

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

THE WHOLE DEBATE about crime is hopelessly confused and confusing. One thing is certain, in the population at large, there is a fear of crime which politicians, especially the Tories but increasingly Labour, are exploiting for political gain. There is an ever growing demand by reactionaries of all kinds to "get tough with crime". It is an easy slogan to make which guarantees attention but, despite a dozen years of authoritarian Tory control, crime is nowhere near to being defeated. Why is this?

In capitalist society, what crimes actually are is determined by the state. They may, or may not, coincide with what working class people think is wrong behaviour. People 'living' on social security benefits cannot survive on what is available to them. They have either to get involved with some form of 'criminal' behaviour, whether this means social security fraud, shoplifting or worse. And most working class people who have jobs ask few questions when offered goods which have 'fallen off the back of a lorry'.

Their attitudes change when they become the victims of crime. It is an unfortunate fact that some working class people are quite happy to steal from or abuse their own kind. Stealing television sets and videos on council estates or racial or sexual attacks are examples of criminal behaviour which is not acceptable to the working class.

Does this mean that there is a double standard operating here? Not at all. The point about crime is that it must be seen in class terms. Crime is defined and combatted largely by the state acting in the interests of maintaining their order and protecting property. The maintenance of order is presented as being in the interests of all classes but in reality provides stability for the promotion of capitalism. Capitalism itself is based upon a form of robbery: exploitation. But this is not defined by the state as crime. Similarly, we all have personal property to protect but the state is mainly concerned with the protection of private property, ie the instruments of legal robbery — the banks, factories, shops etc. Working class people are generally aware of this. It is a commonplace to hear that there exists "one law for the rich and another for the poor".

So far, from an anarchist communist standpoint, we must be skeptical, to say the least, about the whole debate about crime. We are clear about one thing; anti-social crime, meaning anything which oppresses, robs or does violence to the working class, must be opposed. We cannot wait until 'after the revolution' to fight the active enemies of the people. Racist attacks, sexual assaults, muggings are not acceptable and we have to find solutions to these problems here and now. This will mean vigilance and self-defense by the affected communities. Middle class crimes and assaults on the working class by asset strippers and speculators, though often invisible, are also insidious and must be opposed collectively, where possible, in this long dark night of capitalism. Interestingly, their activities are not often seen by the state as crimes at all, or if they are, they carry relatively light punishments.

Anti-social acts are a direct expression of predatory capitalism. Selfishness, bullying, violence and legalised robbery are all inherent in the system. The tentacles of class society and its ethics have entered into every part of life. It is not accidental that men are responsible for

most crimes and that women hardly figure in the crime statistics. Men are socialised from birth to be aggressive, violent, hard and tough, whilst women are socialised to be submissive and caring. This sort of upbringing does untold psychological violence to boys as they are shaped by their parents and society to struggle and fight.

Add to this a strict and regimenting school system, a future of unemployment or dead-end jobs together with boredom and you have a mixture which invites trouble. This is not to excuse macho behaviour but is an attempt to place it in perspective. Crime and capitalism are inseparable.

If crime is a part of capitalist society, what will happen in an anarchist communist society? Anarchist communism is based upon the principles of a classless society in which freedom arises out of community solidarity and an enlightened system of socialisation and education. Private property will be abolished and the goal of production will be for the fulfilment of human need, not the accumulation of private wealth. Goods and services will be planned by the active communities working with similar communities elsewhere. The individual will be encouraged to take part in decision-making. In this way, goods and services will be provided to meet everyone's needs, so far as this is possible. Also, many services will be provided by the community just as public libraries are today, so that entertainment, transport etc will be on the basis of free access.

Moneyless

Communism requires the abolition of money and exploitation. With a moneyless society there will be no possibility to accumulate wealth beyond that which a person can possibly hold on to. Since goods are free, there will be little point in stealing and therefore most, if not all, crimes against property will disappear.

In a caring society which will do away with the desperate struggle for everyday survival, many of the material bases of want will disappear. The revolution will consciously want to eliminate anti-social behaviour and so education and the socialisation of children will be directed towards tolerance, equality and sharing. Violence, which is an ever present undercurrent of life today, will be discouraged through the development of cooperative play and education. The current obsession with aggressive individualism combined with glorification of male assertiveness probably accounts for much of male violence, especially among younger people. Whilst individualism as a means of achieving personal fulfilment is to be encouraged, it must be done so in a positive way. Gain for the individual is a gain for society as a whole. The point of anarchist communism is not to stifle individual effort but to channel it in constructive directions.

In present day society, most people are cut off from their neighbours. Very few real communities survive and those that do are deeply imbued with the values of capitalist society. In an anarchist communist society, community and solidarity will bind society together.

Despite education and other means of socialisation there will be isolated acts of violence, sexual assaults and other anti-social behaviour. Many of these will be carried out by people who are emotionally disturbed. The community has a right to protect itself and steps will have to be taken to eliminate violent

and other destructive behaviour. Such people should be cared for as far as possible within the community. This approach has nothing in common with the current dumping of the mentally disturbed onto the streets. In 'face to face' communities everyone will recognise their neighbours and take on a collective and individual responsibility for social care and control. Psychiatric and medical help will be aimed at the integration of disturbed individuals and the promotion of their welfare. There are no easy solutions to some disturbed and obsessive behaviour such as sexual assaults, arson etc. But the approach to such problems will have to be approached in an enlightened, not a punitive way.

This leads us to a discussion of punishment. Punishment, the infliction of violence for so-called crimes, has been a feature of virtually every society from the earliest recorded history. The *Old Testament* approach to punishment in which not only the 'guilty' are harmed but also their relatives and descendants is to be found in many societies. Aspects of this approach have come down to us today in Islamic law and in the Tory government's initiative in blaming and punishing parents for their children's crimes.

There are several justifications given for punishment, all of which are seriously flawed. Revenge is the most primitive, being based on the desire to 'get even' with the criminal. The 'retributive' approach starts from the assumption that individual crimes deserve punishment; murderers deserve to be executed, rapists deserve castration. Apart from the problem of gauging what is an appropriate punishment for each and every crime in a whole range of circumstances, this approach assumes that one act of inflicting pain (robbery, assault etc) is to be condemned whilst another, that of punishment (which might be equally brutal eg stoning of adulterers) is fine. It also accepts that a higher authority, ie the state, has the right alone to inflict punishment.

Linked to the vengeance justification for punishment is the idea of deterrence. Indeed, the two are usually cited together in determining a 'suitable' punishment in the courts. The idea that criminal behaviour will be reduced by the threat of punishment on being caught does not stand up. Firstly, many serious crimes take place on the spur of the moment when people lose self-control through anger, jealousy or drugs. There is no thought of the consequences of such acts.

Secondly, premeditated criminal acts are not deterred by the thought of an eventual punishment. What concerns criminals is the likelihood of getting caught. If such an event seems on balance to be possible, the proposed crime is aborted. A few hundred years ago pick-pockets were executed at public hangings. Active among the enthralled crowds were professional pick-pockets! So much for deterrence.

The idea that society will be better off by carrying out punishments misses the point. An unequal, unfair society creates its own criminality. What needs to be eliminated is the social and economic base for crime. Similarly, the idea of reforming criminals within the prison system is a sick joke. There is precious little enlightenment in Britain's repressive prison regime. In modern Britain, it is not the criminals that need to be 'reformed' but society itself, which needs to be changed, lock, stock and barrel.

ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

50p

April-June

1993

Issue 30

DEAFEN THE RULING CLASS



With the Sweet Music of Class Struggle

INSIDE:

Music and Class Struggle, Ecology and Enlightenment, Workplace Struggles, Religion, Somalia, And Much More!

Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation

ORGANISE!

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

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

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

Deadlines for next issue are 22nd February for features and reviews, and 5th March for letters and news.

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

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

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The ACF promotes the building of a strong and active anarchist movement in Britain and internationally and has contact with like-minded anarchists overseas. For all contact write to: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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- *Organise!* 26: Women & Revolution; Direct action; US Greens.
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Please send all feedback, contributions for *Organise!*, requests for papers and Press Fund money (payable to ACF) to the London address.

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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 regularly support *Organise!* Write to London address for account details. Dig into your pockets now! Thanks to all those who contributed to the Press Fund this issue:

£60, Sheffield; £210, London; £5, Pontypool; £8, Suffolk; £7, Nuneaton; £4, Barrow-in-Furness; £6, Gateshead.

WORKERS The Miners

PRESIDENT HESELTINE has seemingly backed down over the threatened closures of 31 pits. His announcement at the end of March was hailed as a famous victory for the mining communities by much of the ruling class press.

