering.

The CBI, representing British industry, will take a slightly different tack. They will want lower interest rates, a lower pound so that they can increase exports, and also help from the government. Even the bosses of industry realise that they can't make profits if the majority are too poor to buy anything. But, as always, it is not the interests of the working class they have at heart. The bosses will be at the forefront of calls to keep wage increases well below the inflation rate.

Others, both from the left





and the right will be more radical in their demands. The left will call for an increase in state spending, a bailout of industry and the re-introduction of the exchange rate controls that Thatcher got rid of. The right will want Britain to pull out of the EEC, cut links with Europe, throw out immigrants

and retreat into British nationalism.

All these proposals will mean the continuation of a system that, despite sophisticated technology and great wealth, cannot even provide for basic needs, allowing millions to be out of work whilst others go without essentials like food

and housing. We know what the proposals of the Thatcherites and the CBI will mean for the working class.

But the other proposals need more careful criticism. Though it seems an attractive idea to cut links with the capitalist EEC, the ideology of nationalism and racism must be fought mercilessly. There is no solution to be found in an authoritarian, isolated, intolerant and still capitalist Britain. Our fate lies with the working class in all countries.

Nor will the reformist demands of the left be any more successful. They'll say that all currency speculation should be stopped, more jobs should be created and more money spent on social services.

But these measures would only temporarily relieve our hardship. Basically Thatcher was right when she said you cannot "buck the market". Any radical measures would only cause capitalists to rush their money out of the country, causing yet more crisis. More gov-

ernment spending will cause taxes to be raised. It wouldn't be done to the rich as they would stop investing, so it would be done to us. Firms would take advantage of any increase in demand by putting up prices. In other words, *under capitalism*, the working class can never win. It is a vicious game, played by *their* rules. The left's attempt to get in on the game and change the rules is doomed to failure. We must resist any attempts to increase the hardships of the working class in the short term, but we can't forget that the working class will only win when the game of capitalism is actually destroyed. We may not be able to buck the market but we can get rid of it. Only then can we create a society that is not based on absurdity and greed, but where we use the immense human resources to build a world of plenty and environmental harmony. Where freedom, dignity and equality are not dreams but actual reality.

Western leadership has never been seriously challenged.

Today, Britain leads not in the role of world policeman (the USA having that dubious 'honour'), but in producing the most horrendous economic statistics of the seven most industrialised countries.

In August, a short three months after its previous predictions, the voice of the British capitalists, the CBI, was forced by its forecasting techniques to 're-adjust' its growth predictions downwards, from plus 0.9% this year and plus 2.9% in 1993 to a minus 1% this year, adding that it would "not be too surprised" if the economy shrank further in 1993.

But such figures never do convey the misery left behind in their wake. On the same day as the CBI announcement, 2400 jobs in the vehicle manufacturing industry were lost. The day after, it was British Coal's turn to announce the termination of 25,000 jobs, as the result of the closure of 30 collieries. These losses are in addition to National Power losing 3000, BP 5000, the armament sector 40,000, and the 1000 a week rate of small business failures, throwing thousands more workers onto the dole.

Even by the government's own crooked standards 9.6% of the total workforce are out of work. The official three million mark is rapidly approaching, and even more quickly the scum politicians, despite superficial differences, are all scrambling around for solutions that will save their miserable skins. Given day-to-day evidence that monetarism is nothing but a good times economic theory, the haughty principles and lofty idealism of a decade and more of Conservatism will, given enough pressure, be quickly ditched. The more politicians fail to find any brake to apply to the free-falling of the economy into a '30s style depression, the more all factions of the state's power base will begin to raise oppositional noises. And that means only one thing. The return to type, the return of the temptations of the quick fix.

The return to an interventionist Keynesian type economy cannot be discounted, even during a Tory government. It could be argued that for a monetarist government to



make such an about turn that that would be equal to its political suicide. But Toryism had no qualms about ditching a piece of useless and embarrassing political baggage such as Thatcher, if that meant the Tory party could survive another election. How it made a decision upon that is exactly how the party makes decisions upon other important issues. That is, research the middle class's political opinion, and keep one step in front of that.

Although the establishment demands for intervention are not constant enough to call them a deluge, such demands are becoming more frequent. The first to call for action are those who have seen their profits take a decline, after being more than content to rake in massive profits during the credit boom of the '80s. The building society Abbey National wanted money to go to beleaguered home-owners caught in a 'negative equity' trap. The construction industry wants money released into government building projects. The car industry, not content with asking for a decrease in car taxes, has also called on the Tories to "kick start the economy".

Added to this is an ideological campaign aimed at formed public opinion. *The Guardian*, as always reeking of liberalism, colludes with Leninist dogma. Hardly a day goes by without this rag calling for a return to Keynes, the message being that state intervention is

also organising the modern day equivalents of labour camps, than the Board of Trade boss Heseltine, who in 1987 informed the Tory Reform Group that "the unemployed cannot expect to be provided for without contributing". He then went on to urge an expansion of sport, adventure and Outward Bound type projects. "These can be serviced by military instructors, and for those who wanted it, experience of actual military service should be an option," he said.

Practically the only way the Tories could re-introduce Keynesian type policies is through the back door method of solving the unemployment 'problem' by embarking on a programme of public works where those working would be on greatly reduced rates of pay. Taken to its extreme, labour camps would have to be built in order to provide accommodation for workers on large or inaccessible sites. From there, only small administrative steps need be taken to use such labour as a competitor against private industry, driving rates of pay down.

We do not envisage such a turn of events occurring tomorrow. But if pressure for interventionist measures keeps rising, and unemployment rises to previously unknown limits, we should be aware of the draconian lengths the capitalists will go to. And while we're confident that there would be a significant working class resistance against such measures, we are also aware that a divided working class is a weakened one. Everything we can do to build an unbreakable alliance between unemployed and employed workers can only strengthen our struggle towards the destruction of this rotten system.

### Labour camps

At the time of writing the above, the Tories are still not deviating much from the route of near-zero inflation. But this is not to say that other strategies have not been considered for future implementation. It has been leaked that forcing the long-term unemployed into US-type workfare projects is being considered. In terms of not rousing one iota of concern amongst the middle class, the ET scheme was a success, perhaps the guinea-pig for future schemes. And what better hatchet man to do the job of implementing forced work schemes, and perhaps

Further reading: *Labour Camps. The British Experience*, D. Colledge, Sheffield Popular Publishing, 1989, ISBN 1870513010.

## Down the Plughole

**STATE INTERVENTION IN the economy, not a favourable factor in the economic theories which spawned Reaganism, Thatcherism, and a hundred other fawning imitators, has of late been staging a comeback.**

Japan, the land where over 50% of economists avow to a neo-Marxist interpretation of capitalism, has pumped some £45 billion into its economy. This is a classic pump-priming measure of the unfashionable (in the West) economic model as best advocated by the immediate post-war economic guru J.M. Keynes. In much the same way as the monetarist free-market rubbish as expounded by Milton Friedman and others gave a stamp of approval, an attribution of scientific status, to the right-wing lunatic think-tanks which so influenced much of the '80s Conservative political agenda, so Keynes also was able to provide the theoretical justifications required by his generation of politicians.

From Roosevelt through to

Attlee, these were the years when Keynes's theories of state intervention were most in vogue, taken enthusiastically on board and turned into practice. These years spanned recession, war, and then reconstruction.

### Keynes legacy

Of the two economies of the USA and Britain, it is in Britain where the Keynes legacy is most visible, though the provision of public money for housing and the maintenance of the NHS are but very thin former shadows of their previous selves. But it was in foreign policy that Truman, extending Keynesian policies through the creation of the Marshall Plan, was able to steal the triumphant march of capitalism from under Britain's nose. The USA's superior economic strength won the lion's share of the reconstruction spoils of war ravaged Europe, where, from that day to this, its claim to post-war



## ACTIVE RESISTANCE

Coming soon

Active Resistance, the ACF paper for young people. Enquiries to London address, for details, bulk orders.



# Rio and the New World Order

**"Money is the root of all progress" John Major**

**"...environmental protection and a growing economy are inseparable" George Bush**

**"...there is great awareness about the importance of a new contract between man and nature" UN Secretary General, Boutros Ghali**

**THE ABOVE QUOTATIONS demonstrate how the participants of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, the Earth Summit, responded to the problems of global ecological crisis within the perspective and language of capitalism. What was achieved within this framework?**

**Agenda 21** This 800-page 'agenda' was agreed as a series of guidelines for governments covering a range of issues including waste emissions, recycling and population. There is no legal obligation to follow these guidelines and their implementation is dependent upon financial investment.

**Biodiversity** The US refused to sign this agreement to protect plant and animal diversity. This is because the agreement would threaten the practices of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) involving biotechnology and 'intellectual property'. Again, implementation is dependent on finance and further ratification.

**Global Warming** Although this agreement, signed by 110 countries, is to be enshrined in law, its recommendations are limited by economic rationality, so that, for example, while scientists recommend an immediate 60% reduction in atmospheric pollution, levels need only be reduced to those of 1990 by the year 2000.

## Deserts

Other proposals and agreements were made concerning aid, deforestation and desertification but these, like the others, fell within the overall

pattern where TNCs kept themselves and their activities, beyond the reach of any regulatory controls (by lobbying richer nations and through the special access the consortium of top TNCs had got to the Secretary General of the Earth Summit) and where the needs of capitalism triumphed over those of the environment, the poor and the starving.

Is it at all surprising that what the Earth Summit produced was not worth the 20 years it took to organise or the 30 million pieces of paper it was written on? No, environmental protection and a growing economy are not "inseparable" they are entirely incompatible. Unlike the naive and outraged of the green pressure groups, or the left, we do not ask or expect global capitalism to act against its own interests or reform itself.

To understand exactly why capitalism can never be 'greened' we need to know exactly how capitalism operates as we approach the end of the 20th century.

## Permanent

A permanent feature of capitalism is its need to grow in order to overcome the limitations which force it into periodic crises. This growth takes the form of the creation of new products, new markets, an ever increasing rate of turnover and geographical extension. In recent years, due to technological advances in transportation (commodities to consumers/consumers to commodities) and communications (global finance markets), this



flexibility has enabled international capitalism to establish a degree of independence from even the most powerful nation states. Its increasing wealth and power is concentrated in around 500 TNCs who account for 80% of all world trade and investment and whose individual budgets are often bigger than those of whole nations.

This is not to deny the power of nation states, particularly the rich and militarised states of the west, but to recognise that ultimately they do not run or control capitalism. The function of the state today is to create and maintain conditions in which capitalism can thrive. This can be seen in the push toward laissez faire and market economies, cuts in public spending, high unemployment and attacks on the power of organised labour.

