

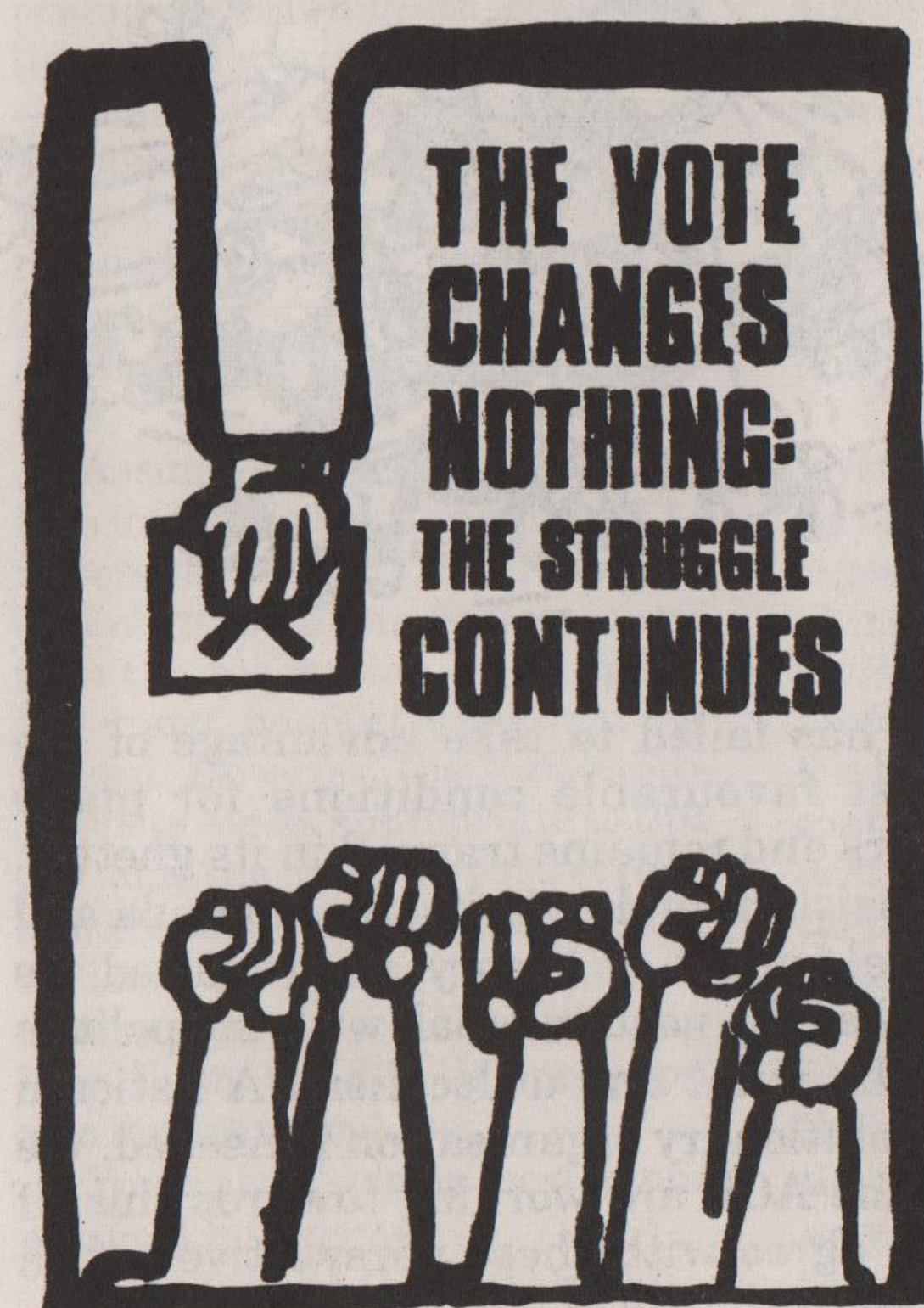
# COLLECTIVE ACTION

**CONTRARY TO POPULAR prejudice, fostered by both media caricatures and by the antics of a small number of self-proclaimed "anarchists", anarchism is neither "rugged individualism" nor individualistic rebellion.**

Whilst anarchists argue that the realisation of individual freedom is central to any authentically revolutionary politics we don't equate this fundamental freedom with the right of individuals to manifest their ego without regard for the social totality. But, more importantly, it is our belief that it is *collective* action which creates change and is essential to anarchism rather than the activity of isolated and atomised individuals.

Obviously this is such commonsense that it should not require comment, but so often individualism is regarded as the bedrock of anarchism, rather than its actual opposite. That, of course, is not to say that anarchists are opposed to individuality — far from it — but that in capitalist society individualism is at best an excuse by some to selfishly indulge themselves and at worst an ideology which encourages the most horrendous competitiveness and exploitation. Capitalism loves (and sings the highest praises of) individualism whilst crushing real individuality. Capitalism, however, fears collective action. A Trade Union's strength is founded upon the potential, on the part of its membership, for collective action. Its ability to mobilize and control this action is crucial in maintaining its credibility and position as labour broker. Once the threat of collective action is removed, however, the Trade Unions tend to be no longer taken seriously by employers nor members.

The individual can be compared to the finger of a hand. On its own it's not particularly strong or effective but in unison with the other fingers it can become a fist.



The working class, in whatever context, be it the community or the workplace, is more easily dominated and exploited when it is divided and impotent. When organised collectively it has the potential to act in a concerted manner against capital. Although, particularly in the workplace, the individual can engage in sabotage, absenteeism and "theft", even these activities organised collectively (even clandestinely) can be more effective.

Collective action also creates a spirit of combativeness as people realise that, far from being powerless, they in fact have power which can bring about change. Probably the most outstanding example in recent years was the anti-Poll Tax movement. If resistance to that tax had been in terms of purely individual non-

payment, of individuals separated from others refusing to pay, rather than in the form of a community of collective struggle, then it would have rapidly collapsed as individuals were isolated and picked off by the state.

Similarly the individual anarchist can only do so much on their own. The feeling of isolation which capitalism imposes on the individual rebel can often lead to disillusionment and despair. But, collective action in the shape of an anarchist group can accomplish far more whilst a national network constantly keeping militants informed and motivated... well who knows what we could achieve? Why not take the *individual* decision to take some *collective* action with the Anarchist Communist Federation?

## Transport or Traffic Continued from page 12

"multi-modal integration". Governments agree about the "need" for infrastructure. Clinton has promised to spend \$80 billion on renovating America's roads, creating a new high speed rail network linking US cities and developing new technology to expand capacity. Similarly the European Commission is pledged to "the establishment and development of trans-European networks, in particular in the sectors of transport."

The forecast is for the doubling of most forms of transport. In the EC nearly five times as much freight is carried by road as by rail, 12 times as many passengers as by rail. The bulk will therefore be roads. "Intra-modal integration" consequently means different forms of transport will act more efficiently as tributaries and distributors for each other.

Infrastructure is not confined to the industrialised world. In order to meet the demands of International Capital, many governments are pumping borrowed money into infrastructure schemes. Most are centred on roads eg Amazonia (which has the most extensive national water transport network in the world) is being rapidly covered by roads, as is the Congo basin. The Pan American highway, stretching from Patagonia to Alaska is nearly complete. There are plans to link Alaska to Siberia. If these schemes are completed, the majority of the earth's land mass will have become one continent, with motorists able to drive from Buenos Aires to Cape Town, via New York and Moscow. For the South this will mean further rounds of enclosure, more colonisation with the displacement of people and the disruption of local economies, the sacking of the environment and the dubious benefits of consumer goods.

The improvement of infrastructure in

the West is part of the move from manufacturing to service/distribution economies. Goods are shunted ever faster over ever greater distances. As transport costs decrease, competing firms will venture further and further, selling identical products in each other's territory. Manufacturers will look further afield to find the cheapest supplier of components. Workers will commute ever further to work. The result will be less an improvement in the quantity of commodities available and more an increase in travel and traffic. People will have to travel further to work, shop, visit relatives and holiday in less spoilt resorts.

Even the European Commission has admitted the axiom that more roads leads to more traffic: "infrastructure planning should not necessarily seek to promote an increase in capacity, since in certain instances this might boost transport demand and in the long-term exacerbate the problem, particularly in the case of road transport". EC Green Paper.

This damaging slip was withdrawn from the subsequent White Paper. The ERT claim: "The benefits are often widespread while the costs are typically borne locally... technocratic designs... which ride roughshod over the legitimate concerns of others, will simply founder on the obstacles of local resistance... Environmental objections, while important, cannot be simply granted a power of veto... The increasingly efficient organisation of those arguing for environmental citizens' rights must be matched by a more efficient organisation of the advocates of change, adaptation and growth."

### Operation Roadblock

A national rota of 100 people per day for a mobilisation against the building of the M11 Link. Contact No M11 Link Campaign, Arch 211, Grove Green Road, London E11 4AJ or phone 081-558 2638 - fax 081-539 7569.

# ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

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First time tragedy,

1994 — Viva Zapata!



Second time . . ?

50p

April-Jun  
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Issue 34

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## 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 4th June for features and reviews, and 11th June for letters and news.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:

ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## WANT TO JOIN THE ACF? WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

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## PRESS FUND

NOW IS A difficult time to be asking for money, with many out of work or wondering if they're going to get the chop. Cash is in short supply.

But *Organise!* desperately needs money to continue to appear and to improve. We need money for our projected pamphlets, for the stickers and posters and leaflets we intend to produce.

So we are asking you, dear reader, to think about sending something in, no matter how small, to help us continue the fight for anarchist communism. We know that many of you value the

ideas presented in *Organise!* So please help us by sending in POs, IMOs, or cash. You can even send us a standing order to our account to support *Organise!* more regularly. Write to the London address for account details. Dig into your pockets now! Thanks to all those who contributed to the Press Fund this issue: £100, East London; £80, Sheffield; £5, Nottingham.

## Sell *Organise!*

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

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### Feedback

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

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

## Organise! Back Issues

BACK ISSUES of *Organise!* (from issues 14 to 28) are still available from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virus*. They cost 20p & sae each:

- *Organise!* 25: SOLD OUT
- *Organise!* 26: Women & Revolution; Direct action; US Greens

- *Organise!* 27: LA Riots; Yugoslavia; Malcolm X
- *Organise!* 28: ERM; Recession; Detective Fiction
- *Organise!* 29: Debate on the Unions; Italian Workers Fight Back
- *Organise!* 30: SOLD OUT
- *Organise!* 31: Somalia; Travelers; Natural Laws
- *Organise!* 32: SOLD OUT
- *Organise!* 33: Criminal Justice; Battle of Wanstead; *Bad Attitude*; Abortion.

## ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION

THE ANARCHIST Communist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. We have members and groups in the following areas:

### ENGLAND

*Midlands:* Aylesbury, Birmingham, Chesterfield, Coventry, Nottingham, Saffron Walden, Worcester.