Gloomy picture

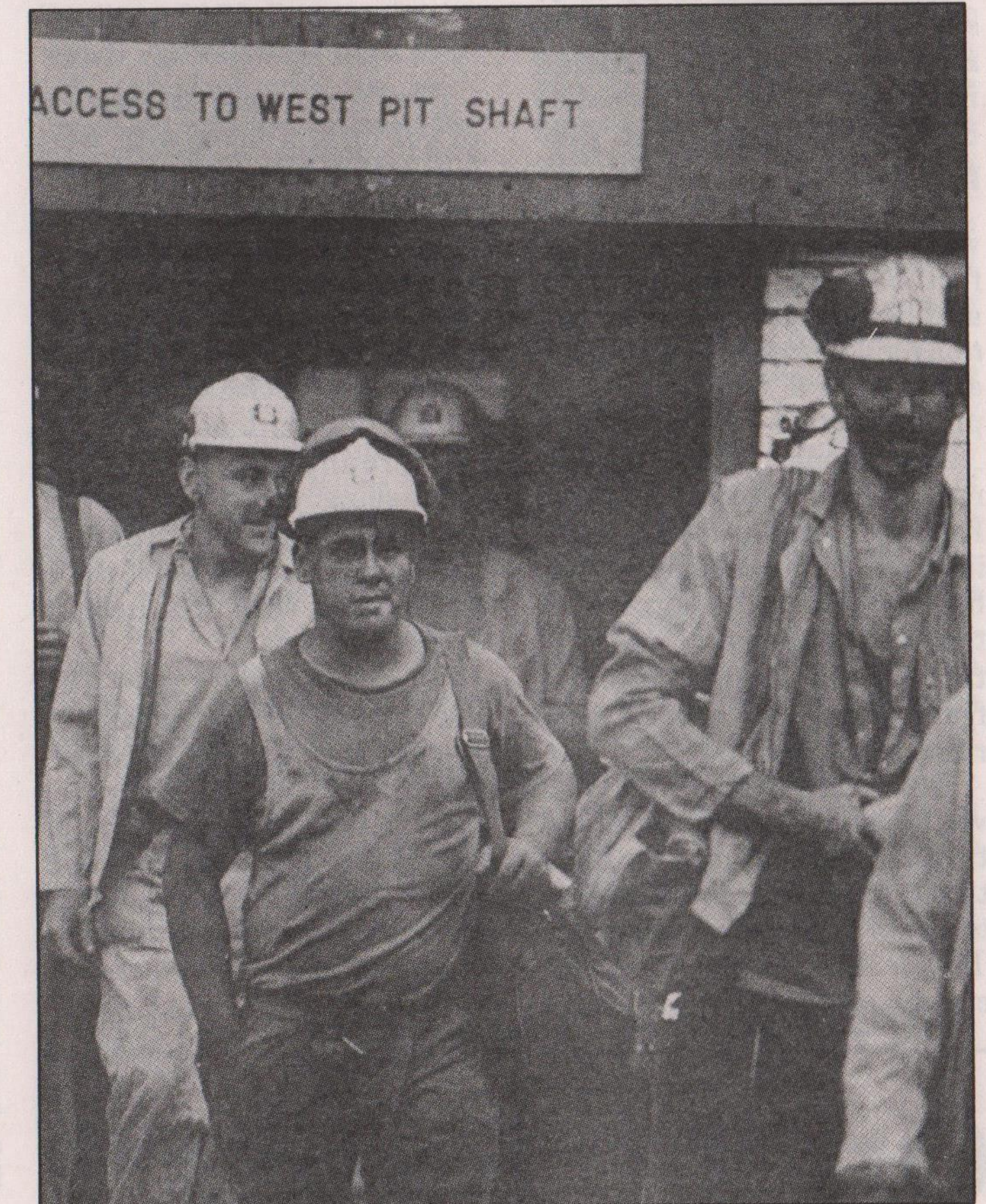
But a closer look at what was actually promised shows a much gloomier picture for the miners. Some 12 pits are still doomed, six are mothballed and one is 'in limbo'. What this means is that these pits are to be supposedly kept in running order, with no miners actually working in them! The 12 pits supposedly saved might not be open in a year's time. 5,800 miners are to lose their jobs, on top of the 8,000 who have left the industry since October. The pits will be privatised at the earliest possible opportunity and working practices will be tightened up, with more hours being spent underground. Since the end of the miners' strike of 1984-5, National Coal Board management have adopted increasingly aggressive attitudes towards the miners, and now this will

worsen. The government and the boss class hope that pit closures can take place in a camouflaged way with the further quitting of the industry by many miners, fed up with the worsening work conditions.

These supposed 'concessions' have been hailed by the national press, in a campaign to defuse the situation. Alongside these manoeuvres by the boss class, are the actions of the trade unions, including the TUC and the NUM. As we pointed out in *Organise!* 29, the TUC called several days of action, supported by many thousands, to take the heat out of the situation. They were aware of the rising tide of working class anger, and made steps to let a little steam be let off. The anger is still there, and so they have been forced to take what at first sight seems like more radical forms of action.

Courts

The NUM has concentrated on mobilising 'public opinion' and going through the courts to stop the pit closures. As we pointed out, this was designed to head off any direct action amongst the miners and



other sections of the working class. The NUM issued no appeals for solidarity action to those workers directly or indirectly threatened by the pit closures. Now, the NUM has developed other methods of containing the actions by miners. Seven pit camps have been set up by women of the mining communities outside threatened mines, along the lines of the Greenham Common Camp. Women took an active role in the Great Miners' Strike, and now their activities have been harnessed by the NUM bureaucracy to their public relations' campaign. Unless the actions of the women of the mining communities break free of the stranglehold of NUM bureaucracy, the camps will be just a cover for NUM failure to actually take any action, including strikes and occupations and active solidarity from other workers. The pit camps could be transformed into active centres to galvanise action, but at the moment this seems far from the case.

On the face of it, the strike of April 2, involving miners, rail workers and London bus workers, was a positive step, with workers going from ineffectual demonstrations to strike action and united solidarity action with other workers. But the fact is that these one-day strike actions are an effort by the union leaders to limit action. They know that rising discontent must force them to call what appear to be more radical actions. But Scargill, and the rail union leaders like Knapp and Fullick, often described as 'lefts' by Leninist organisations, are politically tied to the rest of the union leaderships and are as much part of the apparatus of social control as the 'right-wing' leadership of the TUC.

Scargill called for strike action on both 19 January and 18 February. Both times he backed down, after conversations with the TUC leadership. Each time miners prepared for action, and each time they were left demoralised.

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 will be a pamphlet on the *Italian Factory Councils of 1920-21*.

Copies of the *Friends of Durruti* pamphlet will be available from:

ACF (London) c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 at 50p plus postage.

Railworkers

THE SLAUGHTER OF rail lines by British Rail will result in job losses of 40,000 with reductions to up to 40 services. Fares are set to rise by 10% and the unified national timetable is set to disappear under BR proposals.

The rail unions colluded with BR management on the forthcoming privatisations, and accepted the *Organisation for Quality* document that established business and profit centres.

The leader of the biggest rail union RMT, Jimmy Knapp, is famous for his fighting talk. In practice, however, he wholeheartedly agreed to the new structures of negotiation, giving management a freer hand to impose new rules and conditions.

Now the RMT and the white collar union TSSA are turning to the 'public opinion' tactic, lining up solidly behind the public relations tosh of the 'Better Rail Campaign'. Increasing anger from the rail-

workers forced them to call a ballot for the one-day strike on April 2.

Blame

The unions are attempting to get off the hook with workers by blaming each other. So the RMT blames the traindrivers' union ASLEF for lack of solidarity, whilst ASLEF turns round and does the same. In this way effective solidarity between railworkers is undermined.

More and more railworkers are seeing clearly what the role of the unions is. There is a growing awareness of their connivance with the Labour Party.

They remember how the RMT called off the strike last April so that it would not damage Labour's election chances. They look back to the days of the 'Left' GLC with their Fares Fair plans for London Transport, which resulted in productivity deals and speed-ups.

On the Buses

THE TEN COMPANIES which make up London Buses Ltd have demanded pay cuts of 20%, increase in the working week and job losses.

Sell off

They are justifying this by saying that if they do not cut operating costs, they will lose contracts to private operators in April. This is in line with plans to de-regulate and sell off London bus services by the end of 1993.

Four of the six garages in East London have already closed and the London Forest bus company has collapsed. These worsening conditions in London are reflected in other cities throughout Britain. Fares have shot up, and passenger use has dropped.

The private operators in cutthroat competition have aggravated traffic congestion in city centres whilst country services have been annihilated.

The working class of London can expect the same situation, with worsening traffic chaos, the axing of many routes, the end of concessions for pensioners and yet more fare rises.

Bus workers will face increasing workloads, longer hours and greater stress and pressure.

The principal busworkers' union, the TGWU, has resorted to the usual tactics. They organised a march and lobby of parliament, which they deliberately failed to adequately publicise.

Enquiry

They tried to head off strike action by calling for a select committee to launch an enquiry!

Mass meetings in the garages showed the strength of anger of busworkers and their willingness to fight, and the union was forced to organise a ballot, much as the RMT had done.

ACE

Anarchist Communist Editions

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

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

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

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

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

The Post

THE POST OFFICE plans to sack 16,000 workers by March 1996. Whilst the amount of mail has gone up 50% in ten years, nine workers are now expected to do the work of ten. These attacks are in line with Heselstine's review pointing to break-up of the postal services and privatisation.

sionment with the union has resulted.

Back in 1988 postal workers went out in 12 days of unofficial action which terrified management and the union. This could happen again, indeed it must.

As can be seen by these brief reports on various industries, only united action, outside the control of the unions, can provide an effective way to fight.

Links have to be built between railworkers, bus and tube workers, and miners as a priority. Beyond this, united action must come with other workers under threat from the State and the bosses, like health workers and postal workers.

Disillusionment

In the face of this, the UCW, the posties' union, could only call for redundancies not to be compulsory and to express surprise at the number of projected job losses! All this, after the UCW had negotiated a pathetic 2.5% pay rise. Increasing disillusionment



Twyford Down and the State

TWYFORD DOWN IS a beautiful area of high ground lying SE of Winchester in Hampshire.

It is rich in historical features such as the site of an Iron Age village, pre-Roman field systems, and ancient trackways known as the Dongas, which a group of protesters have named themselves after. They have been camped on the site to defend it since at least last summer and constant actions have been going on with locals, Friends of the Earth supporters (who soon dropped out) and above all Earth Firsters who have been consistently in action against the proposed M3 eight-lane motorway beside the already

the Twyford Down cutting. 'Green celebrities' like Porritt and Bellamy as well as the Friends of the Earth lent their support to the campaign and direct action to save the Down was even mooted by the thoroughly respectable Residents' Association and Twyford Down Association. But this was all rhetoric and was, unsurprisingly, never put into practice when the DOT with the hired security men ruthlessly evicted the Dongas protesters.