The rich and militarised state will respond to any perceived threat to this order from 'upstart' regimes through the use of sanctions, the support of 'rebels' or, as a last resort, direct military intervention. But this should not blind us to the fact that it is the TNCs who call the shots. It is they who have the capacity, regardless

of the needs of any individual state, to move a manufacturing base from one part of the world to another where production costs may be cheaper or environmental restrictions evaded.

## New World Order

This mode of late capitalism, the New World Order, is responsible for the most savage destruction of the environment and the ruthless exploitation of millions of human lives, all expendable in the pursuit of profit.

In the debt-ridden nations of the South the International Monetary Fund and World Bank restructure and reschedule loans to debtor countries with 'structural adjustment programmes'. These programmes force countries to open up to TNCs and adopt export-based economies where the provision of their own food, housing and education is sacrificed to the production of goods for export to bring in the hard currency debts must be repaid in. Cash crops are produced requiring the use of imported and environmentally harmful chemical fertilisers

and pesticides. Precious forests are cut down to produce timber products and cleared cattle grazing land to deliver burgers to every High Street in the western world. This deforestation leads to further global warming and the loss of plant and animal species.

In the rest of the world TNCs use planned obsolescence to achieve an ever-increasing turnover rate for their commodities. Commodities are made to break down quickly, cars, TVs etc, or become 'unfashionable' through the promotion of ever newer and 'improved' products.

## Deadly

In the New World Order the ruling class work to provide a global stomping ground for a capitalism that is not simply the enemy of ecology, but an enemy which is in the process of becoming more dangerous and deadly than ever before.

The farce of the Earth Summit should signal to all those seriously committed to protecting the environment the futility of attempting to encourage any government to adopt a green agenda. Such activity is not only naive but dangerous since it encourages the illusion that, even if a green government were elected it would be in a position to oppose the forces of international capitalism.

What we must do is to bring the single issue of ecology into the general terrain of class struggle. This means breaking down the barriers between the mass of exploited humanity globally and going on the offensive. "...[N]ow it's between TNCs and citizens to fight it out directly", as eco-feminist Vandana Shiva concluded after the Earth Summit.

## 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 Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX.

# McLIBEL



**AS CONSUMERS WE are overwhelmed with information about the goods on sale to us. We find a detailed nutritional analysis on a tin of beans or are told of the amazing biological cleaning powers of the la-**

**test soap powder. What we are not told is the story of how these commodities appear, as if by magic, on the supermarket shelf or fast food restaurant counter.**

Telling that story, exposing the secret face behind Ronald MacDonald's smiling mask, or seeing through the whitewash of Unilever, London Greenpeace are active in making people aware of the exploitation of workers, animals and nature involved in the production of commodities by transnational corporations like McDonalds.

McDonalds see London Greenpeace and their leaflet *What's Wrong with McDonalds?* as such a threat that they paid spies to infiltrate their meetings. As a result Helen and Dave from the group are being sued for libel

by McDonalds simply for handing out the leaflet. The outcome of the case concerns us all as it will affect our freedom to produce and distribute information critical of corporations and other organisations in the future.

The McLibel 2 hope to turn their trial, early next year, to their advantage; "...the trial will be a public forum for the truth in front of the world's media — they will be able to publish the facts about McDonalds' practices presented to the jury. It should be a real eye opener for millions of people... This is why the case must be fought."

Help them fight, send donations and messages of support to: McLibel SC, London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.



# Letter from America

*An ACF member visiting America reports on Earth First. A critique of Earth First's internal structure.*

LAST MONTH I attended Earth First's annual Round River Rendezvous, in a forest campsite near Durango in SW Colorado. The gathering of about 200 EF! activists from across the US and Canada lasted a week, and was an eclectic mix of 'workshops', socials, discussions and to end, an action. Most of the participants were young, white, articulate and extremely idealistic. For me the social dynamic was most interesting. At one and the same time a strong sense of collectivity but also individualism. But first the formal stuff.

Earth First! is well known for being a deep ecologist direct action grouping, more practically minded than theoretically based. The 'workshops' followed this approach and were mostly practical, for example how to climb trees, how to avoid FBI infiltration, how to do press releases etc. While not explicitly anarchist, EF! is definitely anarchistic and most EF!ers are proud of its anti-authoritarian stance and claim to have no hierarchy.

Earth First! has no formal membership or overall structure. Anyone doing actions in line with EF! ethos is a 'member', whether they have contact with other EF!ers or not. This is similar to the structure of the Animal Liberation Front in Britain. It makes sense for groups based solely on clandestine direct action, but this is not the case for EF! They are also an open political propaganda grouping. They have a regular journal based in Montana, published eight times a year, which is supposed to both report on and represent the 'movement'. The Round River Rendezvous is the 'conference' which dictates the direction of the journal. This was by far the most controversial issue for the gathering. It is the decision-making process for this debate that I wish to criticise. To me it shows one of EF!'s strongest weaknesses. Their emphasis on trees, animals

and wilderness with a disdain for humanity has left them with little understanding about group dynamics.

## Fish-bowl

The method chosen by Earth First! for collective decision making is called a "vouchered fish-bowl system". They hope to reach a consensus decision amongst a large group by using a fish-bowl. That is, small groups convene beforehand to discuss the issues and choose one person to represent them in the main meeting. The chosen delegates then meet in the centre and discuss. All others have to sit around the outside and watch, although anyone with a strong viewpoint is supposedly allowed to enter the middle circle as an individual. A decision is made by consensus of those in the middle. The vouchering

part of this process is even more absurd. Each person in the middle has to be vouched for by two people already in the middle. This is supposed to stop FBI infiltrators from wrecking the consensus. In practice this system breeds elitism and hierarchy. The small groups tended to be regional and the most well known 'figure' in each region tended to be the delegate chosen for the fish-bowl. Those activists not already within these small regional cliques, tended to be isolated and marginalised. The vouchering needed to be part of the later fish-bowl would then be a further disincentive to new, less extrovert, or isolated activists. The double-think the 'leading lights' use to justify and explain this system is revealing. They claim it is open, efficient, secure and non-hierarchical.

The biggest layer of confusion is security. Earth First! is genuinely concerned about the level and severity of state and corporate harassment. The

FBI has seemingly targeted EF! activists in a pattern similar to the COINTELPRO of the sixties against the Black Panthers and American Indian Movement. This includes the bombing of two EF!ers in California and the entrapment of four leading Arizona EF!ers by an FBI infiltrator (although even this is way less severe than the FBI's murderous campaign of destruction against non-white groups in the sixties).

The concern about infiltration has led to some very unhealthy paranoia. Any newcomer or anyone making a challenge to EF! orthodoxy is seen as a potential agent provocateur. In an open meeting (where by necessity only legal activity is discussed) the best way of countering infiltrators is to make decision making as open and non-elitist as possible. The voucher system positively works against this and isn't foolproof since three agents could vouch for each other. The problems with consensus decision making are inherent, EF!'s paranoia has made them worse.

## Social dynamism

While EF!'s lack of political analysis and awareness was disappointing but not unexpected, their strength was an almost tribal collectivity. The level of humour and artistic creativity were extremely high. For them, politics is as much about life and having fun as it is about action. It reminded me in a way of the rebellious youth sub-culture of the anarcho-punk squatters in London during the early '80s.

A further encouraging sign within EF! is their continued political drift away from the 'redneck' nationalism of EF!'s founders, and towards a more libertarian, socially aware ecology. Such comments as "AIDS and famines are good because they kill humans" are fortunately gone. But there still seems to be a pretty wide gulf between the enthusiasm and activity of EF! and the dull, dry politics that seemingly make up the social ecologist movement.



# IRISH ANARCHISM

**ANARCHIST POLITICS HAS little history in Ireland prior to the 1980s, a fact which does not deter Irish anarchists today but merely reflects the failure on the part of revolutionary socialism to mount any serious challenge to left republicanism and create a specific class opposition to 'revolutionary' nationalism's political domination over militant sections of the working class. With a few notable exceptions, Leninist groups have had a spectacularly minimal impact, even compared with their British counterparts. Their miserable track records do not of course give genuine revolutionaries sleepless nights!**

Although the **Belfast Anarchist Collective** and their magazine *Outta Control* deserves an honourable mention, class struggle anarchist organisation in Irish history begins in 1984 with the founding of the **Workers Solidarity Movement** in Dublin and the Ballymena Anarchists' bulletin *Organise!* in 1985.

The WSM and their magazine *Workers Solidarity* are still going strong, but *Or-*

*ganise!* folded in 1989 after its 6th issue.

In the last issue of the ACF's *Organise!* we were happy to announce that *Organise! Irish Anarchist Bulletin* had been relaunched with issue 7 being collectively produced by comrades from Ballymena, Derry and Belfast.

The bulletin has proved

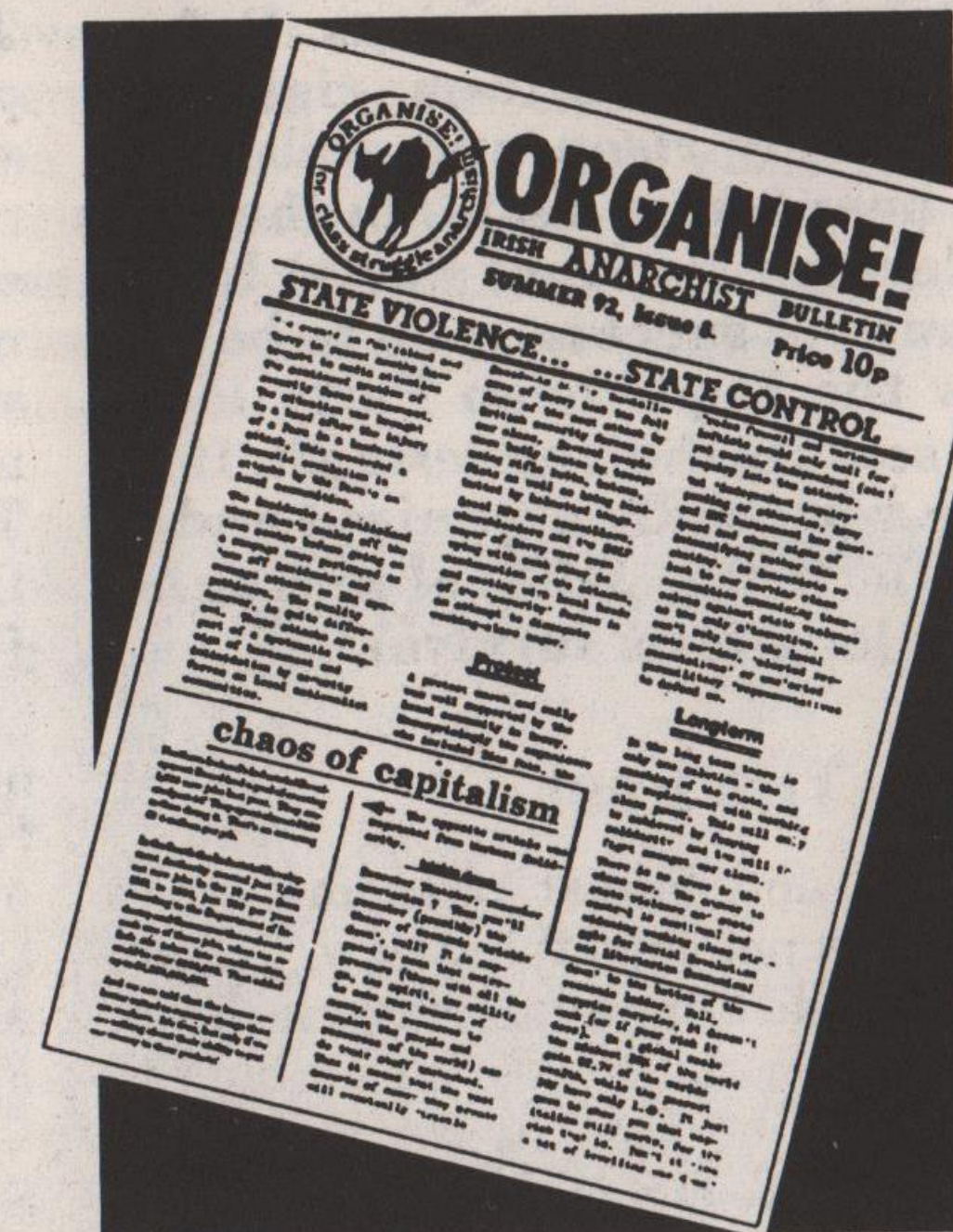
The *Organise!* group stand firmly within the tradition of militant class struggle anarchism and as such are committed to building an organisation with internationalist perspectives. In practical terms this means an uncompromising opposition to both Unionism and all variants of nationalism. As they say, "In the long