*North East:* Blyth, Chester-le-Street, Gateshead, Newcastle.

*North West:* Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Ulveston.

*South East:* Brighton, Canterbury, London (East, North, West),

Portsmouth, Twickenham, Woking.  
*South West:* Buckfastleigh, Exeter.

### NORTHERN IRELAND

Portrush, Warrenpoint.

### SCOTLAND

Aberdeen, Glasgow.

### WALES

Lampeter, Pontypool.

Contact ACF (No other mention)  
PO BOX 4, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 OYZ.

# Tower Hamlets: The Electoral Charade

AGAINST A background of ever more brazen and brutal racial attacks combined with far-right electoral success in an increasingly xenophobic "Fortress Europe", fears are mounting in the UK that at the forthcoming May elections the British National Party will be able to repeat its success of last year in winning its first council seat on the Isle of Dogs in the Tower Hamlets borough of London.

The three main parties blamed each other for the BNP's first electoral victory (while at the same time virtually everyone scapegoated white working class voters, as though the mainstream parties could abnegate their own responsibilities for the social mess at both local and national levels). Jack Straw of the Labour Party, in particular, unhesitatingly blamed the ruling Liberal Democrats for stoking up racism in their election run-up campaign. Meanwhile, Labour councillors in the borough and the candidate, James Hunt, lost no time in spouting forth sanctimonious drivel about their own "Mr Clean" record.

In fact racism, institutionalised by the British political system, has a long history in Tower Hamlets, and did not mysteriously evaporate away when the Liberal Democrats took control of the council in 1986 — if anything they carried on the tradition of discrimination previously perpetuated by Labour. At the time the BNP won its council seat last year, for example, one of the Liberal Democrats' campaign leaflets was shamelessly proclaiming a "Bangladeshi shocker", urging voters not to vote Labour which had apparently squandered money on aid to victims of the Bangladeshi flood. There is a frequent emphasis on the rights of local people to have a council house in their "own community", local people



first, and so on. It may sound benign, but it adds to the already poisonous atmosphere created by Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Tories.

### Counterbalance

As a counterbalance to all the vacuous rhetoric, particularly from Labour, we reproduce below some extracts from an independent report commissioned by the Labour-run Greater London Council after complaints of racism in housing allocation from the community group, Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Services (SHPRS). The report was researched by Deborah Phillips who as "an independent researcher was able to observe GLC housing management practices at close hand and to make daily contact with housing staff".

During the investigation, the researcher found: "OVERT RACISM; a disturbing level of racist comment and joking was witnessed by the researcher. Bengalis in particular were stereotyped as dirty, troublemakers and causing problems on estates, although social security tenants were often characterised in similar ways. Several officers who independently expressed per-

sonal views on Tower Hamlets' racial and housing problems offered remarkably similar solutions, that is, to put all Bengalis together in E1 and allocate them to poorer estates, their view was that they would turn them into slums anyway." (p43).

"The overall effect of the allocation process has been to direct Asians towards some of the more popular and newer white estates. . ." (p15).

"SHPRS's criticisms over 1982-1984 period have focused on the GLC's management of Bengali access to and distribution in E1. In particular the group alleged that Bengalis were not getting their fair share on the "better" estates in the area. The pattern (ie distribution of offers etc) supports the findings reported in the preceding paragraphs and confirms SHPRS's allegations that Bengalis were more likely to be given a narrow range of offers on poorer estates. . . In particular it seems remarkable none of the 12, three bedroom vacancies on Exmouth was offered to Asians, especially given their very high demand for this size of accommodation."

An internal memo justified the council's role: "difficulties which result from housing

Above: Aryan supermen celebrate victory of the "master race" in Millwall.

families who enjoy a different social and culinary style in blocks with internal access where the aroma of more savoury cooking tends to permeate the immediate areas."

It should also be noted that the idea for an independent report was first considered and rejected in 1982.

It was Labour who laid the foundations for racism to thrive in Tower Hamlets, until the Liberal Democrats took control of the council in 1986. In that light, the self-righteous bleating of the borough's Labour councillors — "we joined the party because of its anti-racist policies" — must seem pathetically hollow.

So whom should you be voting for in the May elections? Perhaps it looks like a choice between the least of three evils? There must, after all, be some decent people in the Labour Party, musn't there? There may be, but they're not going to change anything. And they're certainly not going to change the way that people — the electorate — think. Vacuous rhetoric from politicians, inconsistent with their actual practices, is clearly recog-



nised for what it is. We need positive grass roots action, starting with a clear recognition of the charade of "democracy" and an abstention from the May elections, and in the second place, a concerted campaign of getting across to people a clear understanding of who is responsible for poor and scarce housing, failing so-

cial services, a deteriorating education system and the grinding poverty of the most vulnerable sections of the working class.

It's not the Bangladeshis to blame, nor the Somalis, nor any group identified along racial lines. The "us" and "them" must be clearly identified for who they are: as the working

class people of this country, irrespective of race, and the politicians of all parties who, in seeking to divide us from each other, hope to draw attention away from their own self-seeking and socially reprehensible policies in the service of capitalism.

REFERENCES: 1 *Bengalis*

and *GLC Housing Allocations in E1*, Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Services, 1982.

2 *Bengalis and GLC Allocations in E1 — an Update*, Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Services, 1984.

3 *GLC Housing Research and Policy Report No. 9 What Price Equality* (c.1986).

## NATFHE sabotage

**THE LOCAL FURTHER Education (FE) colleges provide post-16 education, often mainly vocational, for large numbers of working class people.**

There are next to no jobs for school-leavers and to avoid the prospect of gangs of bored, penniless youths on the streets, the government has been using FE colleges to mop them up. By and large, it is a cynical exercise as there are few jobs, even after training. It is seen by the State as a partial solution, keeping otherwise dangerous youth under institutional control.

Being set up for mainly working class students, the FE colleges aren't too concerned with the quality of what is provided, though their propaganda argues the contrary. Cost effectiveness, meaning squeezing more and more people into fewer colleges is presented as the inevitable way forward. Colleges are required to increase student numbers by 25% in three years and compete vigorously with each other for "bums on seats". Those who don't at-

tract the students will go under as colleges are now more or less in a state of open warfare with each other.

To survive, college managements have been restructured and confrontational tactics are being employed to cower the workforce. Part of this bullying process, aimed at achieving total submissiveness by college lecturers, is the imposition of new employment conditions. Collective bargaining has been abandoned, and there will be a large increase in lecturers' hours, bigger classes and a cut in holidays of seven weeks per year. As if this wasn't enough, colleges are busy replacing full-time lecturers with much cheaper part-timers.

So, given all of this, you might have expected the main lecturers' union NATFHE to put up a vigorous fight — after all, a major attack has been launched against their

members. In fact, the union response could be described as treacherous, if we accepted that it had ever actually been on the lecturers' side in the first place, which we do not. A one day strike took place last year which was successful, as far as it went. Then, following further negotiations with employers, NATFHE heroically offered to meet them halfway. They decided, without consulting members, to give up several weeks holidays and lengthen the working week!

A second strike was called for March 1st this year, as the employers, scenting blood, demanded total surrender. Under the stirring slogan "No Substandard Contracts Here" the union negotiators got a favourable result for strike action in a postal ballot.

Unfortunately for NATFHE, the management of Blackpool College challenged the legality of the proposed strike. The court ruled that the strike was indeed unlawful, since NATFHE had failed to give the employers the names of every member participating in the ballot. The judge said that for the result to be lawful, the union should have provided the employers with impossibly accurate membership lists. In effect, this judgement virtually bans all official union strikes.

Given this judgement, you might have expected an intensification of the struggle, or the ignoring of the judge's decision. Not so. Immediate and desperate capitulation was the order of the day. A union letter demanded that under no circumstances should NATFHE assets be threatened, and no one should place the union at risk.

Only three FE colleges dis-

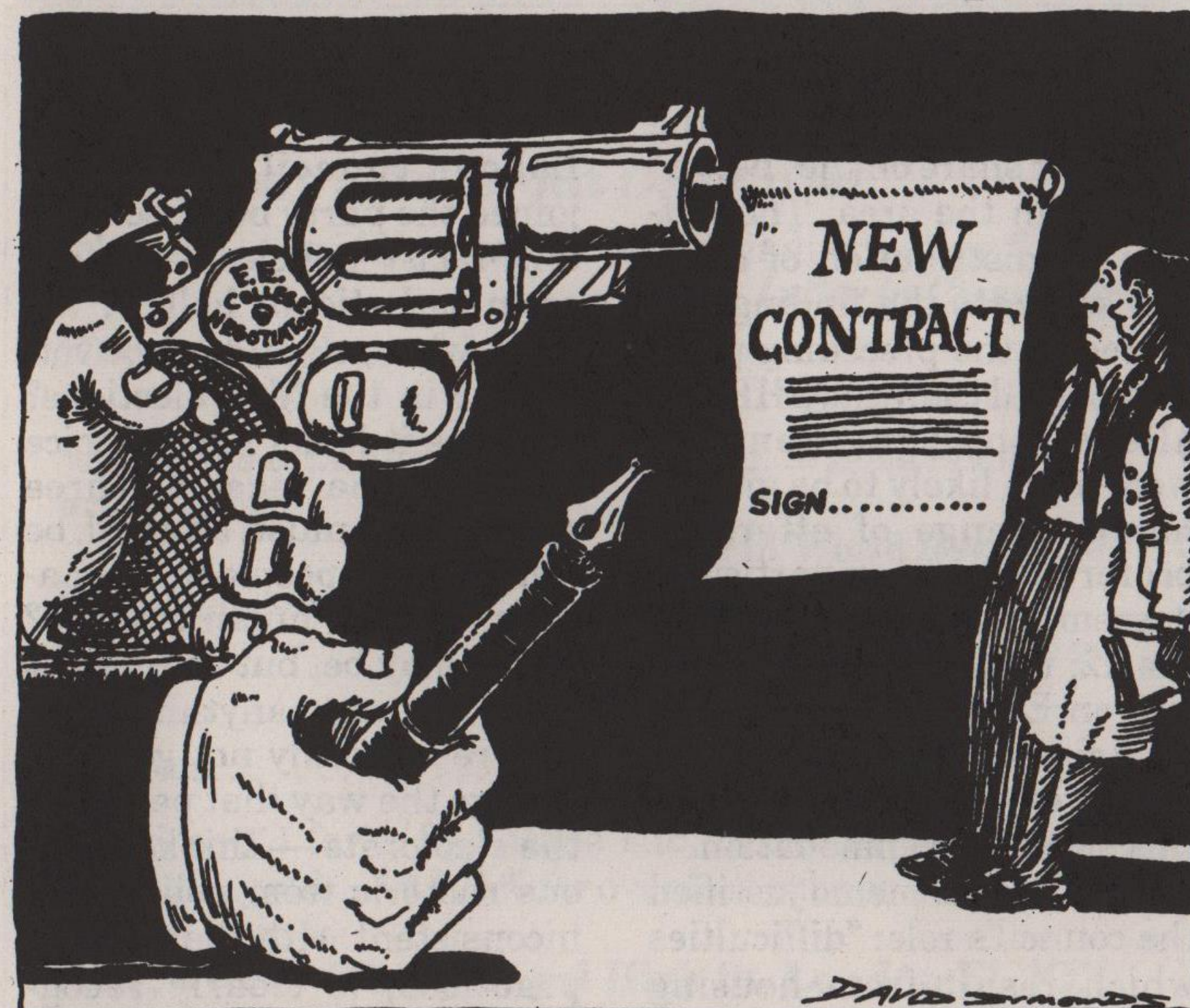
obeyed the union's directive and went on strike on March 1st. Would-be strikers in other colleges were stunned into paralysis by the court's decision, though misplaced loyalty to the union was another factor. Tower Hamlets College, which did strike, was rewarded a week or so later by students who struck for the day in support of lecturers.