Class Struggle

To many, Twyford Down may seem like another Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) of little relevance to class struggle activists. But the Twyford Down affair, like the planned destruction of Oxleas Wood for similar reasons, is part of an international attack on the countryside and the environment for the needs of capitalism. The British State will tolerate no opposition to its plans, and will use State violence if it feels it to be necessary. The government has the powerful backing of the road lobby, and has need of a road infrastructure geared to compete with the high-speed rail link to the Channel Tunnel. Besides Twyford Down, there are over 15 new road schemes in preparation or under construction.

Government expenditure on road schemes has gone up phenomenally since 1979. A vast number of historic and environmental sites are under threat. And this is just in Britain. The road scheme here is part of an international plan to provide Europe with a modernised road system geared to the free trade principles of the Single Market. France plans to double its road system by the year 2000, including driving a road through the Massif Central mountains. The European Commission plans a 50% growth of the road infrastructure.

This is not all. The European Community is providing funds for several environmentally damaging hydro-electric projects. These include the diversion of the Aeheloos River in Greece, which will

threaten many species of bird and ruin the livelihood of hundreds of fishing families; the funding of 250 dams in Spain, which will destroy more than 100 ecological sites; the funding of a large bridge over the Tagus in Portugal, where the most environmentally damaging of three routes was chosen.

The fight against the Twyford Down cutting has relevance to the fightbacks against roads in the rest of Britain. A nationwide fightback against roads would include mobilisations against the Oxleas Wood development and the M11 link road through Hackney Marshes. It would need to link up with the developing opposition to road schemes and other forms of ecological damage throughout Europe.

The fight at Twyford Down was bogged down in legalistic appeals to the European Court, and a letter-writing

campaign to the Government and the Queen! The Dongas Tribe, to their credit did attempt to use direct action to stop the development. What was lacking however, was a mass mobilisation, so that the cutting could be physically stopped due to weight of numbers. There is an urgent need to link up the fight against road schemes to the fight of railworkers and bus workers. The car economy promoted by capitalism has to be directly related to the attacks on public transport, and the vision of a new society which would be geared to environmental harmony and the expansion of a free public transport system. The fight in the countryside has to go in tandem with inner-city actions against road schemes, such as Carmageddon mass blockages of roads that are beginning to develop.

Nigerian comrades freed

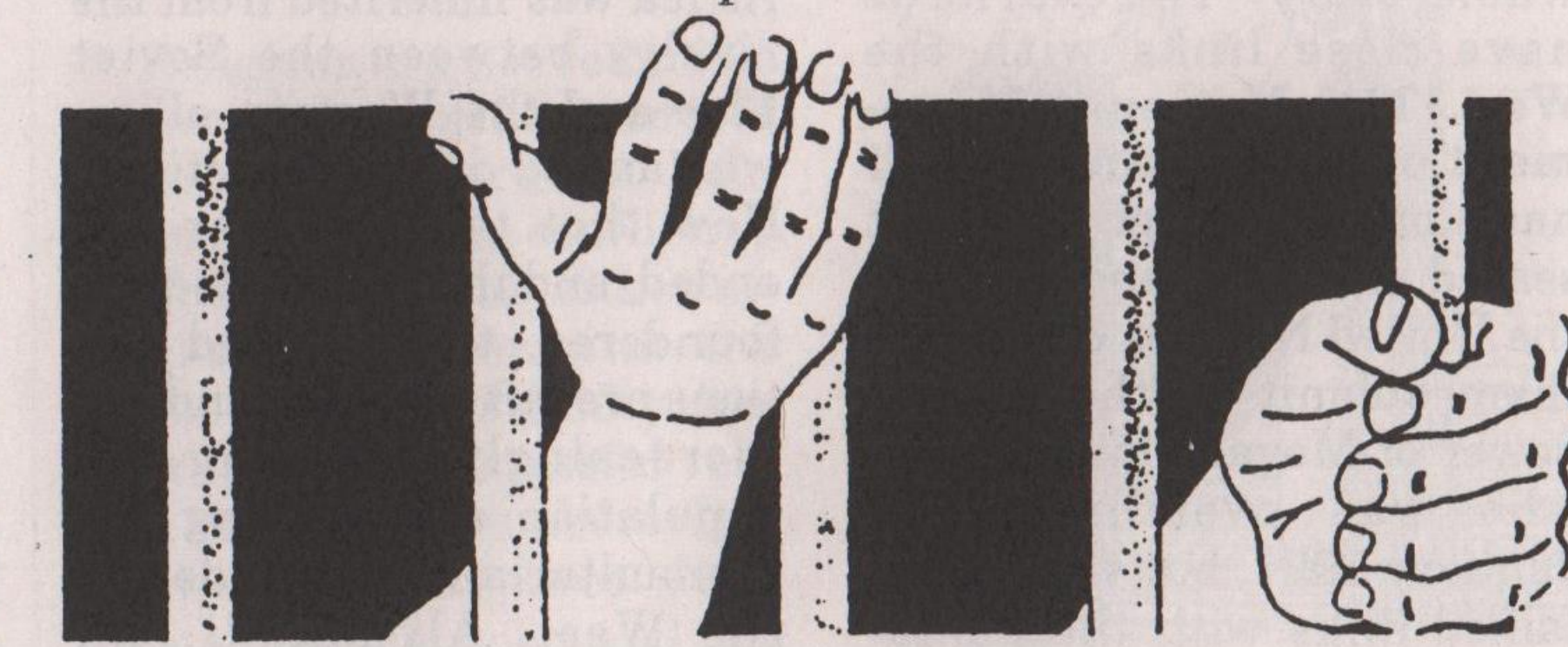
IN OUR LAST issue we had an article on the repression and imprisonment of the libertarian socialists of the Awareness League of Nigeria.

Legal costs

On 29 January the four comrades were released after eight long hard months. According to the Awareness League, the comrades looked "badly emaciated, weak and sick". The four were released on bail but have to report weekly to the secret police. It is feared they may be re-arrested any time. The Awareness League asks for continued moral and material support.

They have legal costs of about US\$12,000. Send contributions — either International Money Orders or UK bank cheques by express to: Awareness League c/o Samuel Mbah, PO BOX 28, Agbani, Enugu State, Nigeria.

London ACF mounted a picket and handed out leaflets about the imprisonment outside Nigerian Airlines office. Pickets and demonstrations also took place in Dublin, Hamburg and New York. Letters of protest and petitions were sent from Germany, S. Africa, S. Korea, Turkey, India, Brasil, Italy, Canada, USA, Russia, Bulgaria, Norway, Spain, Estonia and Poland.



Warlords or US troops — what's the difference?

THE MEDIA HAS functioned well in both Europe and the United States in putting the joint US-European intervention in Somalia over as a *humanitarian* act. The 36,000 troops who landed in Somalia weren't there to protect the Somali population against the ravages of the local warlords. They were there to protect the interests of their own ruling classes.

For example in France there was a massive exposure of photogenic Somali babies dying of hunger in silence. Public opinion was manipulated to allow the French participation in the adventure. Since the landing there has been little footage of children and women dead from hunger but plenty of well armed military supermen.

Inevitable

The wave of sympathy and solidarity with the starving of Somalia was cynically exploited by the boss classes and the State apparatuses of the US and the West, so that military intervention could be accepted as the inevitable logic by many ordinary people faced with the feeling of powerlessness.

Alongside the images of emaciated children were those of a country delivered over to chaos, where the chiefs of military clans let loose their Mad Max men at arms on a population that they starved and crushed beneath the wheels of their armoured Toyotas.

This picture was partly true, but did not reveal the whole story. The warlords have close links with the West. The **National Movement of Somaliland (NMS)** has a provisional government seated in Paris and accuses the United Nations of making them submit to the central power of Mogadishu S Barre, who was overthrown in January 1991, but who maintained links with the Penta-



gon and the CIA, who allowed him to re-establish himself in Somalia. M Abchir, leader of the **Somali Democratic Socialist Front** was armed by the West via their allies in the Middle East (Egypt, the Gulf monarchies). The interim President, Ali Mahdi, was supported by Italy, who delivered 10 tonnes of arms and three tonnes of bank notes to him via Kenya in exchange for letting him use Somalia as a dumping ground for toxic waste.

Behind the warlords are their Western godfathers. If the famine in Somalia has been aggravated by the war between the different clans, it remains above all the work of the Great Powers whose 'humanitarian' intervention disguises objectives that are less openly admissible. It should be remembered that the legacy of civil war throughout Africa was inherited from the rivalry between the Soviet Bloc and the Western allies, who armed different factions. Now that the cold war has ended, and the Soviet bloc has foundered, these armed factions are left without funding, increasingly pillaging the population and robbing the humanitarian aid provided by the West. Ali Mahdi and

General Aydid, who broke with Mahdi and heads his own faction, are two of the richest men in Somalia, thanks to their control of food distribution and traffic in drugs.

The US government, after its demonstration of military might with Operation Desert Storm in Kuwait and Iraq, did not want to rest on its laurels. It wanted to confirm its role of world leader by digging in in this part of the world. The Somali operation allowed this to take place. Somalia is now the base camp and aircraft carrier for the defence of the interests of American big business. It overlooks the searoads of the petrol tankers, it is close to the Gulf and the Middle East, and is situated in the zone of influence of French interests coveted by Washington.

Intervene

This forward camp for the USA on the East African coast can allow it to intervene in this zone against the interests of the French (or European) ruling class. It could intervene in Chad, in Zaire, throughout North Africa where French interests are under threat, in particular in Algeria. It could attack Libya or the Sudan and

could control the Middle East which it regards as its patch. It can now better support its faithful ally Mubarak in Egypt, increasingly under internal threat. The USA is worried that the stability of Egypt is in jeopardy as a pro-Western state in the Arab world.