amongst our class". (*Organise!* No.8)

## Cheerleaders

Some 'anarchists' in Britain, however, rather than apply a class analysis to the situation in the Six Counties, prefer to act as cheerleaders for the Provisional IRA and describe internationalists as 'English liberals'. This is a gross insult to those Irish comrades defending class positions in the firing line. Whatever the motives of these 'anarchists', and for the most part we think they are good — based as they are on a healthy hatred of Loyalism — they end up stabbing in the back comrades fighting to build a revolutionary internationalist movement in Ireland.

As the *Organise!* group progresses and the movement grows we shall be keeping our readers informed of developments, debate and discussion in Irish anarchism. We also recommend our readers get hold of a copy of *Organise! I.A.B.*, from the ACF London address, or direct from *Organise! Black Cat Press*, P.O. Box 5, Derry, Ireland BT48 6PD.



popular and has attracted interest from many quarters (even, of course, the obligatory Loyalist death threat!) and issue 8 has recently been produced.

term there is only one solution — the smashing of the state and its replacement with working class power. This will only be achieved by forging solidarity and the will to fight

# OBITUARY

**THE VETERAN FRENCH 'Platformist' anarchist, Nicolas Faucier, died at the age of 92 in June.**

Born in Orleans, he went out to work when he was 12 years old, working in hard conditions — night work, 12 hour days, and a working week of more than 50 hours.

## Anarchism

During the First World War, he joined the merchant navy to escape the slaughter on the front. From 1923 he became an anarchist.

He was a workshop delegate at Renault from where he was sacked after a strike. He

was also a member of the anarchist organisation **Union Anarchiste**.

Under the influence of the ideas in the *Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists* written by Russian and Ukrainian anarchists in exile (Makhno, Mett, Arshinov etc) which argued for class struggle anarchism and theoretical and tactical unity, the UA changed its name to **Union Anarchiste Communiste** in July 1926. However the UAC manifesto contained many confusions left over from 'traditional' anarchism.

Faucier became an editor of the UAC paper *Le Libertaire*

and ran its bookshop from 1927-30.

He took an active part in defence work for the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, framed by the American State, and along with his future life companion Alice Nadaud worked in the committee that raised funds for Makhno's welfare.

## Synthesis

Faucier was active in the defence of Platformist ideas in the UAC, leading to the departure of the 'Synthesists' (partisans of Sebastian Faure, who attempted to make a synthesis between anarchist communism, individualism and syndicalism) and the changing of the UAC's name to **Union Anarchiste Communiste Revolutionnaire** from 1927-30.

However some synthesists

remained in the UACR, and these won the majority at the 1930 Congress.

The Platformists published a Bulletin for six issues, which in the words of Faucier ended "in quasi-general indifference".

The fascist menace in France in 1934 led to a reunification of synthesists and platformists, and the reversion of UACR to UA! Faure returned to the fold.

Faucier found this hard to digest, although he remained in the UA. Indeed he carried on anti-militarist work alongside the leading synthesist Lecoin. With Lecoin he was one of the leading lights in the Free Spain Committees and then the International Antifascist Solidarity (SIA) committees, which had a membership of 15,000. Through a false idea of solidarity these com-



mittees failed to take a principled position on the question of the entry of Spanish anarchists into the Catalan government and then the national Republican government, and the lack of opposition to the militarisation of the militias into a 'popular army'.

### Naive

Similarly Faucier and Lecoin jointly edited a leaflet *Immediate Peace* at the outbreak of war in 1939. This leaflet naively demanded of both sides an immediate peace, but failed to mention the problems of social change, class struggle and fascism. Faucier was sent to prison for three years for draft resistance, escaping to live underground up till the Liberation.

After the War, Faucier was involved in several anti-militarist committees. He remained friends with Lecoin, and this may have compromised him in his relationship with the post-war Federation Communiste Libertaire, basing itself on the need for class analysis and a structured organisation. Whilst Faucier remained a Platformist, he never joined the FCL, preferring to remain a sympathiser.

### China

Spending his last days in St Nazaire he was active in 1989 in the local group, **Collective Against Repression in China**. Up to the end he was active, in January 1991 working around the opposition to the Gulf War. As he stated in the local paper, celebrating his 90th birthday, "I will struggle right up to my last breath".

Despite his devotion to class struggle anarchism and a structured organisation, Faucier was too willing to collaborate with the synthesists, which led to continuing problems for the revolutionary anarchist movement. He preferred to put anti-militarist work before the creation of a specific anarchist communist organisation.

The French movement is still suffering from these errors, and Faucier's own life illustrates the failure of the pre-war anarchist communists in France, and indeed the superficiality of most of the French 'platformism', in comparison to the core ideas of the Platform itself.

# The Rostock Riots

**THE REUNIFICATION OF Germany brought with it a crisis for the groups of the extreme right. They had lost one of their main themes — the reconstitution of a Greater Germany. But they quickly regained their momentum with a new theme — refugees. The 'Republicans' and other groups began to grow in numbers. Kohl and the Christian Democrats threw oil on the fire by making the 'problem' of refugees one of their preoccupations. Before the collapse of the Wall, extreme right parties had regularly risen and collapsed, never to be heard from again. In the '60s, the NPD (German National Party) had a certain amount of success, soon to be forgotten. Now the Republican Party looks like gaining seats in the Bundestag in 1994. But they are very badly organised and at the moment lack the political personnel necessary for long-term survival.**

### The East

The neo-Nazi and fascist phenomenon in east Germany was not something new, despite the protests of the old Communist regime. From the start of the '80s, skinheads subscribing to Nazi ideas were to be seen in the East. The regime refused to take any of their attacks seriously, as they were much in love with the idea of the 'glorious' youth produced by Communism! This ended in 1987 with a serious attack on a punk concert in East Berlin. From then on, the regime could not ignore the problem. The fascist skinhead phenomenon was a home-grown one, produced under East German conditions. The regime refused to accept this, claiming that the movement was directed from West Germany. There was a mass round-up of skinheads, many of whom were imprisoned. In prison they developed their contacts with each other and developed a thorough-going extreme right ideology. When East Germany imploded, they came out of prison determined to organise and to create a party.

When the extreme right parties of West Germany sent their disciples to the East they were able to make contact with these people.

### Rostock

The riots at Rostock were not orchestrated by the West German extreme right. It was the youth of the town who started the attacks on the refugees' hostel. The West German neo-nazis arrived after the first violence. One neo-Nazi leader from Munich, another from Hamburg were to be seen in the crowd. But the phenomenon of Rostock was a phenomenon of East Germany. There had been no group or party of the extreme right organised at Rostock for the last few years.

On the other hand, the extreme right organisation Deutsche Alternative founded in West Germany in 1989, has been able to put down roots in East Germany in particular at Cottbus,

where sporadic riots followed those of Rostock. This organisation pushes the line that what was East Germany is being led by the nose by West Germany, which has proved to have a certain popularity amongst the East German youth. It has a number of East Germans in its leadership.

The neo-Nazi groups will attempt to take full advantage of the unrest in the East. Rostock was an important ship-building town and dock. The reintegration of Germany caused enormous problems for these industries and thousands were made unemployed. This scenario has been repeated all over the East. After years of state capitalism and the lack of a revolutionary alternative, some elements in the East German working class, especially amongst young people are being attracted by racist and fascist ideas. The flames are being fanned by the Christian Democrats for their own ends, and the Social Democrats are going along with their game.

As for the Greens, they have shown themselves to be split and confused over the issue of refugees. As for the autonomists, the Autonomien, whilst they attempted to mobilise against racist attacks, their deliberate self-marginalisation has not helped them relate to ordinary working class people.

The vacuum created by the collapse of the Stalinist regime in East Germany followed by lay-offs and redundancies on a large scale has given the neo-Nazis an opportunity to extend their influence. Whether the revolutionary movement can respond to this challenge, and more importantly, whether there will be a working class offensive against the bosses attacks, will determine how long-term their success will be. As we noted in *Organise!* 27 the German working class in the West has mobilised on a massive scale. An upsurge in working class militancy would short-circuit the plans of the neo-Nazis.

*P.S. We are not implying that all German skinheads are neo-Nazis. A large number of skinheads marched through Lubeck earlier in the year in a 'skinhead demonstration against racism'. They came from all over Germany, both East and West, and wanted to show that all skinheads are not fascists.*

## Meet the ACF

*Come and talk to us at:*

ACF bookstall, Anarchist Bookfair  
October 17th, Conway Hall, London.

ACF bookstall, Greenpeace Fayre  
October 31st, Conway Hall, London.

London ACF Public Meeting  
'Revolutionary Anarchism — The Way Forward'. October 22nd, Marchmont Centre, Marchmont St, London WC1 starting at 7.30 pm.

# Bashing the fash?

**FASCISM HAS LONG been the last resort of the ruling class — when the facade of liberal democracy can no longer control the working class, fascism is unleashed to secure the power of the bosses.**

This was precisely the role fascism played when it first arose in 1920s Europe, ending hopes of revolution in many countries and ensuring capitalism could continue unchecked. Once more fascism is on the rise, especially in France and Germany. This has led to a stampede of left wing groups rushing to save the working class from this new menace.