### Distressing

Loyal NATFHE members are now somewhat demoralised and unsure of the way forward. Union representatives have been busy trying to draw up accurate membership lists, indicating complete compliance by the leadership with legalism at all costs.

A further distressing feature of the dispute is the way various Marxist-Leninist groups have been using the union to increase their influence in the working class. The Maoist Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) controls the leadership and the Socialist Workers Party is intent on displacing it. The Maoists have been pursuing a long-term policy of extreme moderation to maintain their grip. This is reminiscent of the Communist Party of Great Britain's strategy of capturing top union positions. In the end, the infiltrators are captured by the unions. The SWP, in the meantime, is making militant sounding noises to unseat their Maoist rivals.

The situation is a complete mess. The dispute will probably end up for the lecturers as the biggest massacre since Little Big Horn. It is clear to save the situation, lecturers will have to embark on a course of wildcat strikes, outside and against the union. Three colleges have already shown the way forward and their example has to be followed if the lecturers want to maintain their conditions.



## Squat! Don't Rot!

**ARTILLERY MANSIONS is a good example of what we anarchists call propaganda by the deed. That is through direct action showing how people can start gaining control of their lives. We hope that more and more homeless people will take action and occupy the large numbers of empty buildings, offices, flats and hotels, that have lain empty for many years. The homeless problem could be solved at one fell swoop. There is enough property to house the homeless many times over. The estate agents and property developers prefer to put profit before people.**

Anarchist militants have consistently advocated and taken part in occupations of empty property.

Georges Cochon, anarchist and upholstery worker organised the Union syndicale des locataires (Union of lodgers) in 1911 in Paris. He was to initiate the first mass urban squatting movement. Up to 15,000 people took part in the occupations of large buildings. Even the model homes put up during an Ideal Home style exhibition, the Salon de l'habitat, were squatted!

In 1945 in Britain large numbers of homeless people occupied empty properties, and in 1969 a group of anarchists and libertarian socialists initiated a squatting movement in East London that spread throughout Britain.

As a result many people took over empty property over the last 25 years. The movement needs to be re-activated accompanied by mass propaganda pointing out the obscenity of the vast number of properties lying empty.

## Artillery Mansions Fires off a Broadside for the Homeless!

**ARTILLERY MANSIONS IS a huge Victorian building on the main thoroughfare of Victoria Street in London. It has recently been occupied by homeless people. *Organise!* interviewed one of the activists in the occupation.**

***Organise!* How long has the squat been here at Artillery Mansions?**  
AM: Three weeks.

***Organise!* And how many people are installed here now?**  
AM: Over 100.

***Organise!* It's all people off the streets, isn't it?**  
AM: Mostly people off the streets, rough sleepers and some people evicted from other squats.

***Organise!* The squat was**

**instigated by the Freedom Network. Who are they?**

AM: It's made up of the activist members of SQUASH (Squatters Action for Secure Homes), Green Committee 100 and some Earth First! people.

***Organise!* How long do you hope to be in here?**

AM: We're going to court on the 17th. We're pretty certain that it's going to be a possession forthwith, it's just a matter of how long it takes the bailiffs to come round. We have sent letters to the solicitors saying that we know that most of the building is to be left empty because they intend to turn it into offices and the property market is not good enough to support that at the moment, so they intend to leave it empty as they have done for the last eighteen years. A few of the flats here

were occupied right up to 1990, but the majority have remained empty for eighteen years or more.

***Organise!* In the media it said that this was being done specifically against the Criminal Justice Bill. Is that correct?**

AM: There are three things. Firstly, it was a protest against the Criminal Justice Bill. Secondly, it was a protest against Westminster City Council's jerryandering — unlawful and improper use of their powers. Thirdly, it was to run an alternative rough sleepers initiative, which is to get people off the streets and put them into a flat.

***Organise!* Are more and more rough sleepers coming off the street when they hear about it?**

AM: Yes. It's starting to fill up a bit more.

***Organise!* When protesters first started, were many rough sleepers ready to move in straight away?**

AM: Yes, we invited a few in and then we decided to have fliers to hand out to rough sleepers. What actually happened was that the influx was enough for what we could cope with, so we didn't end up giving out the fliers. We were taking in about five rough sleepers a day.

### Grapevine

***Organise!* You mean that people heard about it through the grapevine?**

AM: Yes and people on their way to the building to see people.

***Organise!* If you are evicted from here, do you hope to carry out similar actions in other large buildings to highlight what is going on?**

AM: Yes. This is taking a hell of a lot of work. There is a responsibility here not only to the rough sleepers who come in. We've got under age people coming in, we've got people with mental health problems coming in and people with al-

coholic problems. Then we've got kids coming in and make a mess, like the chimney pots being broken, so we have to make sure that they keep out. We have a responsibility to the five tenants in the back block who are old people waiting to be moved for the last eleven years, with braces hanging off and their pants undone, not knowing what is going on. They are littered throughout the back block, each one on a floor where every other flat on their floor is boarded up and it stinks of pigeon shit as well. They are still stuck in there waiting to be moved on because they have secure tenancies, which means that they have a right to another place. So we have a responsibility to them and we have a responsibility to the locality.

***Organise!* Is the building owned by Westminster City Council?**

AM: No, it is owned by Great Bear N.V. who are a big multinational company.

***Organise!* And they are taking you to court?**

AM: Yes, their solicitors are on their behalf.

***Organise!* How is the squat run? Is it run by meetings of all the people who live there?**

AM: There was the original group that lived here and kicked it all off. Some of those have already left and there is a core group of people that remain in order to make sure that the place carries on and is responsible. A lot of rough sleepers have got involved in the organisation of the place, holding the door together, making sure there are candles, food, a bucket, donations, leaflets and talking to the media. So now it's not as though there is one committee of people, although the few people that have remained from the original group that got in have tried to keep it steered in the right direction.

***Organise!* So there is quite a lot of active participation?**

AM: Yes, there is a lot. It's quite magical really to see some people come in off the street when they have been on the street for ten months. Some of them are quite brewed up, but they get into



the way it is run. For example there is Bill who is a rough sleeper and has just booked out of his hostel, which is due to close in two weeks and moved in here. He makes a great big tub of soup every day and that is his place and his pride.

**Organise!:** So is it the first time he has been under a roof in a while? Has it really changed him a lot?

AM: Yes. They have respect and dignity when they have got their own room and their own lock on the door. They can build their own fire, they have sofas, pictures they have picked up in skips hung up on walls. They have turned it into a home straight away. They don't want to go back onto the streets after this because it is the first bit of dignity they have had for a long while.

**Organise!:** They might try to move into other places after this?

AM: Yes. Quite a lot of them are saying they were not aware of the fact that you could squat and having talked to people and got clued up on how to do it, I think that there will be a whole group of people that won't wish to return to sleeping in the doorway of Victoria Street after this place. They will go and try and squat in an empty property.

**Organise!:** What relationship does it have to the old squatting movement that started in 1969? Are there any veterans from that movement who were involved in taking over the flats?

AM: No. I don't think that you can view it as an organised movement that evolves in a

#### Need an Antidote?

Aylesbury group of the ACF have produced a local agitational magazine *Antidote*. No 1 is available containing articles on Jobplan Workshop, the Child Support Act, Nestle, and What We Believe. Copies can be obtained (free or donation) by sending an SAE to Aylesbury ACF, PO Box 406, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 8LS



structured way. There aren't any veterans that are involved in it. Advisory Service for Squatters are involved in preparing a court case and I guess that there are a few veterans there, but not in the running of the place.

**Organise!:** What sort of support are you looking for? Can people who are not rough sleepers or homeless give their support apart from donations of food and blankets?

AM: They can get down here and help man the place. There is constantly lots of cleaning up to be done. There is constantly lots of running around to be done with the small group that is trying to keep it centred along the line and are well stretched. So if anyone wants to get down here and help, there is a vacuum for them to step into.

**Organise!:** Is there any friction between people in the place? Do people fall out?

AM: It's peaceful.

**Organise!:** So if the court issues a possession order, you will stay until the bailiffs come?

AM: Yes.

**Organise!:** Will people have to be taken out of the building?

AM: Yes.

**Organise!:** Do you think it will inspire the homeless to start squatting?

AM: Yes, as I said earlier, they didn't even know about squatting until this happened.

**Organise!:** Is there any way that the homeless can be reached and told about this?

AM: This is really the best instruction to it. It's hard to go up to people in the street and tell them that they can get in if they find an empty window.

Here they are exposed to the reality that they have a room of their own for the first time in over a year. Having said that, the Bill will be coming out between Easter and June.

**Organise!:** The Bill at the moment refers to some new court orders which haven't yet been defined?

AM: There are two things with regard to squatting. There is delegated legislation, which is going to be handed down from the Lord Chancellor's Department. That is the teeth of which the Bill is the drawback. They are going to have two consultation processes about that. They are going to float the idea, have a consultation process. They are going to formulate the idea and then have another consultation process. The first consultation process is already underway; they published it last week. There have been three new clauses about squatting since the publica-

tion of the Bill and they are worse than the original Bill itself. They extend the definition of PIO's and DRO's to include private tenants and leasehold owners of anything more than two years. It used to be anything more than 21 years, or anyone acting on their behalf. It gives those people or anyone acting on their behalf the right to gain violent entry, which means it removes the security of the front door and gives license to vigilante bailiffs.

**Organise!:** So instead of having to get a court order first, you can be asleep in bed and find that someone is axing the door down?

AM: That's right. It says you have to let the people know first. These were passed through the standing committee two weeks ago. The next stage is the report stage when it goes back to the House of Commons. It seems likely that it will be passed.



## If Fred West had been a hunt sabber . . . ?

Every year, when councils are working out their budgets, the police put in a bid to increase their funding to help them "investigate" crime. Well, the police in Gloucester would need to increase their detective work a hundred-fold judging by their recent piece of gardening.