Added to this is the determination to get over the humiliation of the Vietnam war, a process that started with the intervention in the Gulf. In this way the 'Vietnam syndrome' that shackled any American military intervention abroad can be countered. The Somali operation will also help on an international level, with people getting used to US invasions.

Under cover of humanitarianism, the arrival of Western troops is to counter the chaotic political situation due to the collapse of the central government in Mogadishu. This is seen as a dangerous example for the neighbouring countries of Egypt to the north and Kenya to the south. On 18 May 1992 the tribal chiefs of the north proclaimed the independence of Somaliland and the division of Somalia. A little later, on 28 May, on the other side of the border, Eritrea proclaimed its independence from Ethiopia, fol-

Operation Restore Oil

The US petrol companies actively pushed Bush to mount the Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.

Concessions

Four major American companies (Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips) obtained concessions for prospecting nearly two thirds of Somalia just before the pro-US president Siad Barre was overthrown in January 1991. The chaos that followed interrupted profitable investigations for oil in a country classed by the World Bank as one of the two most promising African countries in terms of petrol resources.

The head offices of Conoco in Mogadishu were transformed into a base of operations for the US forces several days before the arrival of the Marines. Operation Restore Hope? More like Operation Restore Oil!

lowed by attempts by Ogaden and Tigre to break away from the central government. Alongside these secessionist movements is the menace of Islamic fundamentalism. In Somalia, this is well organised in the **Al Ittihad** movement, which has recruited throughout all the clans and factions. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood is an increasing threat to the government. In Sudan, the Koranic Law has been adopted as a constitution and Khartoum has become the refuge and the base for Algerian and Tunisian fundamentalists.

Humanitarianism

An intervention by Western troops, under the cover of humanitarianism, is designed to limit and counter these menaces. This precious alibi has been useful for hoodwinking public opinion at home by saying: "For the first time, the United Nations is intervening for purely humanitarian reasons, to do good, to feed the starving, protect the defenceless and open the way to political, economic and social reconstruction in Somalia".

The US intervention in Somalia points to a clash between the Western powers, in particular between France and the USA, over their interests in this part of Africa. After having lost its zones of influence in the Lebanon and Iraq without any replacements, France sees the areas that it has regarded as its own for a long time as under threat: Algeria, Chad, and Djibouti where the government is now backed by the US

whilst France gives its support to a pro-French opposition.

This rivalry between the Western powers and the increasing domination of the USA points to the growing 'everyone for himself' attitude among the different fractions of the international ruling class.

In attempting supremacy in what were the economic and political reserves of France, the USA is attempting to weaken and destabilise the European bloc, of which France along with Germany are the most important elements.

Whilst they are aware of this, the French ruling class has no choice but to range themselves behind the banner of Uncle Sam. They have to associate themselves with the US operation to defend their own interests and attempt to reinforce their own influence over the new Somali leaders that the USA will impose. They are conscious of US supremacy in Somalia. Out of 36,000 men deployed by the Western powers, 28-30,000 are American against 2,000 French troops.

The Somali masses, comprising a small urban working class and a vast number of poor peasants, have already scented the real reason for Western intervention. The fleeting joy amongst some that the West would deliver them from the warlords has now disappeared. There is growing hostility to the occupation forces, sometimes breaking out in outbursts of violence.

GOD

YOU CAN USUALLY find some saving grace in any religion. Islam for example stresses community solidarity, Christianity love of our fellow (sic) human beings, whilst Buddhism has concern for every living creature, and so on. On the basis of religious inspiration some of the world's greatest art has been produced from the beautiful Mosques of Isfahan to the wall paintings of Ajanta to the frescos on the Sistine Chapel. However, the damage caused by religions both as philosophical systems and in their practical application makes them a serious enemy of human freedom.

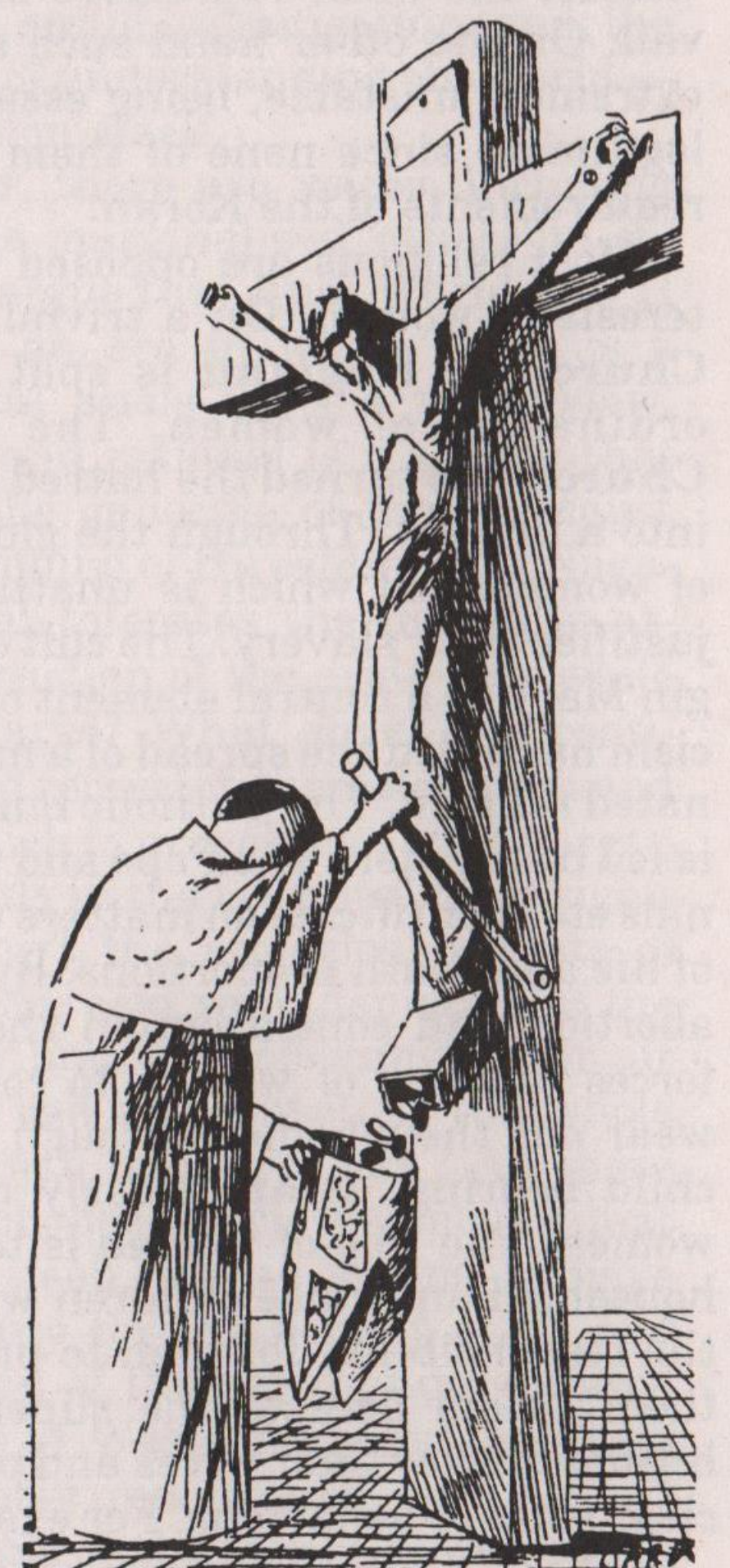
It is dangerous to generalise about religions since they vary enormously in very many respects, but from an anarchist viewpoint they must all be seen as obstacles at best, or more usually as enemy belief systems. Bakunin in his work *God and the State* has some interesting criticisms to make, but it is almost entirely devoted to a discussion of Christianity and is mainly concerned with its application in Europe. Marx in characterising religion as the 'opium of the people' is half right, in respect of national or state religions. The idea of the 'divine right of Kings' and the sickening sight of priests blessing troops before they go off to face death at the front are obvious examples of this.

His view that religion is "the fantastic reflection in men's minds" (sic) of the material world is an interesting starting point which has some validity. He made the point that in the so-called religions of the 'Book', Judaism, Christianity and Islam, god is seen as the great father in the sky, reflecting the earthly reality of male domination. Engels too, in his article on the Book of Revelation offers an intriguing analysis of that mystical work in terms of language analysis, proving it to be a coded description of Christianity in the Roman world.

The difficulty with materialist analyses of religions is that they usually ignore or reject psychological and cultural factors and in doing so underestimate their power. The Marxist, August Bebel, proposed a crude evolutionary theory of religion in which he believed it would disappear as science and society develop. In our present world where science and technology have been used to dominate the planet and its people, religion remains as strong as ever. In fact we are seeing a religious resurgence on a world scale. For example, the resurgence of Islam in the Middle East may in part be due to the effects of international capitalism, but equally is surely an expression of the despair felt by many of all classes in the face of decaying culture. Fundamentalist Islam is an attempt to reclaim feelings of self-worth. How else can the widespread Islamic militancy by women in Iran and elsewhere be explained? Why else do they embrace a belief system which enslaves them?

Conflicting

Religions are not reducible to pseudo-scientific analyses as touted by Marxists. Religions often contain conflicting qualities which can either reinforce or undermine the status-quo. Christianity has been the most successful religion in terms of numbers. It is supposed to be a source of salvation for the poor and op-





pressed, yet historically the picture is more complex. On the one hand it was embraced by slaves during the Roman Empire, but when it became the Empire's official religion it was used to justify slavery. For the last 2000 years Christianity has been both a justification for class society and the state and a reason for their overthrow. Christianity as rebellion has a long history including the Levellers, Diggers etc., during the English Civil War. Islam has had a similar dual quality. For example the Wahabbi sect of Islam was the most communitarian and egalitarian example of Islam, but when it was successful in Arabia it became transformed under the Saud family into an ideology of hypocrisy and repression. Islam (as an ideas system) barely tolerates government — we need only submit to God. Yet in all of the Islamic worlds, the most repressive states prevail. On the other hand such states are extremely unstable, being essentially illegitimate since none of them fulfil the requirements of the Koran.