So what response can anarchist communists give to this situation? First an analysis of the far right and what threat they pose is needed.

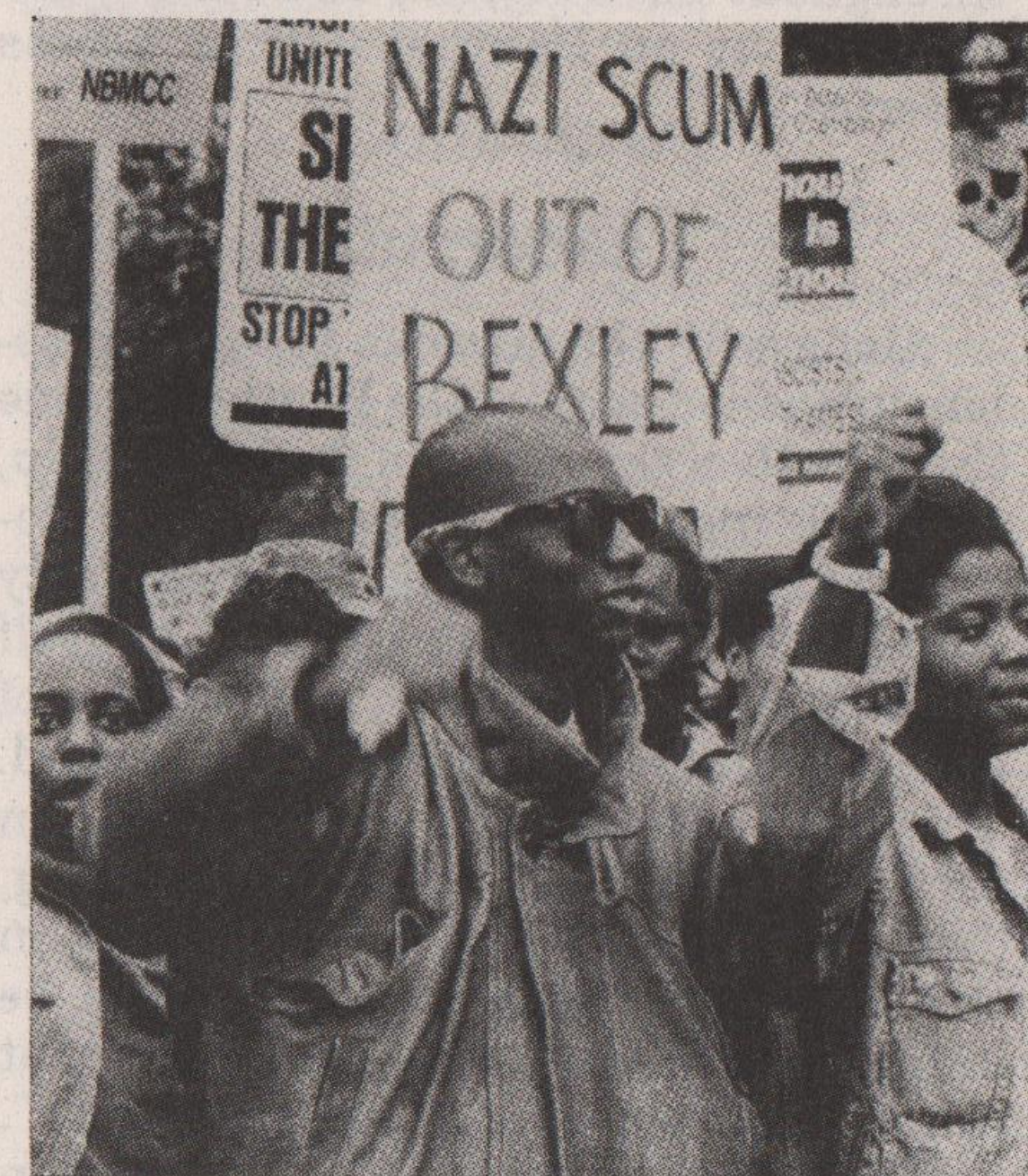
In the press and on TV, pictures of rampaging young, German skinheads has become almost a daily occurrence. In the turmoil of reunified Germany thousands of people have turned to fascism, blaming immigrants for economic problems. A similar anti-immigrant policy has worked well for the **Front Nationale** of Le Pen in France. They have attracted a large amount of support by making immigrant workers the scapegoat for the current crisis of capitalism. However, in neither of these countries where the far right is at its strongest do the fascists look like seizing power. Instead, by putting forward radical right wing policies they have pushed the political agenda of the main stream parties to the right. Tough new anti-immigration laws are being brought in in France and Germany — not by the fascists but by the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrats. The fascists have helped the European capitalists with their plans for fortress Europe without the need for the upheaval a full scale fascist takeover would entail. The fascist mobilisations and attacks on immigrants has enabled the boss class to strengthen the walls of Fortress Europe. In addition, in France Mitterand has used the **Front Nationale** to weaken the vote given to the parties of the centre right and Gaullism and to cling to power.

### Neo-Nazis

In Germany, the neo-Nazis were allowed by the police to terrorise immigrants. After the last World War, the Western powers imposed a constitution on Germany, which was far more liberal towards refugees than other countries in Europe. Now with the orchestrated campaign against immigrants, the parties of the establishment can demand tougher laws and restrictions against immigration. The **Social Democratic Party** (SDP) leadership is backing a restriction of Article 16 of the Constitution, which

allows all asylum seekers a haven in Germany. Only 'real' victims of political persecution would be allowed to have asylum, if the law change came about. In the ranks of the Greens there is talk about restricting entry to immigrants.

The British fascists, mainly represented by the **British National Party** (BNP) have done rather less well than their fellow continental scum. Most of the credit for this must go to the Conservative government! British immigration laws were already the strictest in Europe, and the Thatcher regime stole some of the racist rhetoric of the fascists. The ruling class simply did not need a strong fascist presence here to keep things running smoothly.



So where does this leave anti-fascism?

As fascism, like liberal democracy, is just an aspect of capitalism, any attacks on fascism must be anti-capitalist as to support liberal democracy in attacking fascism, will leave the root cause, capitalism, undamaged.

Sadly, the various anti-fascist groups set up in this country are all to varying degrees cross-class movements. The **AntiRacist Alliance** is made up of sections of the trade union bureaucracy, old Stalinists and MPs from both the Labour and Tory parties — it's obvious, they're all on the same side, and it's equally obvious they'll never stop the fascists!

The recently relaunched **Anti Nazi League** is a very flimsy front for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and is obviously not concerned with fighting fascism or capitalism. In some areas the local ANL is just the local SWP branch with different hats on! The ANL makes continued reference to all fascists as 'Nazi'. In doing so they perpetuate the myth of the 'anti-fascist' war against the Axis powers, and can mobilise on a broad 'anti-Nazi' basis so that supporters and admirers of

capitalism can be drawn in. This was the case in the '70s when the ANL drew in all manner of celebrities with its various cricketers, footballers etc, etc, Against the Nazis. The ANL is merely a recruiting front for the SWP. They desperately need new party fodder to pay their dues and support the SWP bureaucracy of the full-time party officials. The ANL is not prepared to mobilise physically against fascists and racists. It is not prepared to point the finger at the system that created fascism in the first place.

Militant have also got into the act with YAR (Youth against Racism) and various smaller Trotskyist groups have launched their own anti-fascist grouplets.

### Physical

The one anti-fascist group that appears to have some promise is **Anti-Fascist Action** (AFA). Their commitment to actual physical confrontation with fascists makes them much more appealing than the groups content to chant at the fascists from behind police lines. AFA also has as its guiding principle the need for "physical and ideological confrontation" and how opposition must be based on the working class. This shows at least a minimal awareness of class politics, but sadly, that is all there is. As a 'united front' made up of anarchists, Trotskyists, Red Action, Labour Party supporters and non-aligned individuals the political level of the AFA has to be kept at a deliberate low. AFA contains so many supporters of capitalism that it has never claimed to be a revolutionary organisation. It can only deal with the symptoms of fascism, whilst leaving the root cause, capitalism, untouched.

It is vital that the fascists in Britain be ideologically and physically countered. But any opposition to the fascists must be clearly anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-statist. Fascism springs from the soil of capitalism, a soil enriched with racist fertiliser. Any attempt to take on the fascists must talk about the widespread racism throughout society, institutionalised in the British state and its parts, the police, immigration service, courts and prisons.

### MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!

24 Track cassette 1.50 + p&p. Includes tracks from Doom, E.N.T. Hellkrusher, 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.



# From Panther to Anarchist

We continue our series on black nationalism, with a look at the Black Panthers and the Black American anarchists.

**EIGHTEEN MONTHS AFTER the murder of Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party was formed in Oakland, California by two black nationalists — Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Starting off by setting up armed patrols in Oakland that shadowed cop patrol cars, in three years they had set up 30 chapters, the largest of which, in Chicago, may have had a membership of 5,000 at its peak.**

Essentially the Black Panther ideology was a mixture of black nationalism with a stiff dose of Marxist-Leninism, derived from Mao ZheDong and Castro. They saw themselves as a vanguard party. Yet they were significantly different from other Marxist-Leninist groups in their emphasis on the lumpenproletariat, the most degraded elements in capitalist society. In this they were at odds with Marx and Engels who had written in the *Communist Manifesto* of, "The 'dangerous' class, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue".

The Panthers strongly criticised the 'cultural nationalists' who advocated a return to Africa. One Panther militant referred to the Back-to-Africa line as "a bourgeois-capitalist scheme, to confuse the masses of people, so that they will not assault the city halls..."

## White mother

The adoption of 'Marxist-Leninism' made the Panthers emphasise an anti-capitalist line. "We have two evils to fight, capitalism and racism. We must destroy both racism and capitalism." (Huey Newton, 1968). In one of their programmes they stated, "There must be a revolution in the white mother country, led by white radicals and poor whites, and national liberation in the black and third world colony here in America. We can't triumph in the colony alone because that is just like cutting one finger off a hand... No, when we deal with this monster we must deal with it totally". By summer 1969, the Panthers were referring to a general social revolution. "All members of the working class must seize the means of production. This, naturally, includes black people." By autumn, Newton was arguing that a separate black America of five or six states could not survive if the rest of the United States remained capitalist.