A man's wife, daughters and lodger disappear and the police don't notice this may be more than coincidence. Presumably if they had sent a policewoman round to ask about the missing lodger her colleagues might still be scratching their heads about why such a good officer disappeared without even resigning!

But the police budget has

very little to do with detective work.

What the budget is really about is funding the control of dissent, riots, demos, strikes and occupations and Gloucester police's budgetary demands this year have rather more to do with harassing travellers, hunts sabs and working class youth than with looking for the next multiple murderer.

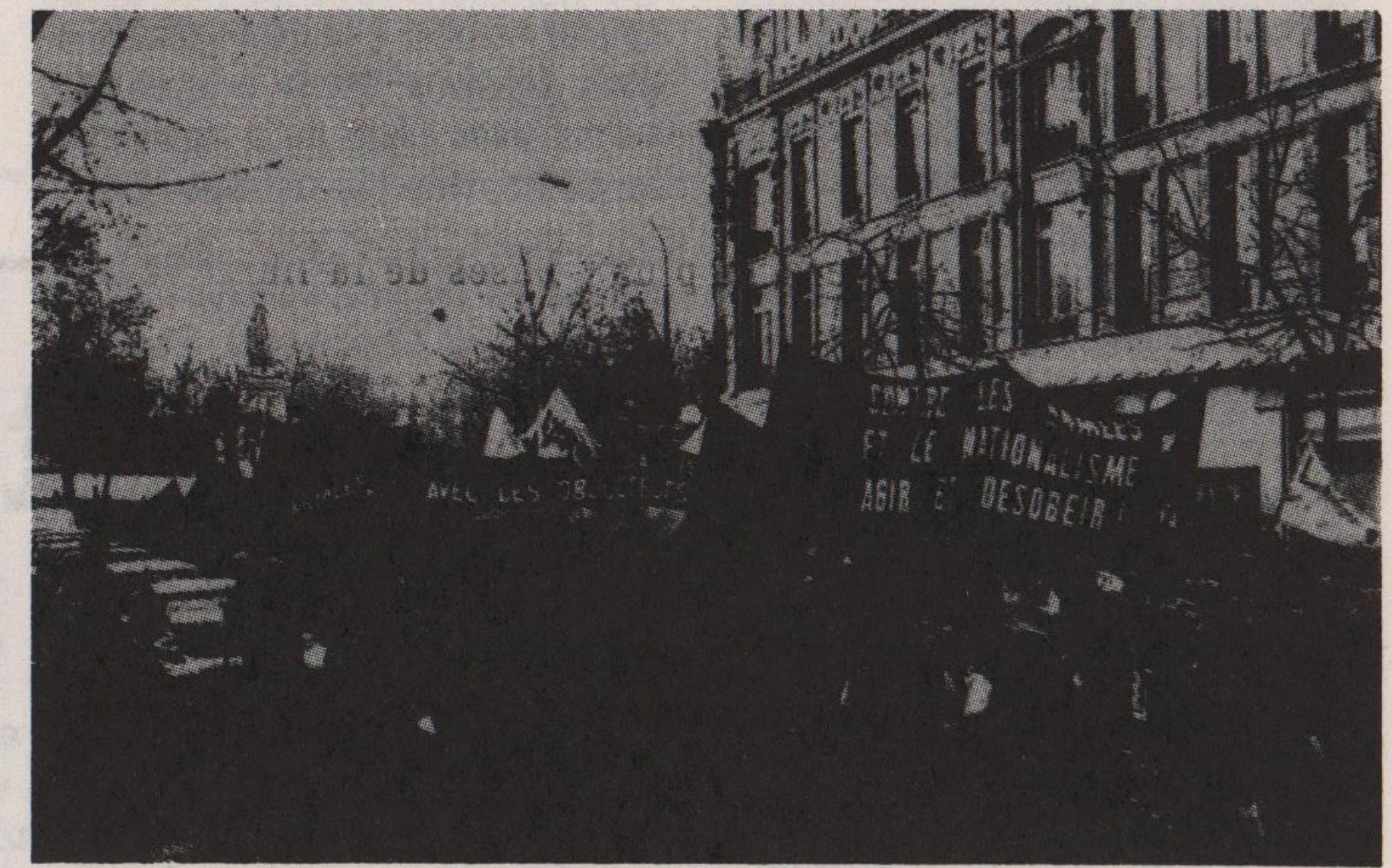
# Cross Channel Links

## An interview with a militant of the Organisation Communiste Libertaire

THE ACF has always considered international relations as a key area of our activity. We believe that the social revolution must and will be international, therefore it is vital that revolutionary anarchists and libertarian communists begin now to extend international contacts. We have long been in contact with the Organisation Communiste Libertaire in France. Until recently this has largely been confined to an exchange of publications.

Then, last summer, we attended the OCL Summer Camp in Southern France where we held lengthy discussions on a number of important issues. This has led us to seek closer contacts with this organisation which in many ways is similar to the ACF. This proved easier than expected as the OCL has a group

in Boulogne — easier to get to than most of Britain for the London comrades of the ACF! So, in October a number of us decided to pay them a visit where we conducted an interview that we thought would be informative for anyone interested in what libertarian communists are doing across the channel.



Above: Against militarism and nationalism! Three thousand plus anarchists march in Paris.

## The interview

**ACF: How are you organised in Boulogne?**

OCL: The group has been around since 1989. For the first two years we stayed independent of any national structure because we had different areas of interest, eg SCALP (anti-fascist group), links with the Federation Anarchiste. Some comrades had never been active before. However, soon we felt the need to become integrated into a national structure in order to overcome our isolation. We needed to do this because our region, the Pas de Calais, has no libertarian organisation and the extreme left in general is very weak. This is because the Pas de Calais has been a bastion of the socialist and communist left for many decades.

**ACF: What are your practical activities?**

OCL: Since 1989 we have been involved in a variety of struggles depending on our capabilities. We were able to organise a bus to go to the demonstration of anti-fascists in Lille as a response to the attacks on SCALP by the neo-Nazis. The same year we organised a concert/discussion evening against the agree-

ment signed by the socialist government to link the schools more closely to the army. One member of the group participated in the demonstrations against the poll tax in London. Following that we published a pamphlet of which we distributed 300 copies in order to popularise that struggle. During the Gulf war we participated in the Anti-War Collective which was formed in Boulogne. However, the dominant role played by the Communist Party in that group meant that we had to keep our distance.

### Alternative

Since then we have been publishing a local paper called *La Mouette Enragée* (The Angry Seagull) which is sold in newsagents around the town. This gives us the opportunity to offer an alternative analysis of what's going on in the locality. We sell between 50 and 75 copies. For the past year and a half we have been supporting the campaign of a comrade who was sacked by a Socialist council in a town near Boulogne. We have succeeded in involving the two alternative unions: the SUD, which was

created by militants who were thrown out of the CFDT (the union close to the Socialist Party) and the CNT, an anarcho-syndicalist union.

**ACF: Relations with other groups?**

OCL: We are the only revolutionary group in our town. The Communist Party remains relatively well implanted, but we don't really have much to do with them. We have good relations with the Federation Anarchiste which is well represented in Lille. For three years we have had a stand beside the FA's at the Braderie de Lille which is a big popular festival in that town.

**ACF: The Front National in France?**

OCL: The Front National developed when the Left was in power. In fact, it was a manoeuvre by the Socialist Party (PS) that was never admitted. In allowing the FN to develop the PS put a spoke in the wheel of the right, splitting its vote and making it more or less weekend and divided. In the course of ten years the PS led attacks against the working class that the right would not have been allowed to make. The workers "betrayed" by those they voted in in 1981 were left without any strategies. The parties of the left and the unions were disempow-

ered and the FN had the way open to develop.

It was evident that on the basis of the economic crisis and crisis of the traditional political groupings that the FN appears as an alternative grouping. The FN developed in the absence of offensive workers' struggles, thanks to the development of unemployment, poverty and above all the splintering of the old solidarities and the old social lines. The workers' vote for the FN has not been negligible. This has had the effect of seeing all the traditional political groupings adopt a language of national security that is openly racist. All the same, the FN remains a party financed by the bourgeoisie, whose cadres are in the majority members of the middle classes: lawyers, doctors, managers.

**ACF: Your successes and your problems?**

OCL: It is difficult for us to speak of successes. We try to get our voice heard with all our feeble means. Our weakness is still the too ideological character of our approach.

**ACF: International relations?**

OCL: This is a key strategy that all the revolutionary organisations must develop. The example of the Libertarian Communist International



Coordination (CICL) that the Organisation Revolutionnaire Anarchiste started up in the '70s seems a good example of the type of relations to develop. For example, putting in contact activists in the same line of work, like railway workers and bank workers... the bourgeoisie is organised internationally, what are we waiting for? Never have we been possessed of so many means of communication, let's profit from them!

#### ACF: Relations between the local group and the national organisation?

OCL: We have organised two magazine commissions in Boulogne. These commissions are held every month in a different town and are responsible for preparing the next issue of our journal *Courant Alternatif*. This arrangement allows the functioning of all the groups and democratic control. The OCL is interesting because it is not centralised in Paris, unlike the FA which has a bookshop and a radio station in the capital. Parisian centralisation is an historic phenomenon which has the disagreeable advantage of creating a divide between Paris and the provinces. This often creates a noticeable separation in the press. We do not think this is the case with the OCL.

#### The Friends of Durruti — New pamphlet!

LONDON ACF have produced a pamphlet on the *Friends of Durruti*, a much misunderstood group that attempted to defend and extend the Spanish Revolution of 1936. In their criticisms of the leadership of the anarcho-syndicalist unions they represented an important moment in anarchist history. Included are an historical introduction written by an ACF member, and two political statements from the Friends themselves. This will be the first in a series of pamphlets in the *Stormy Petrel* series. Coming up is a pamphlet on the Italian Factory Councils of 1920-21.

Copies of the *Friends of Durruti* pamphlet available from ACF (London) c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, E1 at 75p inc. postage.

## Demonstration and Festival

AT THE DEMONSTRATION and festival against militarism and nationalism on 11th November 1993 in the Place de la Republique in Paris over 3000 militants from the libertarian organisations assembled to voice their opposition to militarism and nationalism. Present were the OCL,

Alternative Libertaire, Federation Anarchiste, Union des Anarchistes and Confederation National de Travail. There was music and stalls from 11am-4.30pm. Also present were contingents from Apache (SCALP), a militant anti-fascist grouping and the anti-fascist skinheads of

SHARP. The day chosen was Remembrance Day for the First World War, and the main slogans of the rally were "States, Poverty, Racism and Arms Trade Foster the Wars"; "Against the Racist, Nationalist, Capitalist, Militarist Order"; "Action, Insubordination, Solidarity!" There was a contingent from Belgian and Italian comrades. This event received little coverage in the media (surprise, surprise!).