Most religions are opposed to the interests of women. On a trivial level the **Church of England** is split over the ordination of women. The **Catholic Church** has turned the hatred of women into a fine art. Through the glorification of womanhood which is unattainable it justifies their slavery. The cult of the Virgin Mary as a central element of Catholicism has aided the spread of a male dominated religion. The Catholic bureaucracy is led by old men. The Pope and the cardinals etc., pontificate on matters which are of life and death proportions. By banning abortion and contraception the Church forces millions of women to continually wear out their bodies through repeated child bearing. **Islam** clearly oppresses women. The role of women is to run the household and raise children whilst it is the responsibility for men to provide for them. Islam accepts the superiority of husbands over their wives and proscribes clear rules of behaviour. For example the



Koran proscribes a system of beatings which husbands can apply to their wives (this is clearly spelt out in the Penguin edition whilst the 'official' translation aimed at a western audience interprets the Arabic text in milder terms). Hinduism is a very conservative religion in terms of the role of women. An aspect of its practice actually involves the murder of widows who burn themselves to death on their husband's funeral pyre is illegal in India, but cases still occur, especially in rural areas of India. How many women have been forced to choose this particularly disgusting form of death will never be known.

Hinduism, with its caste system, is also well known for its sanctioning of rigid social inequality. From the Bhramins downwards every Hindu has a pre-ordained role eg, soldier, carpenter, farmer etc., which can only change on death and re-birth. What is less well known is that many Christians and Muslims in India also preserve the caste differences. In Tamil Nadu, for example, untouchables are prevented from entering churches which are run by high caste Christians. This is an interesting example of ignoring religious doctrine for social and economic ends. The idea of social inequality is an essential feature of Islam. It accepts slavery as a perfectly reasonable system of ownership and enshrined in the notion of 'zakat' (ie., charity to the poor) is the acceptance of wealth and poverty, though the poor shouldn't be too poor! Christianity in its semi-official form in Britain is deeply attached to the state. The Queen is head of the Church of England and the bishops sit in the House of Lords. Although the divine right to rule is no longer accepted, a cosy relationship between the monarchy and the Church ensures their mutual benefit. Pity the royal brats with their marital problems, divorce etc., have somewhat undermined the 'sanctity of marriage'.

State Religion

What is interesting is how an ostensibly atheistic belief system should have become transformed into something like a state religion. **Marxism-Leninism** in

Russia and China both granted semi-divine status to its saints. Lenin, Stalin and Mao were all preserved by so-called revolutionaries for the masses to worship. So far, only Stalin has been buried. The other two lie frozen in their tombs in Moscow and Beijing.

Many religions claim universal status in that they are meant to be applicable to all of humanity. There are plenty of exceptions to this rule, **Judaism** is meant for Jews and **Hinduism** is for the people of India. Christianity and its warring factions, Islam and Buddhism (insofar as this is a true religion) all claim to have the message for all of us. Accordingly, there is little room for compromise between them, especially when these religions are taken in the fundamentalist sense of divinely inspired truth. To an extent this explains religious wars such as the Crusades, though the prospect of loot and power also played a part. When religious intolerance is allied to nationalism, then violence is the likely outcome. The long term animosity between Protestantism and Catholicism has a strong measure of national-religionism in it, accepting the imperialist involvement as well. In the former Yugoslavia, Catholic-nationalism confronts Islam and Orthodox Christianity. In India a growing nationalism combined with a resurgence of Hinduism has caused thousands of deaths and extreme intolerance for other religions. Nationalism and fundamentalist Islam has led to the repression of the **Bahai** faith, and so on.

Health warning

In the end we have to conclude that religions are highly dangerous and deserve an anti-government health warning. When we come to the issue of sex, religions become especially intolerant. Though Hinduism has its temple women for the use of the 'priests', like the three main monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam, any sex carried on outside marriage is banned. Homosexuality, incest, masturbation, you name it, it's wrong if not okayed by the religious texts...and that usually means lifetime heterosexuality between the dominant man and his wife (wives). The result has been untold misery and repression for millions.

Religion needs to be fought vigorously. The psychological comfort it gives has to be weighed against the damage it does. It is not enough to state as Lenin did, hypocritically, that religion is a private matter. Religions are not private if they seek world conversion to their particular and exclusive creed.

Ecology and Enlightenment

WITHIN THE ACF the article 'Ecology and Class' has initiated an ongoing series of articles in *Organise!* which has attempted to give a class struggle anarchist analysis to the issue of ecology. So far we have examined the related roles of the IMF, World Bank, transnational corporations and the State within capitalism, with its logic of profits, growth and competition, and how this works to produce the current ecological crisis. We have also been developing a critique of the responses to this crisis such as **lifestylism, green consumerism, pressure groups and the Green Party.**

In concentrating our analysis on the way capitalism is responsible for our environmental degradation and, therefore, the necessity of overthrowing capitalism, are we assuming that the exploitation of the environment would end automatically in a post-revolutionary society? We don't believe that this would necessarily be the case.

It is important to recognise that capitalism is able to function because it uses ideas within our culture which are shared throughout the social structure. Like racism and sexism, ideas of nature as a threat to be controlled and exploited are deeply ingrained in our attitudes and culture, often unconsciously. These ideas need to be challenged and changed if we are not to reproduce the same antagonisms and power relations in a post-capitalist society. So we need to look at how these ideas have developed historically, whose interests they serve and how we can move beyond them.

Antagonistic

Although the antagonistic relationship between culture and nature can be

traced back at least as far as the establishment of patriarchal christianity in Western Europe, the idea of this relationship takes on its greatest significance in the philosophy of the 18th century **Enlightenment.** The ideas of the Enlightenment, which were crucial for the development of modern capitalist society, focus on the importance of rational, scientific analysis as a means of liberating 'man' from the constraints of superstition, irrationality and nature. Enlightenment thought held that a strange and dangerous world should be analysed, classified and brought within the control of rational, western man. This is the era that saw the first encyclopedia compiled in which nature was described as 'red in tooth and claw'. It was also the era which produced the French Revolution and saw the historic rise of bourgeois capitalism.

Within the world-view of bourgeois, educated western man, oppositions were established between his own internal world of culture and the menacing 'other' of nature which must be tamed and brought within the comprehension and service of his interests. So, for example, the colonised people of Africa, America and Asia were represented as being 'other', savages, closer to nature, less evolved, irrational and thus incapable of running their own affairs. This served to justify their exploitation by the rational, cultured man of the West. The working and peasant classes were also seen to be 'other' and their behaviour and customs was a threat and hindrance to their use by capital. Football, originally played by huge numbers in the streets, was removed to a specified rectangle of grass surrounded by stands and seats at which huge numbers of working class people could now only watch and pay to see just 22 men playing the game. The production of alcohol was concentrated in the hands

of profit-making concerns and its sale limited to licensed premises at particular hours. Measures such as these were intended to make a wild, hedonistic and irresponsible class into a controlled, sober, consumerist workforce.

Women, who had been 'others' for centuries, found this view strongly reinforced by the new bourgeois ideology. Victorian values portrayed women as evil and irrational and as needing to be locked up within the prison of the bourgeois family. Their purpose was to reproduce a willing, happy-to-be-exploited workforce.

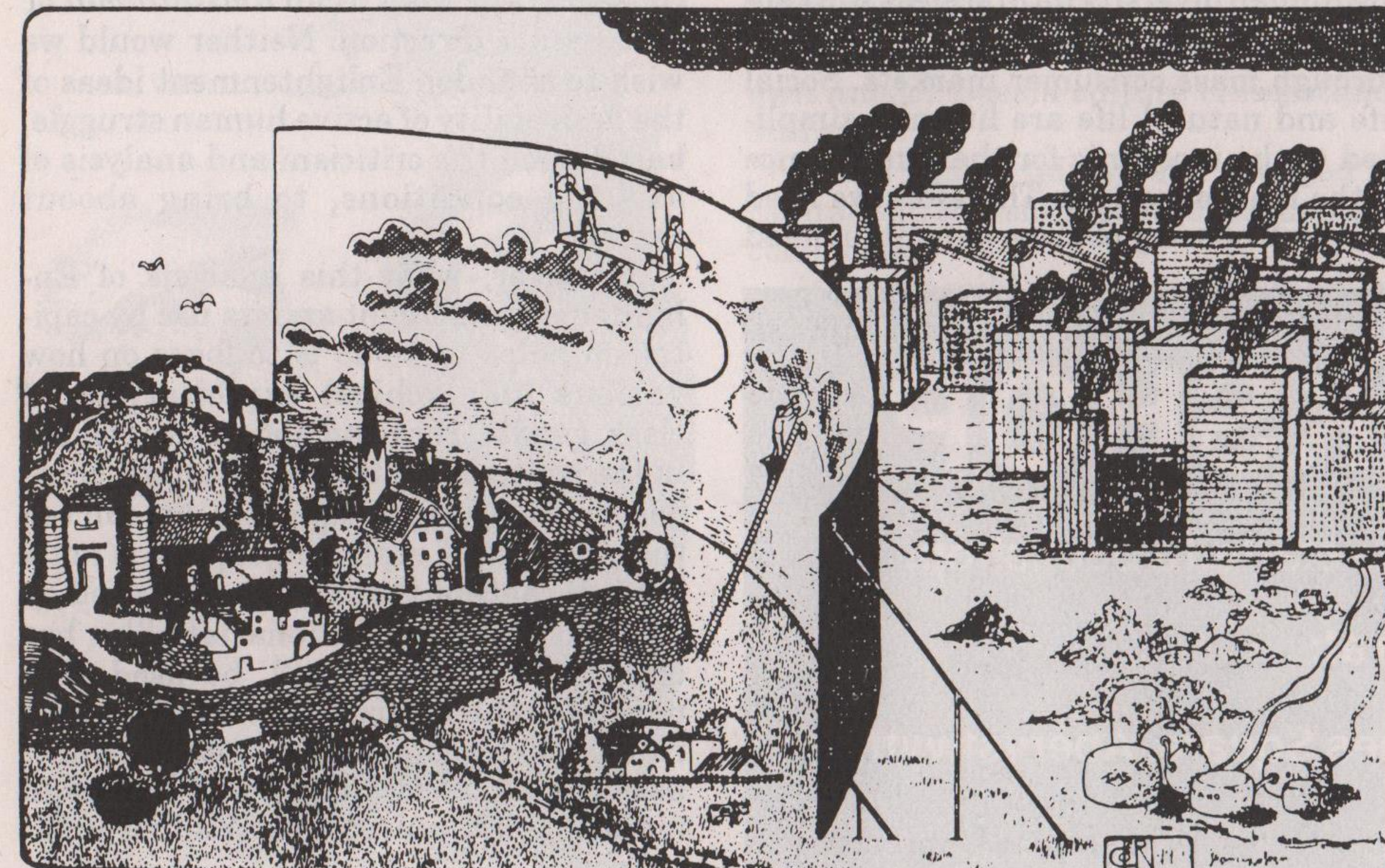
The great 'other' to Western culture, Nature, was similarly seen as a force to be tamed, reined in and subjugated in the service of the developing urban and industrial needs of a commodity-based society.