The Panthers had gone beyond black

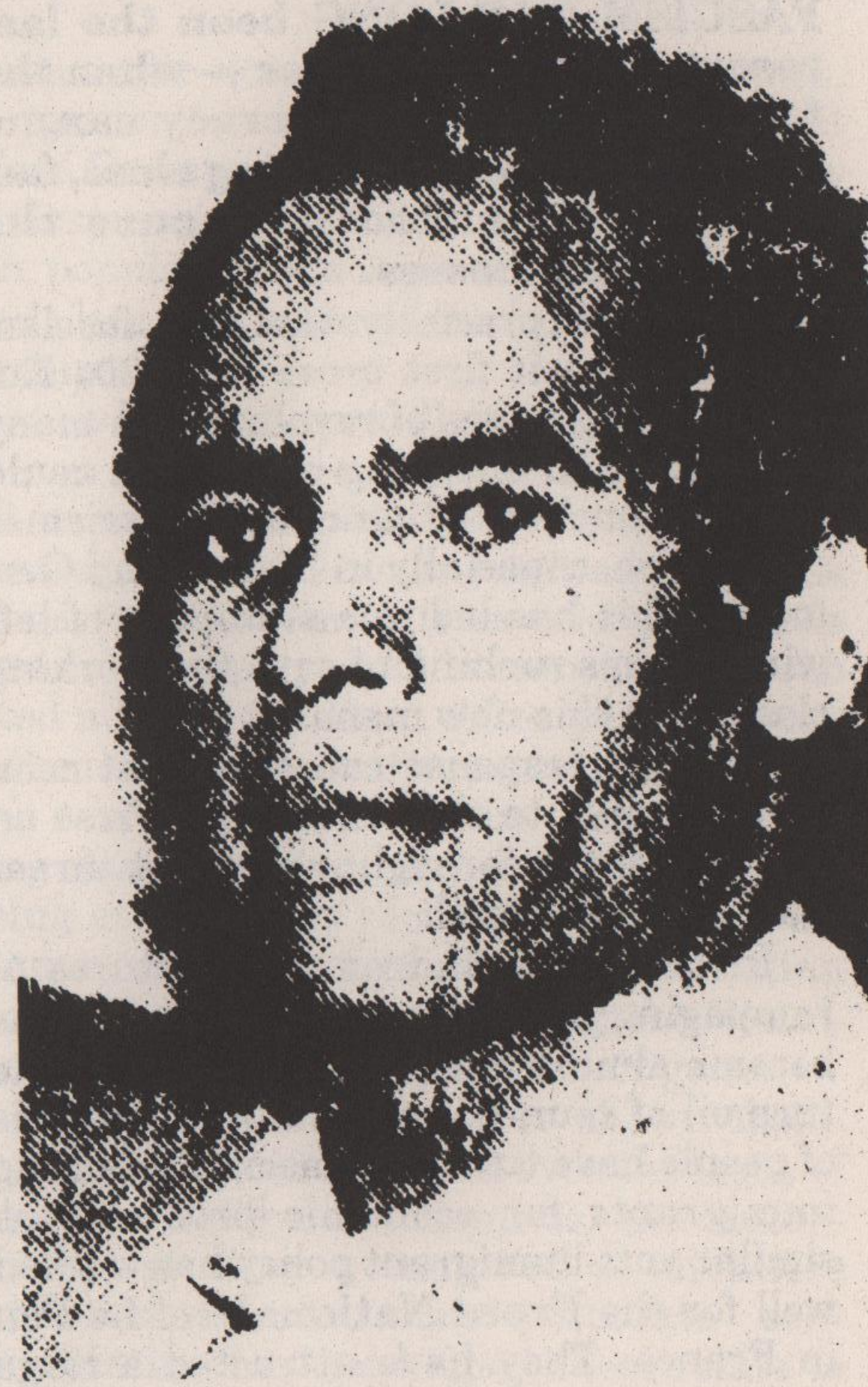
nationalism. Unfortunately, in going beyond it and looking for radical solutions, they were inevitably influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology, at that time, in the late '60s and early '70s, at its most popular. They were among the most militant and combative black working class people in America, and this inevitably attracted the attention of the FBI. Between 1956 and 1971 it conducted a large scale Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) against black groups. They infiltrated the Panthers, and in early 1969 fired as many as 200 rounds into a Chicago apartment where Panthers were sleeping, killing one leading member and mortally wounding another. Prior to this, some 300 arrests were made on Panthers throughout Los Angeles, and raids were carried out on Panther offices across America.

## Leadership

Along with the massive State repression unleashed against the Panthers, came the growth of the power of the leadership, and their increasing corruption and autocracy. In 1971 the Black Panther Party split in two. Newton designated himself the Supreme Commander, and any idea of collective decision-making was scrapped. This came with an increasing admiration for Stalin, Chief of Staff Hilliard stating, "We think that Stalin was very clear in this concept — that socialism could be implemented in one country, we say that it can be implemented in one community".

There was widespread dissatisfaction with the high-handedness and corruption of the leadership, in particular in New York and Los Angeles, as well as the exile section in Algiers. These dissidents were expelled from the Black Panther Party. They decided to take the path of elite armed action against the State. It was understandable that they should take this path, considering the high level of State repression, the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of the leadership, and the failure to create effective links with other sections of the working class. A number of assassinations of cops, attacks on police stations and bank robberies were carried out by the newly formed Black Liberation Army. In the resulting counter-attacks by the State, over 20 were killed and 25 imprisoned.

Among those imprisoned was Kuwasi Balagoon. He had resisted racism whilst in military service, going on to become a tenant organiser in New York. He was one of the 'Panther 21' indicted in 1971. He went underground, staying there when all charges against the 21 were dropped in 1973, and working with the BLA. In prison he started to develop anarchist ideas, from his criticisms of bureaucracy



Above: Kuwasi Balagoon.

in the BPP. He influenced a number of other BLA prisoners, including Ojore N. Lutalo. He died of AIDS-related pneumonia in 1986.

## Balagoon

Balagoon's anarchism was an important development in the black American working class. He rejected centralised party structures, and "replacing one ruling class with another...in the guise of a fairer boss or as a party". He saw that this was what separated "anarchist revolutionaries from Marxist, socialist and nationalist revolutionaries who from the onset do not embrace complete revolution. They cannot envision a truly free and equalitarian society and must to some extent embrace the socialisation process that makes exploitation and oppression possible in the first place".

Balagoon saw the need for mass organising, but failed to break with the concept of armed elite action, and still maintained some illusions in nationalism to the extent of stating, "It is beside the point whether Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano-Mexicano people choose nationalism as a vehicle for self-determination. As revolutionaries we must support the will of the masses". He failed to see that revolutionary anarchists must consistently argue against nationalism, and that often they are in a minority. "Supporting the will of the masses" can

mean surrendering to a number of reactionary ideas within the working class.

Ojore Lutalo still remains in prison and still regards himself as an anarchist, although like Balagoon, he has not broken with the idea of minority armed action. He says that he feels that "the people need armed combat units to check state sponsored acts of terrorism by the government's security forces". We agree that the attacks of the State's security forces must be countered, but any premature action must not jeopardise the building of a mass movement, and often very quickly degenerates into elitist actions completely divorced from reality.

## Dialogue

White anarchists in the United States failed to engage in dialogue with black activists, and themselves had no perspectives on class struggle and the need for a united, mass struggle. Black people in America who clearly see the oppressive and racist nature of capitalism have often had a justified and healthy mistrust of white radicals who often saw them as party fodder, to be patronised and led, without themselves recognising the special problems that black working class people face.

The fact that some black American ac-

tivists did evolve anarchist ideas, given the difficult circumstances, is a remarkable achievement. We may now face another wave of radicalisation in the black American working class after the recent uprisings. This time around, revolutionary anarchists should build on the gains made in the past, and attempt to increase the size of the tiny nuclei of black anarchists and to work towards a mass movement that unites black, red, yellow, brown and white.

OJORE N. LUTALO can be written to at 59860 M.C.U., CN-861, Trenton NJ 08625, USA.

# Reading the Detectives

**WHAT HAVE DETECTIVE novels got to do with class struggle and revolution? Isn't reading and writing a distraction from the 'real' issues? Does it matter what we read when we sit down and relax after a hard day on the barricades? Aren't all detective novels just another form of bourgeois escapism, with macho heroes defending the political status quo and capitalist property relations?**

Of course reading novels can be just another form of escapism and we all need to escape from the pervasiveness of capitalism as it seeps into every aspect of our lives, but there can be more to the detective novel than the blood and guts of commercial sensationalism.

In spite of the commercial success of the detective novel in the twentieth century its origins lie in social criticism. The first detective novel, *Caleb Williams*, published in 1794, was written by the anarchist writer William Godwin. Godwin used the account of a murder and its detection by Caleb Williams, the clerk who is the book's hero, to present a radical critique of a despotic society in which the law functioned as just another weapon in the arsenal of the ruling class.

Caleb, a clerk in the service of an aristocrat, Falkland, accidentally discovers that Falkland has committed a murder for which an innocent man was executed. Although Caleb does not intend to reveal his master's crime Falkland has him imprisoned on false charges. Caleb escapes but Falkland relentlessly tracks him down. Eventually, as an act of self-preservation, Caleb tells the truth and Falkland is forced to confess. Even after Falkland's death Caleb Williams is filled with self-reproach and remorse for his own actions, arguing that Falkland had been a product of a corrupt social system and regretting his own role in the death of an aristocrat.

*Caleb Williams* contains all the classic elements of the modern detective novel but it is underpinned by a serious indictment of social injustice and a corrupt legal

system. The murder, and the criminal, are both products of the system.