## International Round-up

THE ACF SEES the need for an international unification of revolutionary anarchists and libertarian communists. Capitalism is international, so is the working class. Our assault upon Capitalism must be international and we need an international organisation to co-ordinate this.

Unfortunately, such a co-ordination does not, for the moment, exist and a great deal of work, both political and organisational, needs to be done in order to create it. The ACF is in contact with similar political groups and tendencies in various countries and we regularly exchange publications. We thought our readers would be interested to know about libertarian revolutionaries and publications which hold similar positions to our own. We are, therefore, reviewing some of the journals which we have recently received.

### *Courant alternatif*

*Courant Alternatif* no. 36. Published monthly, *Courant Alternatif* is the magazine of the Organisation Communiste Libertaire, a national co-ordination of libertarian revolutionaries in France. Issue 36 contains articles on the Zapatista uprising in Mexico: 'Against The New World Order, Viva Zapata!', on the role of education under capitalism: 'School, Knowledge and Training' and on the recent state repression against Kurdish organisations in France amongst its 36 pages. This edition also has a supplement tabloid on the state of the class struggle in France.

### COMUNISMO LIBERTARIO

*Comunismo Libertario* no. 7/8. A bi-monthly journal of anti-authoritarian theory and practice, *Comunismo Libertario* is produced by the Federazione di Comunisti Anarchici but acts as a discussion journal for much of the libertarian left in Italy. This edition carries articles on the manoeuvring of the two "communist" parties, PDS (Part of the Democratic Left) and the Rifondazione Comunista. Also of interest is an article on the School COBAS (Committees of the Base) in which anarchist communists have been active.

*Confrontations* no. 24. *Confrontations* is the quarterly review of the Organisation Socialiste Libertaire in Switzerland. Originally confined to French speaking Switzerland, the OSL now has sections in German speaking areas. In common with much of the libertarian communist press there is a focus on the Zapatistas. Also included is an article on the Spanish general strike in January and a report of the events from the perspective of the CGT, an anarcho-syndicalist union in Spain. Like much of Europe's libertarian left the OSL has an ambiguous attitude towards syndicalist methods of organisation.

*Workers Solidarity* no. 41. Quarterly magazine of the Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland. Originally a monthly, *Workers Solidarity* has been coming out for 10 years now. From no. 42 it will change from a magazine to a tabloid format and will be supplemented by a new journal called *Libertarian Socialism*. The central article in issue 41 is 'What Sort of Ireland Do We Want?' but there's also stuff on various struggles hap-

### WORKERS SOLIDARITY

MAGAZINE OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT 75p outside Ireland ISSUE NO. 41 SPRING 1994 60p

pening over there. And of course... an article on Zapata! Despite our real differences with the WSM, particularly over the trade union and national questions, *Workers Solidarity* remains an impressive example of committed libertarian journalism.

*Lonnsslaven* no. 4. *Lonnsslaven*, meaning "The Wage Slave", describes itself as a "Paper for the Abolition of Wage Slavery and for Anti-Statist Socialism". A 36-page magazine, it is produced by an editorial group in Oslo, Norway. No. 4 contains articles on science and technology, on the Autonomie movement in northern Europe: 'Autonomy or Brutal Reformism?' and an

analysis of the Timex Strike in Dundee, amongst others. Probably the most clear-sighted libertarian communist journal in Scandinavia.

*Alternative Libertaire* no. 21. Lots of stuff on the Zapatistas in this 16-page monthly journal of the organisation of the same name. The French group Alternative Libertaire used to be known as the Union

### Alternative Libertaire

of Libertarian Communist Workers but is now "broader" politically/organisationally.

*The Revolt* no. 2. "A Magazine of Revolutionary Anarchism" from the South African based Anarchist Revolutionary Movement, is the only non-European journal in this review. Includes articles on New World Order in Africa, the South African Police:

"SAP— To Serve and Protect... To Torture and Kill" and on the violence in the black community amongst other stuff. The ARM also distribute our pamphlet *The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation!*

In the next *Organise!* we hope to be able to review libertarian communist journals which we haven't had space for here.



## VIVA ZAPATA!

"REVOLT IS LIFE, submission is death." — Ricardo Flores Magon, Mexican anarchist, murdered by US authorities in 1922.

The armed uprising of 1st January 1994 launched by the EZLN (Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional) in the southern state of Chiapas surprised all of Mexican society, even though this movement was totally foreseeable. After its initial surprise, the government admitted its knowledge of the movement of armed groups in Chiapas during 1993, during which several soldiers were killed.

Over the next few days the Mexican media published a list of actions taken against the peasants, the great majority of whom are Indians. Armed repression was the immediate reply of the authorities to the demands for better conditions, followed by arrests and mass imprisonment. The attacks on the peasants led by the landowners, big farmers and the Army contributed to the radicalisation of the peasant organisations, which linked peasant demands to respect for individual rights, and which took up the call for

radical agrarian reform. The EZLN sprang out of these organisations.

Chiapas state is the home to the descendants of the Mayas, who hang on to the mountain slopes, cultivating tiny patches of land that produce just enough to survive. The earth here is volcanic and very fertile, but it gets easily washed away in the first rainstorms. Growing maize allows for survival, and just that, and mortality, above all infant mortality, is very high. The men hire themselves out for work on a regular basis, for three-six consecutive months during the coffee harvest. The small towns of the valleys are occupied by mestizos (mixed blood) and whites who have ferocious racist attitudes towards the Indians.

The Indians were driven from the more fertile valleys to the wooded slopes to make room for the big plantations. Now they are not even safe there, as the Mexican airforce carries out bombing raids.

Chiapas state is 80% Indian, yet not one Indian is in a responsible post. There is an almost complete lack of education among the Indians. The owners of the *fincas*, the great coffee plantations, see them only as a source of labour, and the government regard them as invisible, with no rights and no voice.

But the Indians of the region have always put up a fierce and courageous resistance to the system of exploitation put into place by the Spanish colonialists and by their successors. In 1847 the

to supply food until an amenable solution was reached.

Despite this, the attack on traditional culture, deculturation, is enormous. The Indians' ancestors were celebrated for the production of wool items, but now one finds most clothes made out of imported synthetic materials, which are much less effective against the mountain cold.

The Mexican authorities, and their counterparts in the rest of the world, tried to make out that the self-organisation of the Indians in the EZLN was impossible, and must be the work of Marxist-Leninist guerilla groups infiltrating from Guatemala. The British left, tied as it is to the ruling class, was sometimes to be found guilty of this. One paper, which likes to denounce Trotskyists and anarchists equally and which situates itself on the "communist left" came out with the following moronic statement that the Zapatistas "may have been manipulated by Mexican or other Latin American leftist guerilla groups".

The uprising was chosen specifically to coincide with the signing by President Salinas of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which started operating on 1 January 1994. The United States itself now feels implicated, and under pressure at home, has to tell the Mexican State to back off from full scale repression. Strategically, the date was also well-chosen because many soldiers were drunk in the barracks and police stations because of the New Year celebrations. The Zapatistas were thus able to occupy five towns smoothly and efficiently. To capture the town hall of a large town with a large barracks only eight kilometres away is a considerable achievement. On 2 January they voluntarily left the towns to undertake a two-day





march to the forest of Lacandon, where they created a zone of liberation which is well-nigh impregnable. The armed detachments are formed of 90% young men and women. The local villages are supplying them with food.

The Catholic Church has been thrown into disarray by the uprising. When the Mexican Revolution took place, the property of the Church was confiscated by the State. But two years ago, the Church reached a deal with the Federal government in Chiapas that it could have its churches and cathedrals back if it laid off making noises about human rights and the situation of the Indians. So now there is open conflict between the supporters of liberation theology who have links with the Indian communities, and those who want to make sure they keep their property. This explains the abortive attempt of the Vatican to have the Bishop of San Cristobal, Samuel Ruiz, removed from office. The Mexican government put pressure on the Pope to carry this out then backed off when the uprising broke out.

### Refusal

The development of the struggle in Chiapas, combining armed action with mass direct action, the occupation of the land and the official buildings points to the existence of a strong social movement. The refusal of the EZLN to talk about capturing power, the understanding that workers of the land and town must unite, the radical and sometimes anti-hierarchical sensibility of its pronouncements and the references to Emiliano Zapata, the most libertarian of the leading lights of the Mexican Revolution, who had many close contacts with the Mexican anarchist movement, makes us view the EZLN in a favourable light.

Against this, we have to note the gap between the vast mass of the movement, the peasants in arms, and the EZLN committee. The peasants want the land to be held in common and they want better roads, medical services and schools. If you ask them about the NAFTA they don't say that this isn't important, that it doesn't interest them, but they refer you to the committee. The committee is able to fax its messages to the principal papers and is very aware of the international situation. Whilst putting the Indian problem at the head of the agenda, they demand that the workers in foreign-owned factories receive the same wages as those workers in the workplaces at home. This is OK as far as it goes, but it shows a gap between the mass and the "leading militants" which the ACF has always recognised as a problem. There is no talk about the big Western corporations which own up to 30,000 hectares of land in the region, whilst Mexican law permits a ceiling of 2,500 hectares. These corporations have got around this by making each 2,500 hectares out to mum, dad, kids and the dog!

Another major problem is that the EZLN has not broken with the illusion of democracy. They talk about "The formation of a free and democratic government in our country" and "the liberated populations freely and democratically electing their own administrative authorities" (from the *Declaration of the Forest of Lacandon*). The second statement is ambiguous. Does it mean the creation of revolutionary bodies controlled by mass assemblies of working people or does it mean participating in the democratic farce? All this alongside statements like "We use the colours red and black in our uniform, because they are symbols of working people in their strikes". The committee itself may well be dominated by partisans of liberation theology, drawn from among the Catholic lay preachers.

The Zapatista revolt has been driven by hunger and desperation and represents the first attempts by peasants to organise. Because it is still developing its ideas its politics are ambiguous and there are real possibilities of the struggles of the Indians and poor

Mexican peasants being hijacked. Some of the political parties are already making out they support the cause of the Indians. Amongst these are the PRD (Party of Democratic Revolution) of Cuauhtemoc Gardenas and certain sections of the ruling Institutional Party of Revolution who were in disagreement with Luis Donaldo Colosio being made official candidate for the forthcoming presidential elections. As well as these mainstream parties, there are the little parties which represent "the real proletarian spirit of the people" like the Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Party Union of the People (PROCUP) and the Party of the Poor (PDL) who claimed responsibility for the bomb attacks carried out a few weeks after the outbreak of the rising.

The peasants of Chiapas cannot win on their own. There need to be active links made with peasants of other regions of Mexico and the workers of the towns. Real and effective international

solidarity has to be built up, both in the rest of Latin America and in North America and the rest of the world. If this does not happen then they risk a long and frightful guerrilla war where they may suffer terrible casualties and where they remain trapped in the false ideas of liberation theology, democracy and national liberation.