Consolidation

This entire process develops and increases its grip on every aspect of life as capitalism consolidated itself in the late 19th and 20th century. More and more sophisticated techniques of control and surveillance are produced. Military powers and capabilities increase as the nation states of the West exert their control over the rest of the world and fight each other over the plunder. The commodity market becomes globalised through developments in transport and communications. Huge cities emerge while the countryside is turned over to the farming of vast monocultures. All this bears witness to the efforts of bourgeois ideology to establish itself as the single method of social organisation and the single way of understanding the world — as 'civilisation' itself.

However, there are voices, including those of the marginalised 'others' in society, who argue that since World War II we live in an era in which there is a fundamental crisis in this world-view. How sane and rational is a society that produced the genocide of the holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or that tolerates the mutually assured destruction of the arms race while millions starve? What about the continuing world recession, homelessness and poverty which is provoking social unrest, most recently in the LA riots? Most significantly, don't the ecological threats of deforestation, acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer and the poisoning of our air and water call into question the whole idea of growth and 'progress'? All these factors symbolise a society which is ill at ease with itself, whose claims to have tamed nature for the benefit of all and whose vision of the never-ending march of progress of Western civilisation have been seriously undermined.

Symptoms of the loss of confidence in



a bright future are in evidence all throughout our culture. The *Terminator* films show a vision of the future in which the world and its population have been half-destroyed in a war between humanity and a military technology which has taken on a life of its own, believing itself to be superior to humanity. While the future looks bleak, people turn to the past and the countryside for comfort and reassurance. Home owners 'personalise' their '60s council flats with plastic 'oak beams' and leaded windows. The number of museums has doubled in the last two decades with one opening every two weeks. We even have a minister of 'heritage'.

Autopilot

On the other hand there is capitalism, ever more dependent on fictitious capital. Independent of nation states, it is running on autopilot, oblivious to our human crisis or the threats to the planet and all its life, except, of course, when they can be used as a marketing tool for increasing profits.

How do we, as anarchists, respond to this situation? Obviously proclaiming "the end is nigh!" and thus further encouraging people's pessimism and cynicism about the possibility of real change won't help. We must continue to call for resistance and ultimately a class uprising to overthrow capitalism and then to create a free communist society. But how can we ensure that the same dangerous values and power relationships are not carried over into the new society? How can we persuade others that things won't turn out just the same or worse than before?

We believe the answer lies in listening to the voices of those 'others' that have been marginalised and suppressed by Western civilisation. One of the most useful critiques for this purpose is that developed by some elements of feminism. Many of the ideas already referred to are taken from such feminist thought, some of which has simultaneously developed a critique of the exploitation of women and nature since both are treated in our society as irrational, threatening, in need of taming and objects of exploitation.

As Ynestra King has written, "The hatred of women and the hatred of nature



are intimately connected and mutually reinforcing". And as Peggy Kornegger in her essay, *Anarchism: the Feminist Connection* says, "What feminists are dealing with is a mind-fucking process — the male domineering attitude towards the external world, allowing only subject/object relationships. Traditional male politics reduces humans to object status and then dominates and manipulates them for abstract 'goals'. Women, on the other hand, are trying to develop a consciousness of 'other' in all areas. We see subject to subject relationships as not only desirable but necessary. Together we are working to expand our empathy and understanding of living things and to identify with entities outside ourselves, rather than objectifying and manipulating them. At this point, a respect for all life is a prerequisite for our survival".

King, in *Toward an Ecological Feminism and a Feminist Ecology* goes on to explain how the lack of diversity in patriarchal capitalist society is mirrored in the threat to diversity in nature. She writes, "A healthy balanced ecosystem, including human and non-human inhabitants, must maintain diversity...wiping out of whole species corresponds to reducing human diversity into faceless workers or to homogenisation of tastes and culture through mass consumer markets. Social life and natural life are literally simplified to the inorganic for the convenience of the market society. Therefore we need a decentralised global movement founded

on common interests but celebrating diversity and opposing all forms of domination and violence".

What we can take from this analysis is a critique of all power relation and of the urge to control and dominate. We can also begin to recognise the importance of diversity and of a harmonious relationship between culture and nature rather than seeing nature as an 'outside' threat to be controlled. These ideas, as well as those from marginalised and suppressed voices, such as those of native peoples, hopefully tell us there is no single unproblematic way of comprehending the world and that a post-revolutionary society would need to respect difference and diversity in culture and nature, encountering and relating, not dominating and exploiting.

This is not simplistically to dismiss every single aspect of Enlightenment thought or to romanticise non-Western cultures and 'woman' as having special access to wisdom and being 'closer to nature'. The point is to have a critical awareness of Enlightenment thought which enables us to see how capitalism makes use of its emphasis on rationality and science to oppress and exploit. But we must not, consequently, leap in an *anti-rational* or *anti-science* direction. Neither would we wish to abandon Enlightenment ideas of the desirability of active human struggle, based upon the criticism and analysis of existing conditions, to bring about change.

However, what this analysis of Enlightenment thought and its use by capitalism helps us to do is to focus on how various hierarchical exploitations of class, gender, race and nature are related in the concept of 'other' in Western bourgeois ideology. Consequently, we can see that the idea of exploiting nature is not a neutral concept that can be employed by capitalists and revolutionaries alike, but one which can, and will, be used as a model for the exploitation of others by a ruling elite (capitalist or other) which uses claims to rationality and science to maintain and universalise its hierarchical power.

When the Sound of the Music Changes, the Walls of the City Shake

CLASS STRUGGLE PERMEATES every area of social life. It affects what we eat, how we live and determines who we are. It also shapes the music we make and the music we listen to.

In 'natural' society music is created to express emotions, to celebrate, to mourn or to revel in the sheer joy of being alive. In the more 'advanced' societies, music developed different forms — a formalised music which reflected the concerns of the ruling class — the glorification of the monarch and the glorification of the god of the ruling class. Music became formalised, codified and identified with single composers. Performance became ritualised, in contrast to the popular music of ordinary people, which dovetailed with everyday life and events in the lives of ordinary people — festivals, weddings, harvest, births and deaths.

This music drew on the music of previous generations, was not written down, was changed by each person who played it. It evolved anarchically and was played spontaneously in contrast to the formalised rituals that accompanied ruling class music.

Parallel

The two forms of music existed and developed in parallel, each influencing the other. However, their purposes and trajectories were different. Indeed, they

could never be similar because they grew from different social forms.

In Britain this divide was sharpened in several ways: by the use of Latin for religious song and by a division of language on a class basis after the Norman Conquest. The division was also highlighted by the kinds of instruments available to the rich as opposed to the simple folk instruments of ordinary people.

Because it wasn't written down and because it didn't glorify people with power, much of this early people's music hasn't survived. From the fragments that remain, we can see that one aspect of popular music was resistance. The early ballads about Robin Hood are an example and the song, 'The Cutty Wren', another.

From the later music of the English Civil War period (the 17th century, when ordinary people thrust their political ideas onto the political stage), we can see that music was used to confirm and celebrate resistance and revolution. **Diggers** like **Gerard Winstanley** composed songs of defiance:

Your houses they pull down.

Stand up now.

As your houses they pull down so the gentry must come down.

Stand up now.

And the poor shall wear the crown.

Stand up now.