## Commodity

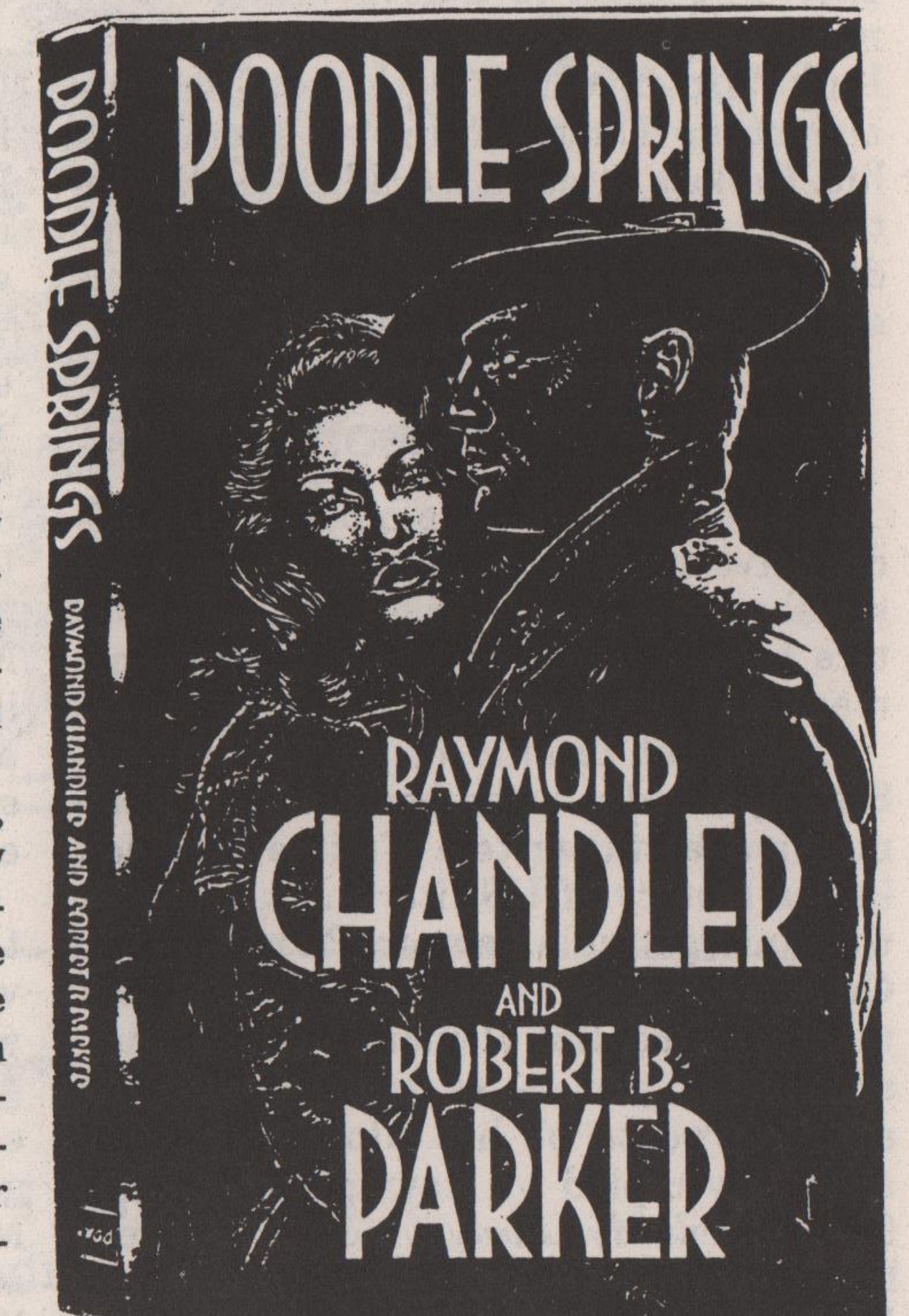
Through the means of commodity production, capitalism absorbs and controls what the state cannot ban and repress. Drawing on the new for its novelty value and the radical for its popularity, capitalism drains ideas of their revolutionary content by transforming them into commodities. As commodities they become subordinated to the rules of capital produced by those with money and control over the means of production.

It was in just this way that the new, socially critical novel was subverted by capitalism, and drained of its radical content. The detective novel became a vehicle for maintaining the status quo with the central characters solving the mystery in order to preserve the social order. Whereas *Caleb Williams* exposed the social system by unmasking the criminal, after Edgar Allen Poe, the solution to the mystery ensured the survival of that system.

The Sherlock Holmes short stories are classic examples. Whereas Godwin used the detective novel to explain how society functioned and economic, political and legal systems operate under the surface, (*Caleb Williams* was originally called *Things as They Are*) Conan Doyle provides readers with a mystery as an intellectual puzzle.

## Sherlock

Doyle established the modern characteristics of the detective story in keeping with the mood of scientific enquiry of his time, but Holmes, the detective enigma, was a man alone and outside normal society, a kind of Nietzschean superman whose abilities enabled him to solve the mystery when the forces of law and order had failed. Holmes was the 'expert' par excellence, a harbinger of the experts who control our lives now — but Holmes



existed to safeguard the ruling class, not to destroy it.

Agatha Christie's whodunnits provide a further subtle twist towards defending the social order. Whereas Holmes protected individual members of the ruling class, Christie's novels and detectives defend a whole way of life — that of upper-class Britain. The threat comes from outsiders, especially the 'lower orders', the murderer frequently someone who does not know their place, or resents it.

Christie's real innovation was to make an ordinary 'little old lady', Miss Marple, the person who solves the crime, not the experts.

## Kafka

During this period, when the reactionary form of the detective novel held sway, there was one revolutionary attempt to

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transform the detective story into a vehicle of social criticism. This was Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* (which is not normally recognised as belonging to the detective genre at all).

Kafka's main character 'K' is accused by a mysterious legal authority of an unnamed crime of which he knows nothing. The novel deals with K's fruitless attempts to obtain justice from an arbitrary and absolute authority with which he cannot even communicate effectively, and culminates in his utter frustration, his complete loss of human dignity and his death like a dog.

Kafka fuses detective and accused into a single character — and demonstrates that power, bureaucracy and authority exist for their own sake. K has not committed any crime — indeed the crime of which he was accused is never specified. Kafka's central concern is with the arbitrary nature of authority and its irrationality. *The Trial* is a devastating indictment of power — unsurprising given Kafka's involvement with the Czech anarchist movement during his short adult life. Kafka's attempt to radicalise the detective story was isolated by a Europe divided by war and revolution and by his early death from TB.

### Perry Mason

The next major attempt to bring the detective novel back into its function of social criticism was made by group of writers based around the American Crime magazine, *Black Mask*.

The most prolific of these was Erle Stanley Gardner who became one of the most successful writers of crime detection in the history of US literature, creating the unforgettable lawyer Perry Mason. Gardner pared down the detective novel to a few essential elements — dialogue, action and plot — so successfully that some aspects of his plot were subsequently copied by Raymond Chandler for *Farewell My Lovely* which was loosely based on Gardner's *Case of the Dangerous Dowager*.

The early Perry Mason novels have a radical edge, with Mason defending the underdog against injustice and a frequently corrupt police force, just as Gardner had as a young lawyer.

One of Gardner's contemporaries on the *Black Mask* was Dashiell Hammett. Hammett was at one time an employee of the Pinkerton Detective Agency which created the prototype of the private detective in the 1850s. Pinkerton's Agency was notorious for its earlier strike breaking and shooting down of workers. Hammett's experience at Pinkerton's gave him an insight into the true nature of society and transformed him into a communist. Drawing on his background in the Agency, Hammett wrote a series of detective novels culminating in the famous *Red Harvest* which is a thinly veiled allegory of capitalist corruption and the ultimate social revolution. This novel is less well

known than his later books, *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Thin Man*. Hammett created a whole new sub-genre of the 'hard-boiled' detective.

### Marlowe

Hammett created the elements that marked a fundamental shift in the modern detective novel which were perfected by Raymond Chandler. Chandler perfected the use of language that Hammett had begun (and which both borrowed from Scott Fitzgerald). Dislocating words and images from their normal context to provide them with a razor sharpness, they created a style and language admired by both Sartre and Camus and which (as Ken Warpole has demonstrated in an underrated but important book, *Dockers and Detectives*) influenced a whole generation of working class writers in Britain including James Hanley and the less well known anarchist writer Jim Phelan.

The background to Hammett and Chandler's writing was Prohibition. Prohibition had transformed crime in the USA, blurring the distinctions between different kinds of crime, altering its scale, and transforming the petty corruption within the police and judiciary into an institutionalised corruption.

It was the shallow ineffectiveness of the traditional detective novel in the face of criminal capitalism that Chandler attacked in his celebrated essay *The Simple Fact of Murder*. Chandler's hero, Philip Marlowe, is a catalyst for exposing this institutionalised corruption. His patrons are the rich and the powerful, but are as corrupt as the criminals they frequently employ or socialise with.

Chandler's methods were taken further by Canadian-born Ross MacDonald, who succeeds in writing detective novels which are a powerful indictment of modern capitalism. There are conscious echoes of Hammett, Chandler and Fitzgerald's use of language (acknowledged in MacDonald's autobiography, *Ceaselessly into the Past*, which takes its title from a line of Fitzgerald) but what makes them effective as social criticism is the way an individual character's behaviour is linked to social causes and shaped by them.

MacDonald frequently links the social and psychological damage done by war to criminal events which take place much later on, illustrating the effects of militarism through succeeding generations. Young people are frequently portrayed as on a knife-edge between honesty and crime, hope and despair, portraying the young generation in which MacDonald placed a hope for social change. MacDonald also links capitalism with environmental destruction so that his novels work on several levels at once. *The Underground Man* does this effectively. Throughout the book a forest fire threatens Los Angeles' suburbs, and MacDonald's hero, Lew Archer, investigates a murder and disappearance against its background. Ecological disaster threatens

from without while the emptiness and alienation of the rich corrode society within. MacDonald connects the two with the revelation that the fire had been started by the murder which triggered his investigation. The central message of MacDonald's work is that the way we treat people and the environment have consequences.

### Warszawski

Since MacDonald's the 'hard-boiled' style has become almost a cult, although this often owes more to the film noir portrayal of Chandler's work and its imitations. It has in turn become a vehicle for writings that reflect the emergence of the new social movements. Women novelists like Sarah Paretsky have translated the 'hard-boiled' style to create strong independent women detectives like P.I. Warszawski. Paretsky's characterisation is ultimately unsatisfying in that her heroine owes as much to the Cosmopolitan-school of liberation and bears little comparison to the more incisive political background of Gillian Slovo's detective novels, with their sax-playing women detective.

One of the most overtly political detective novels of recent years has come from France, *Murder in Memorium*, by the libertarian socialist Didier Daeninckx (a member of Alternative Libertaire, a libertarian communist organisation). Like MacDonald, Daeninckx links individual crimes to social crimes. A murder which is committed during a Paris demonstration in 1961 during which hundreds of Algerians are killed by police is followed twenty years later by the murder of the victim's son. The solution to the murder links the police massacre of Algerians to the war time deportation of Jews to German death camps. The murders are designed to ensure the cover-up of the connections.

Detective novels are not just escapism but a mirror of society. Just as the detective reveals social, political and economic causes of crimes, so the revolutionary seeks to reveal the social, economic and criminal nature of the political system.

Reading won't change the world, but it can strengthen us in struggle.

## POSTER

Bundles of our 'Capitalism Means...' 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.

# JOIN US!

**THE LAST FEW MONTHS have highlighted the failure of capitalism to deliver the goods. The rise of nationalism, often in blackshirt and brown-shirt garb, the Rostock riots, the slaughter in ex-Yugoslavia, the deepening recession — or is it a slump? — laying millions of workers off in the West, the drive to the market in Eastern Europe creating havoc for millions of other working class people, the sanctimonious twaddle at the Earth Summit which came to the conclusion it should do nothing about the ecological crisis; all of these things show the terrible state the world is in.**

The bosses are gloating about how the market is triumphant world-wide. The collapse of state-capitalism has bought a lot of headaches for the boss class, however. The penetration of the market into Eastern Europe is hindered by the bureaucratic nature of the economic and social set-up there. The quick dollar they were hoping to make will not be immediately guaranteed. The social collapse in Eastern Europe has brought its problems, with waves of refugees fleeing to Western Europe, something the boss class are not keen on.