### Postscript

The assassination of Colosio, the official candidate of the ruling party further destabilises the situation in Mexico. There are possibilities that he may have been killed by rival factions in the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or by elements within the Army. The militarists wanted to smash the Zapatistas brutally, but were restrained by the government, themselves under pressure from the USA. Whatever the answers, the Mexican situation can only be further aggravated, bringing the period of tight control by the ruling clique to an end.

## Anarchism in Arabic!

**AIDED BY international contributions, the comrades of Al Badil al taharouri (Libertarian Alternative) in Lebanon have completed the translation into Arabic of Anarchism.**

This is considered by many to be the best introduction to class struggle anarchism, and was written by the veteran French libertarian communist Daniel Guerin.

Now the comrades need the money to print it. IMO's etc, made payable to Agora 2000, to finance and to aid Al Badil al taharouri can be sent via BP 177, 75967 Paris cedex 20, France.

## Appeal of the comrades active in Yugoslavia

**FOLLOWING THE issue of the bulletin *Preko Zidova Nacionalizma i Rata* (Beyond the Walls of Nationalism and War), the Italian anarchist group Germinal in Trieste, on the border with ex-Yugoslavia, have received the following appeal from a number of small anarchist groups in Yugoslavia (Serbia).**

They say: "We need help. We have neither anarchist books nor pamphlets nor papers. We have no experience of struggle. We need support in several ways. Whatever you decide to send us will be useful for our development, to defend our ideas and reach out to others. Remember: solidarity is a revolutionary action".

Anyone who wants to help these comrades active in this

part of the Balkans, particularly isolated because of the embargo which favours the government and speculation, can send material written in English to Germinal at: GRUPPO GERMINAL, 11 via Mazzini, 34124 Italy.

You can also get copies of the bulletin written in Serbo-Croat from them to distribute here.

# The Mythology of Nationalism

**THE MYTH OF the golden age before the invader came has been a potent force in modern Irish republican politics.**

The shining vision of the pure Gaelic race, rich in culture and learning, ruled by noble kings and defended by superhuman heroes, has become so fixed in the nationalist psyche that ancient legends are more often seen as historical fact than as stories that have grown in the telling. To the exploited and demoralised worker in Belfast and the Bogside the dream of finally ousting the invader and recreating this golden age has had a powerful appeal. The cruel lie that everything would be wonderful if we could get the Brits out is central to nationalist mobilisation.

On the other side of the fence the loyalists have also cottoned on to the racial purity con, realising that the British label, which they have so desperately clung to and so tragically died for in their thousands, may be plucked from their patriotic breasts by an ungrateful master. They too have burrowed deep into the misty past to find their own set of dubious roots in the fertile soil of Irish (sorry... Ulster) mythology. This has furnished them with an historical basis for their Ulster Nationhood.

The real history of the Irish people (in the sense of inhabitants of a geographical area rather than of some rhetorical abstraction called "The People") is a buried beneath the crushing weight of the mythology, romanticism, power struggles, political manoeuvring and carefully fostered lies of the "Great Men" who shaped and wrote the official versions.

But who are the "Irish/Ulster people"? What is the common root of "Irishness/Ulsteriness" which nationalists proclaim? Any attempt at establishing racial purity in Ireland is doomed to failure, even a cursory glance at an Irish telephone directory or even at the surnames of Irish republican leaders, from Tone to De Valera and Adams, will reveal the varied ingredients that serve to make up the modern Irish population. The list of those that invaded/cultivated the island and were subsequently assimilated into the population is long and diverse. Amongst the ingredients that make up the "Irish stew" can be included such names as Firbolg, Pict, Cruithin, Celt, Viking, Anglo-Norman and finally Scottish and English "planters".

Contrary to Irish nationalist mythology, it can be stated with certainty that, prior to the 12th century Anglo-Norman conquest, there is no suggestion that the geographical landmass known as Ireland was a united nation under a single political administration. Ancient Ireland was a tribal society, each tribe had its chieftain who defended the communal land while trying to grab a bit of some other tribe's territory and/or livestock. Al-

though there may have existed some loose confederations of tribes from time to time, there seems to be no evidence of any "national" unity. The existence of a "High King" is something of a red herring in this matter. The "High King" was not, as the title tends to suggest, the overall leader of any "nation" but rather the ruler of one tribe who, in the event of a confederation of chieftains being formed, could assume an overall command. This should offer no great solace to Ulster nationalists either.



The fact that no High King based at Tara would have exercised any permanent authority over the tribes of Ulster, as the likes of the UDA enjoy claiming, is no more relevant to today than the fact that a tribe in ancient Munster would have felt little in common with a tribe in ancient Leinster, or that the Gaelic speakers of Ulster would have had difficulty in understanding the Gaelic spoken in Connaught or the Scottish highlands for that matter! And, despite the obvious cross-fertilization, ethnic and cultural, owing to the close proximity of Scotland to the North East of Ireland, this factor cannot be legitimately utilised as an explanation for the present divisions.

The coming of the Anglo-Normans to Ireland in 1169 saw the first stages of their eventual conquest of the island. A divided and militarily inferior Irish people proved to be no match for the might of the Norman fighting machine that had conquered a far more homogenous England and Wales. The Normans did however become quickly assimilated into "the locals", often becoming more Irish than the Irish themselves. The Norman leaders made good use of the divisions which existed between the various peoples of the island, forming alliances with whichever of them could best advance their objectives. Ironically, it was the armies of Ulster which held out longest against the forces of the crown. Eventually, however, the island of Ireland was "united" under the Anglo-Norman yoke. It was not until the 1790s that Irish resistance took a consciously national form in line with the emergence of modern nationalist ideology. After the defeat of the United Irishmen's 1798 aborted revolution the "un-

ion" would not again be seriously challenged until the "Gaelic Revival" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The real roots of this movement lay of course in the soil of economics. The legitimate discontent of the Irish working class was easily manipulated by groups such as Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin whose motives were far removed from altruistic concern for the common people (see *Organise!* 23 for a discussion of this period).

The religious factor in Irish politics became prominent from the time of the Plantation onwards. The Gaelic Irish were predominantly Catholic whilst the Gaelic Scottish and English planters and their aristocratic landlords were predominantly Protestant. This religious factor was to increase in prominence despite widespread intermarriage and "conversions" on both sides. Those involved in the struggle for power, which continues to this day, have never been slow to accentuate and capitalise upon the religious factor, utilising it as an effective tool for control and manipulation. From the genocidal antics of Oliver Cromwell to the struggle for the English throne, through various sectarian revolts and ecclesiastical power struggles, the religious divide has been carefully fostered. The history of Ireland has been so distorted and manipulated to suit the power hungry, that the Irish melting pot that assimilated peoples as diverse as Vikings, Picts and Celts has been reduced, in many minds, to the crude lie of "Catholic" Ireland fighting to regain its ancient "nation" from the imperialist "Protestant" invaders.

Leftists, and some "anarchists" have not been blameless in perpetuating the myths and lies which fuel divisions amongst the working class of this island. Much of the left has acted as cheerleader for the reactionary and often racist nationalism espoused by the pseudo-socialist IRA. This attitude has further alienated working class Protestants and driven them towards the Orange right and political neanderthals of loyalism.

The Provos like to portray the conflict here as a colonial war but, whatever it may have been in the past, it is certainly not a colonial war today. The British government does not want Northern Ireland, the Irish government does not want Northern Ireland. Neither want a civil war, however, and their tactics, despite some fairly superficial differences, are concentrated upon neutralizing the "extremists" on both sides, whether by incorporation or by oppression; sometimes by both methods. The choice for the working class remains the same: continued manipulation by nationalists and capitalists of all hues or self-organised struggle against all of them. Only when the latter road is taken will the Irish working class make their own history rather than be the subject of ruling class self-interest.

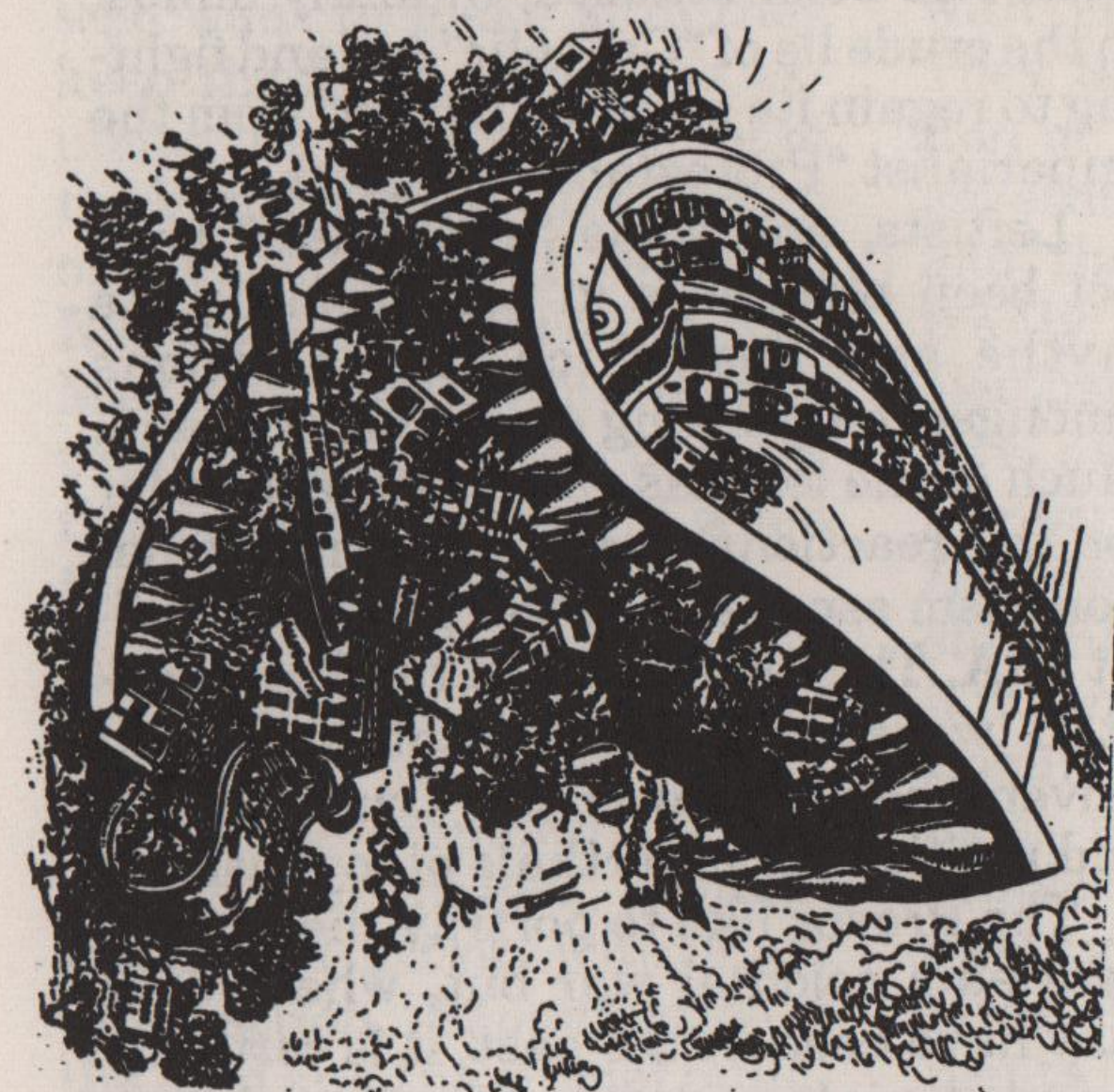


# Transport or Traffic?

**IN THIS ARTICLE** we look at the origins of the motor traffic system and the huge malign influence of the Road Lobby. In the next issue we will look at the Human and Environmental consequences and alternatives/resistance to road traffic.