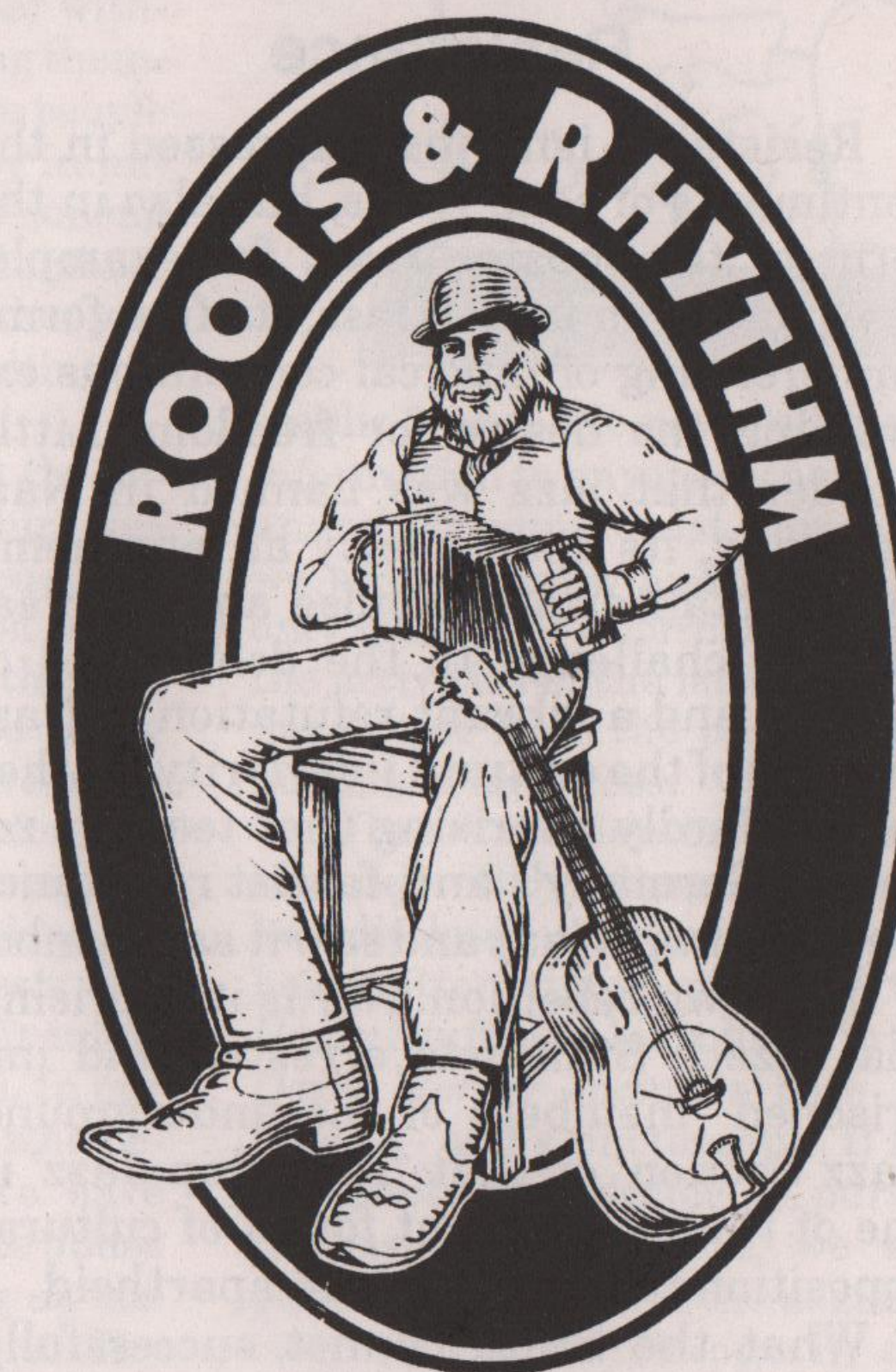
The growth in literature and changes in printing technology have resulted in the survival of more songs of resistance from the 18th and 19th centuries than from earlier periods: songs like the 'Colliers' March', 'General Ludd's Triumph' and the 'Chartist Anthem'. If you're interested in hearing them, listen to **Chumbawamba's** record *English Rebel Songs 1381-1914*.

What about our own century and our own music? Does a culture of resistance still exist?

Music has certainly been changed by capitalism, transformed into just another commodity.

Its accessibility as a commodity, through records, CDs, tapes, television and radio has generated a spurious and superficial democracy. Music seems available to all, but even so there remain hierarchies of consumption with people on low incomes given restricted access (varying prices of concert tickets and even if CDs are available in libraries, the equipment costs more).

Technological capitalism has also alienated many people from the production of music and transformed them into consumers of a centrally produced product. Like everything else, entry into the sys-



tem, making music, requires access to capital.

Of course, people develop strategies to get round the worst effects of capitalism, share and swap instruments, rehearse in garages and so on, but increasing technological sophistication continues to push home-made music into the margins.

The production of music as a commodity has replaced and destroyed much of the music that was based on folk community. The destruction of music has been accelerated by the destruction of community that results from capitalism's transformation of human relationships.

As capitalism causes class struggle by dividing society into classes, and because people are not the passive economic categories that economists would like them to be, they resist, and music reflects and strengthens that resistance. This is why there is a history of songs of resistance, and why every struggle leaves its own legacy of music and songs to inspire.

The vicious class repression that followed the crushing of the **Paris Commune** in 1871 saw strikers and demonstrators shot down in the streets, but also generated an active and assertive anarchist movement. The movement left an arsenal of anarchist songs with titles like 'The Breakers of Images', 'No More Government', 'I don't like the Police' and 'Ravachol's Hymn'.

This was the period when Eugene Pottier, a French woodworker from Lille wrote the 'International'. "We have been naught, we shall be all", those were the sentiments that echoed down the years and appealed to the Chinese students and

NEW BOOKSHOP

Our Aberystwyth comrades have started a bookshop.

Open every day from 10am-5pm at:

Stall 9, New Mini-Market, St James Square, Aberystwyth.

young workers in Tiananmen Square who made the chorus of the 'International' their anthem:

*Tis the final conflict
Let each stand in his place
The international party
Shall be the human race.*

Resistance

Resistance isn't just expressed in the sentiments of song lyrics, but also in the form of the music. **Jazz**, for example, grew out of an underclass, its free forms and breaking of musical conventions expressing the desire for freedom. Little wonder that jazz was banned in Nazi Germany, its spontaneity an anathema to the totalitarian impulse and its creativity a challenge to the dead hand of fascism and a vibrant refutation of Nazi theories of the cultural inferiority of other races. Hardly suprising that teenage rebels in Germany's anti-fascist resistance identified with jazz and saw it as a symbol of their own rebellion. Nor is it suprising that Czech Stalinists arrested and imprisoned members of the underground 'Jazz Section' or that 'Township Jazz' is one of the most potent forms of cultural opposition to South African apartheid.

What the State cannot successfully ban and forbid, capitalism transforms into a commodity — takes the form, drains it of its rebellious elements, repackages it and sells it back to the people. **George Melly** has written a perceptive account of this process *Revolt into Style*, a book title that neatly summarises the social mechanism that enables capitalism to rejuvenate itself by being parasitical on the creative activity of us all.

Because of this process of recuperation, the transformation of revolt into style, musical radicals need to constantly push back the boundaries of acceptable art, to go outside the experience of capitalism in order to gain the creative space necessary to sustain rebellion.

Frontiers

In our own time the anarchist composer **John Cage** has extended the frontiers of music, by taking the sounds of everyday life and allowing them to intrude into music, as in 'Finnegan's Wake'. Later Cage transformed random everyday sounds into music. In the mistakenly derided (by capitalist hacks and critics) 4'33" of 1952 he structured silence so that inadvertent sounds within the listener's hearing range are experienced as music. As an anarchist Cage never composed works that required an authoritarian conductor, or even a lead instrumentalist who functions apart from a back-up group.

Avant-garde music like Cage operates on the fringes of daily experience, so although it can extend and transform ideas about music it is difficult for it to reflect the joys and miseries of everyday life. The musical forms that do so most effectively

are produced collectively. **Folk** music and punk are two obvious examples. **Punk** music grew out of the desperation experienced by young people during the early years of Thatcherism, and reflects the anger and determination to fight back. Punk's emphasis on raw raucous energy overrode musical niceties. Musical form and structure became subservient to the political message:

*We're knocking on your door
We're taking no more
For this is class war.
(The Apostles)*

Folk music appears on the surface to be the complete opposite to punk — quiet, reflective and avoiding confrontational posturing, but it shares with punk a dislike of complexity and musical artifice. Like punk, folk requires no expertise. Anyone can get up and do it, but folk music goes beyond punk in the range of emotions it can express and in spite of the fossilised cat crap about nut gathering and the like that is frequently presented as folk music, is far more politicised.

Alex Glasgow's powerful songs explore the suffering that forms the basis of capitalism.

Close the coal-house door, lad, there's blood inside.

*Blood from broken hands and feet
Blood that's dried on pit-black meat
Blood from hearts that know no beat
Close the coal-house door, lad, there's blood inside.*

While Pete Seeger says straight out:
I hate the capitalist system.

Love

Folk also allows the expression of other revolutionary emotions, like love. English folk singer, **Ewan McColl** wrote the classic 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' and also the ever popular

'Dirty Old Town' which describes how love transforms our perception of our environment, heightens our experience and strengthens us in our daily fight for survival in the teeth of capitalism.

This isn't a Moon/June love song which sells make-up and yoghurt; this is a revolutionary song which empowers people and inspires them to change the world.

The revolution in music takes place on a daily basis as individuals and groups of music-makers take what they like from other musical traditions, add to it, change it, and play it. So the **Kronos Quartet** breaks out of the confines of classical music, playing pieces by **Terry Riley**, **Jimi Hendrix** and fuses with African music as in 'Pieces of Africa'. Rural blues transform into urban blues. **Big Bill Broonzy**, **Howlin' Wolf**, the crackling sounds of old **Leadbelly** recordings and the songs of **Blind Lemon Jefferson** speak across the years, across continents, and across generations, talking about a shared desire for change. What can their national anthems, their 'Blood and Honour' drivel say that matches that?