Many people who think and care about social justice are beginning to see that the old solutions put forward, be they Labourist, Stalinist, Trotskyist, or Green are like so many hair-restorers sold by travelling medicine shows — "guaranteed to grow hair on a doorknob" and leading to instant hair loss! Just look at the Labour Party — doesn't it remind you of a Poodle pretending to be a Rotweiler? The so-called Labour 'left' is now seen as people like Gould and Livingstone! The Trades Union Congress can't even do to capitalism what it used to do feebly, that is negotiate a better price for wage labour. We're treated to the sight of the employers' organisation, the CBI, getting all palsy-walsy with Wobbly Willis and his chums at the TUC Congress. "Let's all pull together chaps!" That is, work more closely in keeping independent working class activity at bay.

Militant is thrashing around, with its membership falling by the thousands. In Scotland, it tailends the Scottish Nationalist front, Scotland United. As for the Socialist Workers Party, it aligns itself with Militant's call for a 'real' Labour Party, lurching further to the right.

So the crises of these different organisations, all in their way defending the whole rotten set-up, and the increasing difficulties of capitalism bring confusion and gloom to many. But at the same time, they reveal the nature of the system of social control; they help people to come to a revolutionary understanding of society.

While these so called alternatives to capitalism start to decay, small but significant numbers of people are won to the revolutionary position.

We have been greatly encouraged in the last few months by the amount of interest in our ideas. Subscriptions to *Or-*

*ganise!* have shot up to their highest level, and we receive several requests for more info on the ACF every week. Membership of the ACF has soared, and we have gained a number of comrades, some with years of experience, some new to the movement, some radicalised by the anti-poll tax movement.

We now feel that our ideas could take off. We appeal to all our readers to seriously think about joining the ACF and help create a dynamic organisation pledged to helping create a new, just, equal, and sane society.



## On the Future

To be a Byron or a Shelley I will not aspire,  
Though all their works I admire,  
A "Poor Man's McGonagall" is all I'll ever be,  
That's plain enough as you can see.  
My thoughts will be just simple and pure,  
No remedies for life's ills to cure,  
But still a message of some hope,  
That in the future all shall cope.  
The great divisions we now endure  
Between the filthy rich and the blessed poor,  
Be gone forever from this planet Earth,  
A New Age arise: A new birth,  
"But when? But when?", I ask,  
Who shall accomplish this much needed task?,  
'Tis in your hands as well as mine,  
An inspiration that makes us all Divine!

John. P. Matheson.  
(Sent in by a Scottish pensioner)



# Reviews

*Why the Revolutionaries Have Failed.*

Andy and Mark Anderson. Splat Collective. £2.95. 22 pages.

This is a very difficult pamphlet to review for a number of reasons. It is written as an assault on the perceived weaknesses of the 'libertarian-communist-anarchist-socialist revolutionaries' and their failure to have a significant impact on the working class in Britain. However, the assault is made through a critique of the Anarchist Workers Group specifically, making criticisms of the AWG's ideas as well as their response.

It is arguable, to say the least, that the anarcho-syndicalists, libertarian communists, council communists etc. can be subsumed under a single category and highly questionable as to whether detailed observations about the AWG are applicable to other groups.

Nevertheless, the authors of the pamphlet blame the 'libertarian-communist-anarchist-socialist' groups of virtually ignoring the 'real' issues facing revolutionaries and adopting plainly wrong strategies. The issues, they say, relate primarily to the usage of language and the analysis of the state and class oppression.

On the area of language use there is a lot in the pamphlet which is of value. This writer has been guilty of using jargon and unusual words when more easily understood ones would be more accessible to non-specialist readers. The editors of *Organise!* are attempting to deal with this problem.

## Hotch-potch

The authors point out that a lot of words like 'socialism', 'anarchism' and 'democracy' are virtually meaningless since they are capable of so many interpretations and uses. As they point out, for example, 'socialism' has been used "all over the world by a hotch-potch of anti-working class organisations to describe their political ideologies: Stalinist, Nazi, Labourite, Trot-

skyist and so on". Whilst words like 'anarchist' too are capable of being used in a number of ways it does not mean that we have to discard them; what we have to do is qualify them. Hence we describe ourselves as anarchist communists and further clarify our approach by including in all our publications a list of Aims and Principles.

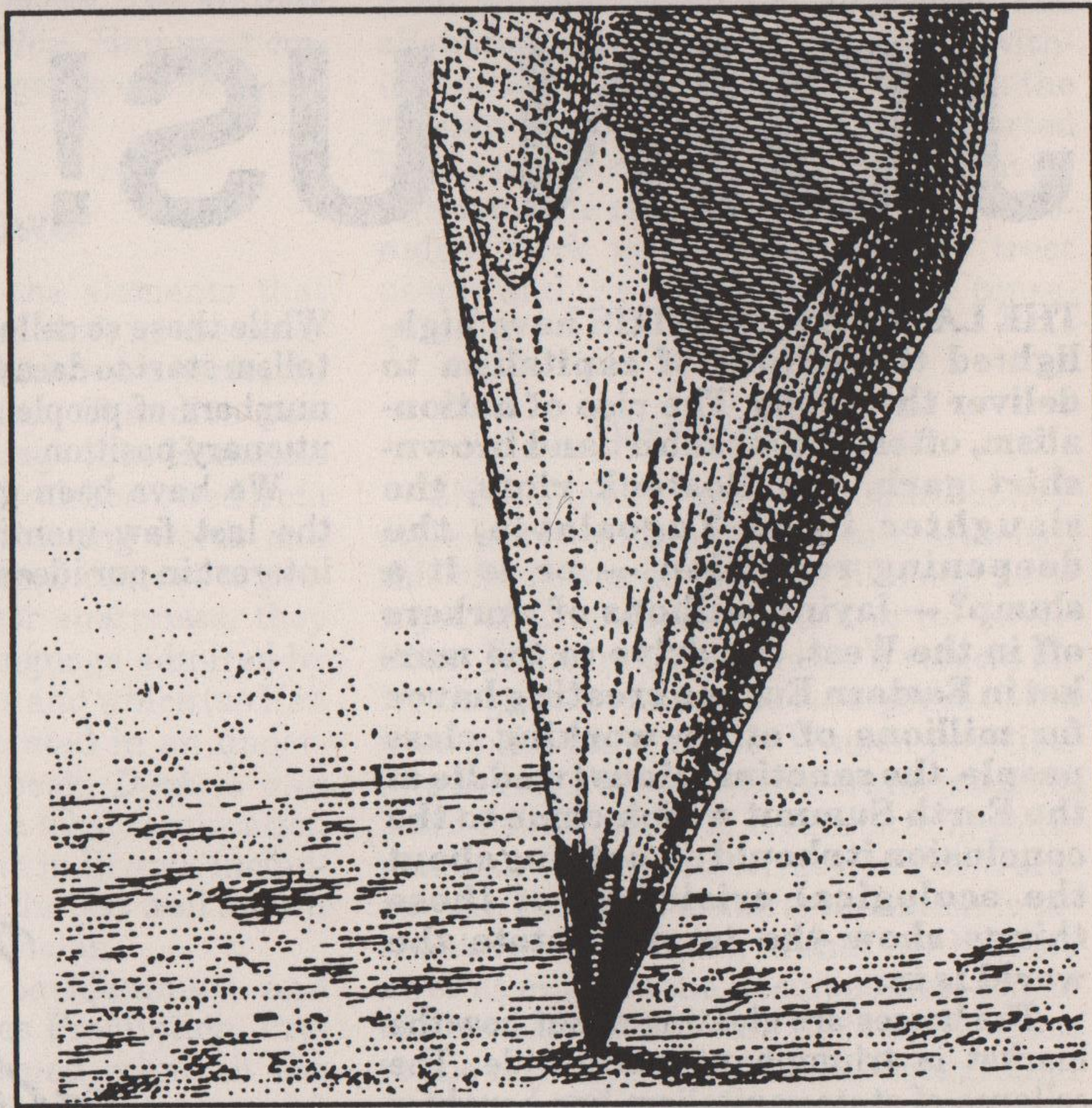
The other major point which can be taken from the pamphlet is that the 'libertarian-communist-anarchist-socialist revolutionaries' are wrong to target capitalism as the main, immediate enemy. Rather, they propose that "the real class of people who dominate the lives of working class people is the middle class". This is of course true insofar as judges, civil servants, police officers, journalists, managers and foremen, teachers, social workers etc directly or indirectly control most aspects of working class people's lives.

The ACF has no difficulty with accepting this description of the reality of everyday control in our society. After all, unlike Marxists, we see hierarchy (the unequal institutionalisation of control) as being a vital problem. The article on equal opportunities, for example, in the last issue of *Organise!* concerns itself with the processes by which middle class people adopt an apparently radical idea to enhance their social position in the hierarchy.

## Point

The point is, however, in whose interests (apart from their own immediate advancement) do middle class people operate? Which class gains the most economically from the current system that we call capitalism? Despite the existence of a large middle class, who owns the most wealth? The answer to all of these is that small, closely-knit, manipulative class which owns the means of production, distribution, exchange and ideas control: the capitalists.

Rather than identifying the middle class as the main enemy we should point to the existence of an alliance be-



tween a semi-autonomous state, with interests of its own, and the capitalist class. Each preserves the power and interests of the other. Each gains at the expense of the working class. Both are the enemy. Both have to be destroyed.

The main failure of this pamphlet is that it lays the blame on the revolutionaries. Of course the 'libertarian-communist-anarchist-socialist revolutionaries' have so far proved unequal to the task of overthrowing the system of domination and exploitation. The state has had 5000 years to perfect its methods and capitalism has virtually unlimited wealth at its disposal. The job is never going to be easy. As far as it raises some interesting issues the pamphlet is to be welcomed, but I wish it had contained some constructive ideas.

*Sabotage in the American Workplace: Anecdotes of Dissatisfaction, Mischief and Revenge.*

Martin Sprouse (ed), Pressure Drop Press & AK Press, 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling, FK8 2RD.

This excellent book charts the sheer diversity of 'improper' behaviour at work. From petty perks to million dollar electronic spanners-in-the-works, mild boredom to intense hatred and anger, all motives for and forms of sabotage are included. Individuals' anecd-

otes stand for themselves, and the editor resists the temptation to draw out political 'lessons' — all levels of opposition to life at work receive equal weight. Everyone in a job will find loads of neat ideas to apply to their situation, and the overall effect is a picture of how utterly normal sabotage is and how sane a response to situations people find themselves in trying to make ends meet.

At nearly a tanner it is an expensive book, though very well produced — destined for revolutionaries' coffee tables? Seriously though, the lack of political analysis makes this book ideal for people who might consider themselves radical or militant at all (to start with), and who would probably be instantly put off by the usual lefty jargon. But with this book you just can't help getting drawn into the rich tapestry of these people's stories. So when your apathetic friend, or even straight relative, is idly flipping through, watch for the increased frequency of them nodding their heads, identifying with the storytellers, and remembering their own experiences. Who knows what they'll be ready for then?!