## Origins of Traffic System

Nikoli Kondriatev, a Marxist writing in the 1920s posited the Kondriatev cycle which argued that the industrial economy expanded and contracted in waves of about 50 years: peaks in 1817, 1870 and 1914 and troughs around 1745, 1790, 1844 and 1890. Andrew Tylecote suggested that each boom period is associated with the successful emergence of a "new technological style" characterised by a new form of transportation. The end of the 18th century in Britain saw the development of the canal system, the rising boom of 1844-70 the emerging rail network, with the steel and electrical style before the First World War developing in the boom decade after 1918 into Fordism. After the 1930s slump and World War Two, Fordism — the Transnational Oil based economy of cars and motorways, super tankers and aeroplanes — came into its own. These theories suggest



that the economy expands until it reaches the limits of its distribution system. Slumps tend to be caused by glut — the inability to shift (rather than produce) goods. One promising way out of recession is therefore to reach a larger market by developing new transport systems.

Whatever the validity of this theory, the ruling class are often ruthless in their elimination of old transport systems in order to introduce new ones. No sooner had the British canal system been introduced, at great expense, than it was judged obsolete. The new rail companies, flush with investors' money, bought up canals and took them down; within a few

decades the canal system was moribund and Britain was covered in railways.

## Road Lobby

The Road Lobby is made up of companies who profit from cars, lorries and the raw materials, fuel and infrastructure they need. Worldwide they are responsible for destroying more human-scale, environmentally friendly forms of transport with huge consequences for community, health and environment. Why? Because they are less profitable: one bus does the work of 35 cars, a tram that of 60, a train that of 1000 cars or 150 lorries.

In 1925, the General Motors Corporation set about systematically destroying non-motor transport systems in America. They bought up the largest manufacturer of urban and inter-urban buses in America. In 1926 they helped set up the Motor Transit Corporation (Greyhound) which agreed to purchase all its equipment from GM. General Motors then bought up all possible competitors for production of buses, destroying the commuter services of Pennsylvania, NY Central, NY, New Haren and Hartford. Southern Pacific, Great Northern and St Louis South Western railroads were also badly affected. In similar vein in 1936 they set up a company, together with Standard Oil and Fines the Tyres, which bought up US train companies and closed them down. By 1956 over 100 electric surface rail systems in 45 cities had been acquired and closed down. In cities, the only way that a new market for the buses could be created was for GM to finance the conversion of its electrical tramway systems to motor buses. This was done by setting up the United Cities Motor Transit Company in 1932. Tramways were bought, converted to buses and then sold off to local companies which were compelled to buy General Motors equipment exclusively. This continued rapidly until 1935 when the American Transit Association exposed GM's chicanery. Company executives and employees "independently" set up another holding company with other car and oil companies, National City Lines, in 1936. Local companies now had to agree to buy only new equipment which used fuel oil and GM/Standard Oil products and Firestone Tyres exclusively.

Before the motorisation of California by GM, Los Angeles was a beautiful city of lush palm trees, fragrant orange groves and ocean air. Now it is a wasteland. Trees are dying in a petrochemical smog. The orange groves, polluted by lead from petrol fumes were paved over for 300 miles of freeways. The air is a cesspit into which four million cars daily pump 13,000 tons of pollutants. Fifty years after the American road lobby started work,

the US transport system is a nightmare. Pedestrians and cyclists have been bullied off the streets, railways have almost vanished and half the land area of most cities consists of roads and parking lots. The road lobby bankrolls many politicians to vote against clean air and fuel efficiency, making American cars the most wasteful in the western world.

In Britain, the road lobby is represented by the British Road Federation, founded in the 1930s to "combat the sinister and distorted propaganda of the railways to enslave British Industry". It is a coalition of car makers such as Ford, motor organisations (AA, RAC), road-builders (Taylor Woodrow, McAlpine), oil companies (BP, Texaco), lorry operators (TIT, Freight Transport Association) and diverse others (eg Tate & Lyle Sugars, Bulmers Cider Ltd, National Farmers Union). They are all united by the prospect of economic growth, which they maintain is linked to the health of the motor industry and "reducing transport costs" (Department of Transport). In Britain the (Labour) government started the demolition of the railway system. It was bought and nationalised after the Second World War. Some 46% of the track was torn up and much of the rest run down. The road lobby is now in the vanguard of privatising the railways, which will decimate what remains of a once comprehensive transport system. Member firms of the RTF are presently planning bids for rail privatisation which will be an asset-stripping bonanza to dwarf that of the buses. There will be prime development sites in city centres, "weird" rural services will probably be made the responsibility of local government, then councils will be starved of cash so they have to cut services (and take the flack). The strategy of the road lobby is to continually up their demands. If the road is a single lane, dual it. If dualled give it three lanes. If somewhere doesn't have a by-pass, give it one. If there is one to the south, give it one to the north. If it has an M25, build another. If it already has a north-south motorway (as in East Anglia), add another.

Traffic lobbyists and planners now talk of the need for "infrastructure" rather than roads, a co-ordinated distribution system using different technologies: "a single network, lined by markets, technology and organisation, which produce a single output: mobility for the citizen and the economy". (The European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) which includes Fiat, Volvo, Daimler-Benz, MAN, Petrofina, Total, Shell, BP, Pirelli and Plessey).

Railways are now back in favour — if they are high speed, such as TGV/part of

*Continued on back page*

# Cultural Identity: An Anarchist Perspective

**MANY OF THE** examples used here are taken from an Irish context. This is because I am familiar with Irish culture and would rather use it exclusively in this article than make errors by using examples from, say, North America. Readers can make comparisons with their own culture and hopefully the uniqueness of Irish culture will not distort the theory incorporated in this piece.

Culture is a glib word these days. It is a subject for the arrogant intelligentsia to idly chat about at fashionable gatherings. It is a source of profit for parasitical industries. It's true meaning of belonging and identity has been forgotten. But how does anarchist communism fit into all of this and secondly, why?

Firstly, I would like to point out the advantages of a form of identity that is common to us all: cultural identity. This phrase is often linked with right-wing hate groups, patriotic warmongers and articles written by upper middle class journalists in the *Sunday Mail*. However, one of the purposes of this article is to show that culture can be of advantage to groups and individuals.

The idea of "belonging" comes easily to human beings. We are naturally sociable animals with complex social structures and a high degree of intelligence. It was inevitable that a series of dress codes, music forms, art forms, languages, dances, stories etc would develop from such an advancing species. It is obvious that the above would unite people into tribes, clans and "peoples".

The emotion of "being part of the group" is a major part of the human psyche. When a person feels part of their chosen group, they feel the solidarity and strength of the group supporting them. The aforementioned expressions of culture (language, music etc) reinforce this feeling, which is all too often looked down on by middle-class leftists as being mindless, animalistic conformity. They fail to see that it is an intrinsic part of human nature and an emotion that is hard to resist. They fail to see that cultural identity can give people a degree of self-respect, dignity and a sense of belonging.

Culture reinforces the idea of community. When people feel that they have something in common, ie their language, their traditions, they feel a bond that encourages fraternity and comradeship.

Culture has been a weapon against imperialism and colonialism. Native Americans, Africans and other oppressed peoples had their language and customs suppressed and eradicated because the imperialists correctly recognised that they were an obstacle in their path towards domination and exploitation. The oppressors knew their victims drew solidarity from their traditions and that to make any "progress" then these tradi-

tions would have to be removed. Admittedly, some Europeans believed that they were acting in their victims' best interests but this is a lame excuse for the cultural (and sometimes physical) genocides that took place.

Culture has been seen to be subversive in its opposition to uniformity and passivity. Taking Ireland as an example, during the years of the Stormont government there was no funding for Irish language groups and Gaelic games were not permitted at one council's playing grounds. Television pictures and news in general sent out from Ulster gave the impression of a serene little corner of the UK which could have been Cornwall or Yorkshire. Royal visits were carried out to show "the people's" aversion to Irish culture.

Cultural suppression is still carried out today. Wales has a Welsh TV channel, education in Welsh and road signs and town names in Welsh. Northern Ireland has little of this. Any form of Celtism is immediately connected with An Poblacht, Sinn Féin, the IRA and Tíocfaidh ar la. So in the British government's terms, Irish culture is subversive. Comparisons with the above example can be made with many other colonial countries.

To round up on culture's advantages: culture is a means of encouraging community. It is a means of giving identity to the individual. Its expressions (music, art, etc) are there for the creative mind to enjoy. Culture can be a way of resisting uniformity and imperialism.

However, cultural identity has a darker side. Its universal attraction has been used by ambitious national leaders to enslave the working class. Nationalism rears its ugly head wherever culture is used aggressively. It is used as an excuse for war and even genocide. The myth of national unity is an engineered result of people's enthusiasm for cultural identity. When the idea that the English/Irish/X working class has something in common with the English/Irish/X capitalist class gains influence it should be obvious that culture has been used to form an unequal inter-class relationship. When "all Irish together" means "all Irish together (as long as you work for me)" we should be able to see that culture has been used as a weapon against the working class.

Culture is used for militaristic purposes. "For Queen and Country" is a familiar saying and comes easily to the lips of the older generation. The horrific example of the World Wars show us how the "us and them" attitude was used against the working class. National service is welcomed in many countries as a patriotic duty. Culture's expressions can be restrictive. Dress codes, skin colour must meet the standard norm of the majority. Dissent is not encouraged. The non-conformist is "funny" or a "crank" and is inevitably shunned.



Indeed, "our" culture has been exploited by capitalism to a degree that is now detrimental to our lives. The tourist industry uses "native tradition" as a major marketing ploy to sell us holidays and souvenirs. Money is made from putting on displays of staged folk dancing and the like. The immorality of the profit motive is obvious from this perversion of culture. To have what is rightfully ours sold back to us is ethically wrong.

The old idea of culture is quickly being changed by the media-orientated version of culture. The despicable fashion industry is a particularly nauseating example. New clothes are produced every season which are useless, expensive and divert the mind from anything remotely cerebral or meaningful. This constant up-dating of "ideas" makes people disregard their hereditary culture and any of the advantages that come with it. The war cry of the new culture is, "To usher out the old and buy in the new". TV culture, car culture, fashion culture, dollar culture: all ways to make us more adaptable to capitalism and its needs. People once identified "culture" as a set of traditions and customs that were characteristic to themselves. Now the word is synonymous with the rat-race, global lifestyle we all "enjoy".

As anarchist communists we want to create a new world in which people are not under the yoke of consumerism. To do so we will have to destroy this new breed of culture which has infected our lives with its grasping desire for profit. If this is achieved people may rediscover what they have lost. Our real culture may return and for once it will be entirely determined by us. In places where it has been used to create divisions we will have to tread carefully. Do we support it or oppose it? The line between diversity and division can be a thin one. But to quote from *Active Resistance*: "Capitalism's greatest fear and threat is a non-consumerist, non-conformist, cultured society".

Hopefully this article will cause you, the reader, to think carefully about this issue which could be of great importance when capitalism is lifted from the shoulders of the working class. Within the early stages of a revolutionary upheaval a period of disorientation may occur. This uncertainty may cause old, forgotten rivalries to surface. We should be equipped with the arguments to counter this.

*Organise!* No. 34 April-June 1994 13



Dear *Organise!*

Class strugglists used reformist eco-crats promoting themselves through oxymoronic "green consumerism" to dismiss the post-1990 Euro election Green boom as "the salvation of capitalism". Your "Monkey Wrenchers" article (*Organise!* No. 33, pp7-8) shows progress from the ostrich position, although disinterring Chris "Miss Anthropy" Manes and other conservationist/conservative Wild Earth marginals just sets up new "straw men".

Redwood Summer isn't "unique". Since Judi Bari first advanced the arguments for worker solidarity that Foreman's "humanoids" found so unpalatable in 1990, Earth First! has consistently argued that without a sustainable alternative to corporate pillage, primary resource workers are destroying their own job security as well as the environment. It's not about "preaching at the proles" either — it's their employers that are responsible, capitalists like MacMillan Bloedel who'll continue clear-cutting Canada's rainforest to feed the US junk bond market until it's all gone at the end of the decade and then dump its tens of thousands of employees thereafter.

Until such workers have enough power to determine their own future, the environment in/on which they work has no future either — which is where the IWW come in, whatever reservations you may have about their syndicalism. We can debate whether all this will actually bring about the (green) revolution — but all involved think themselves revolutionary.

Given your prominent M11 coverage (*Organise!* No. 33 p3), your failure to analyse EF! UK was particularly disappointing. Since its 1991 foundation, the UK movement has grown distinct from that in the US. Lacking indigenous wilderness, UK campaigns have orientated around opposing community to consumption infrastructure development — Golden Hill being as strong an example of this as George Green — and in this they more closely resemble German resistance to the nuclear state or the Japanese against Tokyo airport than US efforts.

Assuming current campaigning conditions continue, it will be impossible for EF! UKers to evade coherent social analysis — and thus the realisation that capitalism must be destroyed, not reformed. However, the tactics eco-activists see as appropriate to this end and the form of post-revolutionary society they envisage are unlikely to appeal to anarchist communists — whether that denies them validity is, perhaps, also for future debate.

Yours, for peoples' power and personal autonomy,  
Oxford Green Anarchists

**Eds reply:** Point taken about EF! UK. The 'Monkey Wrenchers' article was written by an ACF member currently in the USA and was referring to his experiences and knowledge of the US outfit. We're not so sure that EF! UK will "spontaneously" develop an anti-capitalist position, as you seem to suggest. Rather we feel that there must be a dynamic exchange of ideas between revolutionary Green militants and libertarian communist militants in order to develop a coherent, green (for want of a better term) libertarian communist analysis of capitalist society.

### The Rape of Eastern Europe

Dear *Organise!*

As seen from my own experiences in Romania and meeting and living with the people there, I see extreme exploitation and hardship for a comparatively underdeveloped (in the capitalist bosses' eyes) region of Europe — the Balkans. The authoritarian regime of State Capitalism (stalinists) under President Nicolae Ceaucescu and his dynasty produced an extreme police state and total control of the masses. This was done through the *Securitate* (secret police) of which there were thousands who were orphans of Ceaucescu's austere laws and policies of no abortion or contraception to produce more workers; these were brought up and "educated" (read brainwashed) by the State that Ceaucescu was their father. They then had a network of informers so that people literally lived in a state of fear. They had to carry identity cards wherever they went, or risk a fine or imprisonment, and needed permission or a visa to visit anyone outside their home town.

There were many other forms of control and in the latter days of the eighties for the so-called "national good" there was rationing of all commodities, the rest being exported to pay off the debts incurred to Russia and the West in the '70s. Life was worse than under the previous outright fascist government, monarchy and feudalism, which the people had not long left.

Under a programme known as "systemisation" the majority of self-sufficient rural peasant villages (especially those that were Hungarian and German) were starting to be destroyed both to produce an urban working class for industrialism (capitalism), to control the people better and to destroy the ethnic minorities (fascism). Much of what I have seen in Romania I can see happening subtly and slowly in Britain by a government totally out of touch with the people with a police to control the people and keep them in poverty and hardship so hopefully they won't fight back. The reor-

ganising of the police into zones, for example (to the Romanian sectors) and the clamping down on benefits, austerity measures and increasing restriction on people's freedom and on what they can afford. Is the future of Britain to be another Romania or Albania — an extreme police state? Not if ourselves and comrades throughout the world can help it!

Now Romania has Democracy and nothing has changed — just a new boss Ion Iliescu (ex-Communist Party). After the so-called "revolution" (for which the state has even made commemoration coins), all they have is a little more freedom to meet people from other countries and to live in less fear. But for most, things have got even worse: massive inflation means that much of the miserly wage (about 50% a month) is spent on just surviving on extremely expensive food, with very little savings. Only an elite minority (mostly ex-communists) can afford to travel outside their own country. This is why thousands of people are fleeing in droves into "prosperous" Hungary and the West seeking a better life. The EC now wants to clampdown on immigration from this region and create a new Iron Curtain, to cut off the Balkans, an area of great poverty and unrest.

What Romania and the unrest of Eastern Europe needs — and there are signs of this starting to evolve in Romania — is to build a national, and then International Working Class revolution to overthrow all bosses and governments, and help create a real future for all, a classless Anarchist Communist society. We look for-

## Review

*On the Border of a Police State.* £2 54pp. Hackney Community Defence Association, Trade Union Support Unit, 1993.

This booklet is well worth reading despite certain aspects which I will comment on later from an anarchist communist perspective. It recognises police crime and the fact that it is not even recognised as such. It then details the increasing powers being given to the police for political purposes with regards to industrial disputes, strikes, travellers, squatters, football crowds, workplace militants and political activists. It examines the three new reports on the police, the *White Paper on Police Reform*, the *Sheehy Report*, and the *Royal Commission on Criminal Justice Report*.

The government is looking at ways of cutting costs in line with its general austerity programme. Sheehy's report was opposed by the police for undermining their powers and for attacking the permanency of the job, in line with world-wide strategies of tempo-

ward to this evolving in Eastern Europe and the rest of the world: forward to the International Revolution.

SK (London E3)

### Letter from South Africa

Dear comrades,

It's great to hear from you. We hope all is well with your organisation. Firstly, we must congratulate you on an excellent publication. We've not had the time to read through it all but what we've seen has really impressed us. Secondly, as you've more than likely guessed we feel that your articles concerning South Africa are superb. Unlike most "revolutionary anarchist" publications you've researched your topic and published well informed articles. Congrats. Now to update you on local anarchist activity. We are currently involved in the formation of Anarchist Student Action on the campus of Witwatersrand. It's very much a Catch 22 situation. We can't be constituted as a "legal" movement unless we have 25 members yet as an "illegal" movement we cannot get people to join as we may not advertise. Anyway to date we have 12 members.

R. and E. Anarchist  
Revolutionary Movement, South Africa

**Eds reply:** We wish the South African comrades all the best. They will need much courage and determination in the struggle ahead. The comrades have reproduced the ACF pamphlet *Role of the Revolutionary Organisation* and are distributing it throughout S.Africa.

rary contracts and casualisation. The State wants a strong police force, but at the same time it wants to increase its control of it, and to undermine any autonomous power it may develop. This is rather a dilemma for them, because if the proposals of the reports were actually implemented, senior police officers will become some of the most powerful individuals in Britain.

The pamphlet details ways in which the police force can be resisted through legal support, victim support, investigating the police, seeking redress and publicity positing (surprise! surprise!) a role for the trade unions. The authors of the pamphlet understand that in an unequal society the police are there to maintain law and order for the rich and powerful against the poor and powerless, but go on to argue that the police are necessary because of anti-social elements. We disagree. We think that a self organised working class could look after its own communities. For us, all States are Police States. Nevertheless the pamphlet is useful for showing how the police are steadily increasing their powers.

# Aims and principles

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

2. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class. Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as a political level.

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

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

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

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

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

7. Unions by their very nature

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

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

## Join us!

**THE 20-YEAR economic depression/recession continues with large scale long term unemployment (four to five million plus) a permanent fixture.**

This is the political truth that none of the established Parties will admit to. It is a "sign of the times" that although the Conservative government is riven by crisis and scandal (Back to Basics, Health Service cuts, Irangate, arms-for-aid sweeteners) there is no credible opposition which will bring the government down (not that genuine revolutionaries care who administers capitalism). The La-Bore Party has long since dropped any pretence of socialism and vainly tries to out-Tory the Tories ("critically supported" of course by the Left). The racist policies and electioneering of the ruling Social Democrats in Tower Hamlets has

shown the nature of their "radicalism". The Green Party remains wedded to capitalism, parliament and legality with their pathetic bleatings about "our" government and the notion that "we're all (equally) responsible for pollution" — thank you, Union Carbide.

The triumph of private capitalism globally, preceded by the fall of the "Communist" regimes of Eastern Europe, has caused the collapse of many British left-wing groups. The Socialist Workers Party has taken advantage of this implosion in their dash for growth, aka never-mind-the-politics, look at the membership figures. The left's main pre-occupation is anti-fascism. They use their various front organisations (ANL, ARA, YRE) to recruit, and plug their counter-revolutionary politics, defending democracy and nationalism. So what real alternative is there? What alternative for those sickened by this rotting society, whose highest cultural forms seem to be Mr Blobby and Blind Date?

The anarchist movement in this coun-



try has failed to take advantage of the most favourable conditions for many years and remains trapped in its ghettos. Consistent and untiring propaganda and development of theory are required, as well as the need to break with the politics of the stunt and of localism. A national revolutionary organisation is needed. We in the ACF are working towards this. If you agree with these perspectives, then think seriously of joining us.