*From Alcatraz to Marion to Florence — Control Unit Prisons in the United States.* 32p. 1.50.

United States penitentiary

Marion was 'locked down' in October 1983, after two guards were killed in a solitary confinement wing of the prison known as the Control Unit. Eight years later, the men at Marion remain locked in their cells 22 hours or more a day.

Having turned Marion into one huge control unit, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) used it as a model for similar setups in other state prisons. Control units and whole control unit prisons have been created at a tremendous rate over the last few years.

Marion was the successor of the 'end of the line' prison Alcatraz. When this was closed down in 1963, due to public outcry, Marion replaced it as the new 'end of the line'. This was perfected in 1968 with the implementation of a behaviour modification programme called Control and Rehabilitation Effort (CARE). Prisoners in the programme were put in solitary confinement and coerced into group 'therapy' which consisted of psychological 'attack' sessions, designed to bring prisoners under the staff's control as totally as possible.

The turning point came in 1972 when prisoners began a work stoppage to protest a guard's beating of a Mexican prisoner. This ended with sixty men in solitary confinement and enrolled in the CARE programme. By 1973, Marion was officially designated as the Long Term Control Unit and was expanded to include prisoners from throughout the federal prison system. Now all those that the Bureau of Prisons had singled out for special punishment were concentrated in one prison.

As a result the most combative and politicised prisoners were grouped in one place. Stiffer controls inspired a rash of hunger and work strikes throughout the '80s. The longest of these — "reported to be the longest and most peaceful strike in U.S. prison history" began in September 1980, when the warden refused to respond to a list of demands for better conditions. The strike was never broken, but ended when the prison factory was closed in January 1981.

In two separate incidents, two guards were killed by prisoners. The authorities used this to violently repress

all prisoners and start the 'lock down'. Prisoners were severely beaten, and several were confined to individual cells for up to four days, handcuffed behind their backs and wearing only underwear.

## Expanded

Within days, the Control Unit was expanded from its original 72 cells to include all 353 Marion prisoners. As the pamphlet under review notes: "The entire population at Marion was collectively, severely and permanently punished in a calculated move by the BOP".



The lock-down continues. According to prisoners the two most trying aspects of life at Marion are boredom and isolation. Apart from this, prisoners are strip-searched after every visit. Visiting rights are severely limited and prisoners are never allowed to touch their children, wives or other loved ones. Conversations have to be conducted through Plexiglas and over a phone. Prisoners often ask their loved ones not to visit whilst they are in Marion.

Marion was not originally built as a control unit prison. The BOP has decided to replace it with a new prison in Florence, Colorado. This will house 550 prisoners. It is just five miles from a radioactively contaminated uranium mill. Radioactive dust is carried for miles by the wind.

Conditions at Marion are duplicated throughout the country. Many of these prisons have their own innovations in controlling and dehumanising prisoners.

The number of prisoners in

the United States is the highest in the world at 426 per 100,000, well above the ex-Soviet Union and South Africa. The prison rate for black people is more than seven times that for white people. The number of U.S. prisoners has more than doubled over the last decade and Bush has promised to double it again in the 90s. This would bring the prison population to over two million!

The State admits that it can only 'warehouse' people. In order to keep control in the face of ever more overcrowded, disgusting and debasing condi-

chemical company directors cause death, injury and impoverishment and yet are rarely punished by imprisonment. Many destructive acts are not even illegal".

The CEML can be contacted c/o CEML P.O. Box 578172, Chicago, Illinois 60657-8172, U.S.A.

*Preparing for Democracy. No.1. Beyond Just Mass Assemblies. A Critical Look at Spanish Unions That Work Without Bureaucracy.* 24p. £1.00.

This pamphlet has some interesting things to say on the nature of libertarian organisation and in particular mass assemblies and the mandate and rotation of delegates. Unfortunately, it describes democracy as: "still a potentially useful concept for those of us involved in the struggle against authority and elitism. Essentially the democratic ideal is that 'the people' can and should participate fully in running society... the aim of the pamphlets in this series is to help reclaim democracy as an active principle by making available some practical analysis of large scale organisations which encourage the fullest possible participation by their ordinary members".

## Camouflage

We would dispute the value of attempting to use the word 'democracy' to describe new and revolutionary ways to organise. The whole drive of the Western powers, both during the Cold War, and now with the penetration of the market into Eastern Europe, is, and has been, carried out under the banner of democracy. It is always used to camouflage some police action of the USA and its allies, and in bolstering and defending the vilest dictatorships throughout the Third World. If we used the term at all in a positive sense, we would define it as 'workers democracy'.

Nevertheless, despite this and some syndicalist illusions about unions, the pamphlet does contain some food for thought. It concerns itself with developments in Spain. "The use of mass assemblies, which mandate delegates to carry out their wishes rather than giv-



ing power over to representatives, became popular again in Spain around the time of Franco's death in 1975. Even so, it is striking how little analysis of this tactic there had been. What has been written on the subject usually ignores the fact that assemblies have their strengths and weaknesses, preferring to treat their existence as a magic formula which guarantees complete participation, rather than building up an in-depth analysis of those factors which make them more or less effective. 'The sovereign assembly' has become an obsession in the struggle against authority which sectors of Spain's working class is involved in. As a result, problems such as demagoguery or subtle forms of exploitation (for example, the self-denying work done by many activists' wives at home, without which their activities would be impossible) are never really considered".

### Rubber stamp

The pamphlet makes the point that mass assemblies without a proper system of delegate rotation, can degenerate into meetings to rubber-stamp the actions of committees. "Although collected together in a room, an assembly of people can still see themselves as just individuals who are there to complain about the committee's latest decision, shout out their opinion but then just mutter to themselves when they get a reply."

Mass assemblies without the use of rotation and mandation and full participation of the 'mass' could end up with meetings attended by only a small group of dedicated activists.

Certainly this has been a problem with the Dockers' Coordinadora, a militant workers body, springing from the traditions of anarcho-syndicalism but attempting to go beyond it with the concept of assemblyism. Now the Coordinadora appears to be moving along the path of becoming a mainstream union. However there are other factors at work here besides this problem of organisation, not least the problem of organising as a union, no matter how assemblyist it may be. The pamphlet fails to deal with this, which would make it a more interesting read.



### Worldwide Intifada

*Worldwide Intifada* is the name of a bulletin produced in Leamington. It reports on the situation of the Palestinian uprising. The first (summer) issue is now out. We feel that it is worth quoting extensively from the bulletin, as many of the views put forward on the situation in Palestine are shared by the ACF.

"It has to be stated early on in our bulletin that we do not wish to see the creation of a Palestinian state in preference to the Zionist state of Israel: we do not either back the peace talks nor wish to see Palestinian autonomy — the only autonomy worth fighting for is autonomy of our class struggle against capitalism.

"All over the world the bourgeoisie portray the intifada in terms of a nationalist struggle between Palestinians and Israelis or Arabs and Jews... The conflict is not between Palestinians and Israelis, it is between two classes with conflicting interests — the bourgeoisie and the working class.

"National liberation struggles are supported by Maoists, Stalinists and others. Usually the argument rests on the false idea that socialism can be built within one country, an idea promulgated by Stalin. History shows us the folly of this idea: even if governments are set up with the aim of defending workers' interests they cannot hope to give the imperialistic nature of capital. Nation states have to function according to the rules of the world market... Leftists the world over champion the PLO and its 'progressive' national liberation policies. In the same way they championed the Khmer Rouge and the Viet Cong... Support

strikes and workers' councils were disbanded and suppressed. The result was a massacre of militants and the establishment of a virulently anti-working class Islamic republic.

### Autonomy

"Why can't we have an alliance between the bourgeoisie and the working class? Because the class interests of the bourgeoisie and the working class are diametrically opposed. The only way the working class can defend itself is through autonomous class struggle independent of all forces who would attempt to divert it or restrict it to capitalist goals... History has proved that state building offers nothing to the working class. New states offer a new faction of the bourgeoisie a chance to exploit us instead of the old lot, but our interests are diametrically opposed to all governments".

The bulletin looks at the history of the Palestinian working class: the 1936 general strike, the Tel-Al-Zatar uprising, the 1987 general strike, and ends with the observation that the intifada has shown itself capable of developing class autonomy, and must further develop it, to sweep away all who stand opposed to it, to intensify its attack and to ensure its defence. The bulletin can be obtained at 50p + post from Box 1, 22 High Street, Leamington, Warwickshire.

for the PLO can even be found in the ranks of the British anarchist movement... Where you do find criticism of the PLO is on the basis of its "statism, hierarchy, vanguardism, terrorism" — the fact that the PLO are the proletariat's class enemy is overlooked."

### Leftists

"Leftists argue that an alliance of the working class with 'progressive' elements of the bourgeoisie is necessary against the greater evil of the Israeli state. We reject this dangerous notion. An alliance with any faction or element of the bourgeoisie far from strengthening the intifada, disarms it. For example in 1979 a massive wave of class struggle in Iran swept away the Shah. Within a year the "alliance with progressive elements of the bourgeoisie" disarmed the class struggle,



**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 'beginner's 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.

# 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, ethnic 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 of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process.

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

## LETTERS

Dear *Organise!*

Did the Russian people vote for the sale of their most valuable (in capitalist eyes) resources to the world's richest industrial investors and exploiters of international labour? When will the next general election be held in Russia and will any political party be able to reverse the policies of the manic Thatcherite Boris Yeltsin? Will the Russian opposi-

tion form itself into a reformed communist party in the interests of the people's freedom and welfare?

These are the questions that the capitalist exploiters and their media puppets are not prepared to contemplate. From the start they sought only to destroy any form of communism whether elected by the vast majority or seized against fascist and capitalist forces on the battlefield. The only concern of a capitalist is to maintain the dictatorship of capital at all costs, and never be fooled by 'nice' little countries like Sweden, arms dea-

lers and Third World exploiters like the rest of their kind. A.A. (Edinburgh)

*Organise!* editors reply:

Several 'reformed' communist parties under various names and disguises have been formed already in Russia. Many of these have leaderships thoroughly compromised under the old Stalinist party structures. Others contain a new gang of careerists who want to make a living out of party politics. They have a variety of 'solutions' to offer, ranging from the old-fashioned

dose of more Stalinism to the tasteless recipe of Labour Party style politics served up in an unappetising English sauce. The Russian working class must have no faith in any of these parties, but must organise themselves. Similarly having any illusions in elections to change anything forgets that the whole sorry mess of the market, brought in to replace the equally sorry mess of state capitalism (and not communism as you believe seemed to exist in the Soviet Union) was delivered up under the smoke-screen of 'democracy'.