Stop the City

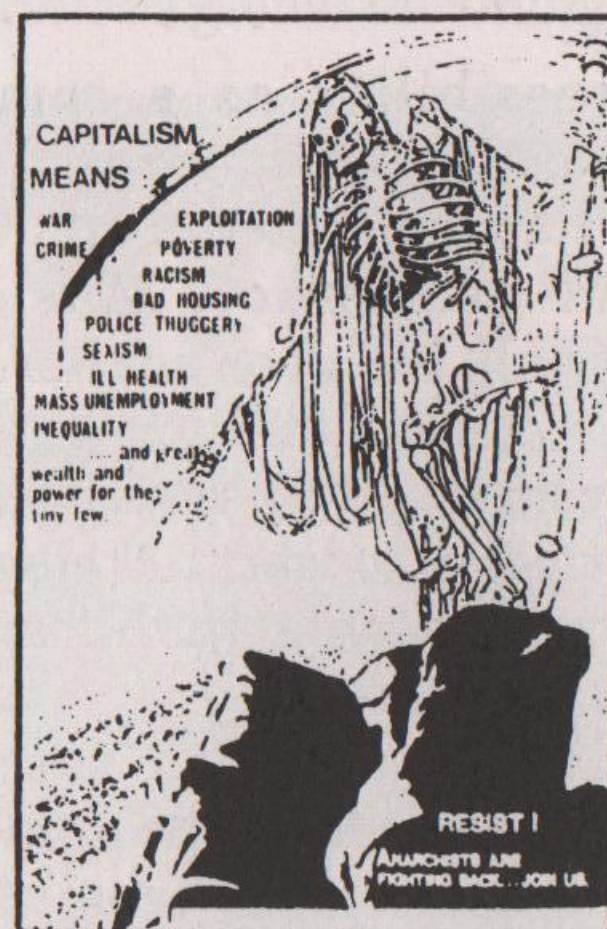
Speaking personally, one of the most profound moments I've experienced was during a Stop the City demonstration during the early '80s, when in the middle of London, outside the Stock Exchange, hundreds of anarchists under siege from the police suddenly burst into song — a short four-line song which had been distributed at some of the planning meetings:

*We're gonna Stop the City
We're gonna Change the World.*

And we will, because, as was said of the murdered Chilean singer **Victor Jara**: "You can kill the man but not his song when it's sung the whole world round".

POSTER

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



Leaflet

London ACF have also produced a small concertina leaflet explaining the basic ideas of anarchist communism. Again, send a donation for a bundle to the above address.

Our last lot of six different stickers has now sold out. So we've produced a new series of nine different stickers (anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, ecology etc).

Again, bundles can be obtained from London address, if you enclose donation.

DEAR ORGANISE!

Wrong again, I am not a full time official of the Yorkshire Area of the NUM nor ever have been. The Yorkshire Area has only three full time officials. I am none of these. The S. Yorkshire NUM Panel of which I am the Vice CHAIR is an unofficial assembly of NUM branches, and meets once a month, it is not in any way 'fulltime'. It just happens, although I am an elected, part time official of my local branch (the Delegate), I am a rank and file worker. I work on the coal face, and do the normal days, evenings, afters and mid-night shift cycle. This is the normal situation for all NUM branch delegates.

Secondly "Having my own column" is not like having your own Rolls you know, it doesn't mark me off as not being a rank and file worker as you seem to imply. In fact I am a supporter of **Class War**. I was offered a column in *Daily Worker*, paper of the reformed CPGB because they have made a heavy focus on the developing pit struggle, and wanted the grass roots information as it happened. This was and is done on a non-sectarian basis — it in no way compromises my political views, or theirs for that matter. Their paper is circulated to every pit in Britain, the support groups and throughout the labour movement. It has been a good way of informing the 'movement', my fellow miners and our supporters of what is going on in this area. It is after all a news column. I am not engaging in a polemic or theoretic discussion on the value or non value of the 'party'. If your *Organise!* was published on a daily basis with a similar wide circulation and you unconditionally offered me a column to keep people informed of the rapidly changing and tactically unfolding nature of the pit struggle, I should take it without hesitation.

That would not however mean I had become one of your supporters; neither does it with the CPGB. My view of Leninism and Trotskyism is well known. If you describe yourself as 'anti union', not anti union bureaucrat, but anti union, and if you were to act on that within the class i.e. trying to break the union, getting people to leave the union, or not join the union, sorry comrades whichever way you put it that it would be scabbing, and most certainly be a sign that you were on the wrong side of the class line. I think you do need to radically rethink your position on unions, as you are confusing its progressive, defensive and strategic role in the working class, with its negative, parasitic and often reactionary bureaucracy.

Declining membership in the unions is not some progressive symptom or far from the indication of growing class conscious-

ness you say it is. Declining union membership is almost entirely due to the fact that the industries in which mass 100% membership was a tradition, have been decimated. Heavy industry, coal mining, shipyards, engineering factories, docks, merchant shipping etc. Mass unemployment in areas where unions were a way of life, has almost on its own accounted for the drop in membership. Such new work that has come along has been low paid, part time, in non union services or in get rich quick greenfield sites in areas with no industrial tradition or experience with unions. To some extent, the spread of Thatcherite, individualist, consumerist 'values' has blocked communal, solidarist, collectivist sentiments necessary for the forming of unions or establishment of membership. Add to this the wickedly anti union laws, and employers ever ready to sack you and blacklist you for the rest of your life, and a decline in union membership is hardly surprising is it? This is however neither a sign that workers in general have abandoned unions because they have all embraced Tory values (which is what the Tories say) or that they are becoming more class conscious (which is what you said).

I concede that right wing and moderate unions do piss people off. Single union, no strike deals such as those signed with the Japanese car firms on Wearside and elsewhere produce very small union memberships even in areas of high union traditions. This undoubtedly is because workers can see no point in joining and engage in other forms of struggle at work instead. However this is only a very marginal factor, the main reason is because unions and the working class have been bashed to bits and bashed out of unions, this is not a progressive fact, and is the reason why I reacted so angrily to your 'anti union' advocacy.

By the way on the subject of blacklists. I know my name appears on the lists circulated by **Freedom Association** and **Aims of Industry** etc, but I didn't know **Trotwatch** provided a similar service to the Anarchist left, especially when they get my job, position and politics wrong,

*revolutionary greetings,
David Douglass,
National Union of Mineworkers
...and still bloody proud of it.
(Letter slightly edited)*

ORGANISE!/Editors' reply:

Yes, we were wrong about your position in the union. We based our information on the **Wildcat** pamphlet (reviewed in this issue). However, this does not drastically alter our criticisms of your role within anarchist circles, that is, to defend trade unionism, at a time when some, perhaps many anarchists are breaking with it. Nor

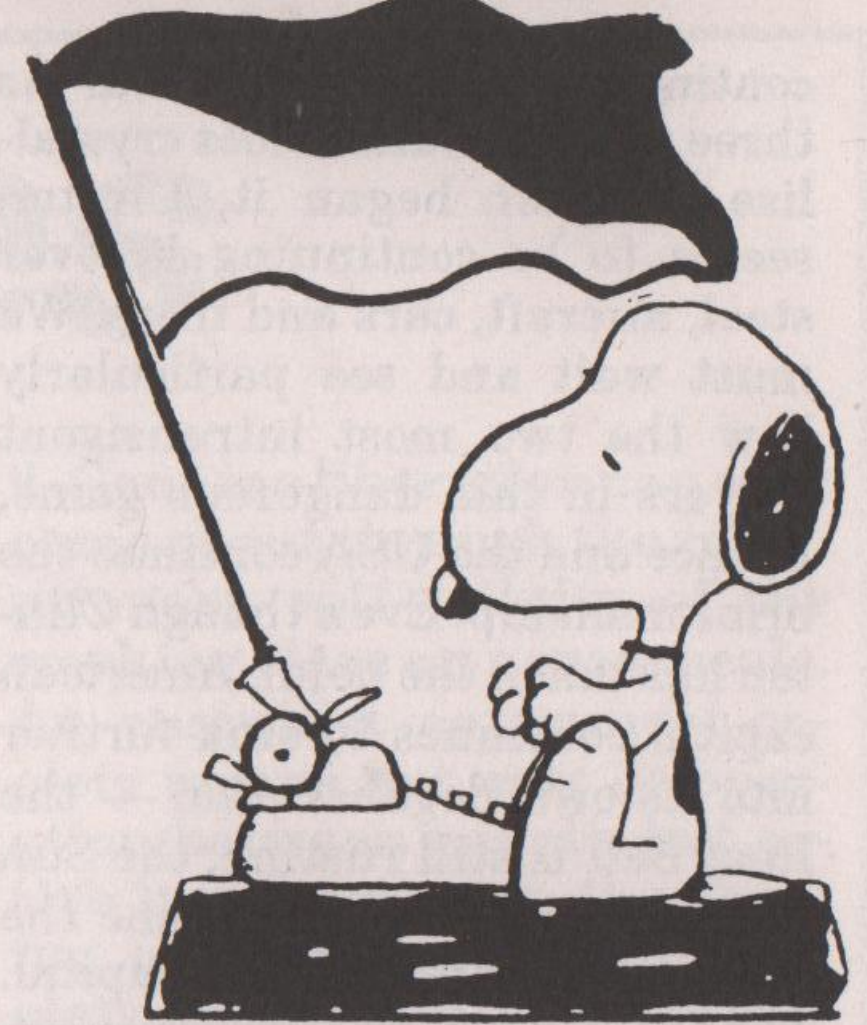
does your espousal of libertarian politics and indeed a public denunciation of Leninism excuse your writing a column in the *Daily Worker*. If anything it makes it doubly damning. The Communist Party of Great Britain proudly defends Bolshevism. No conscious libertarian revolutionary can contribute a column to its paper without seriously compromising themselves. The CPGB will use people like you to gain credibility in miners' circles and recruit among them. So on one hand you lambast Leninism, whilst on the other you give them succour by writing in their publications.

No, we never said that the decline in union membership was due to rising class consciousness. Read our reply to your last letter again. Of course some of the falling membership is due to rising unemployment. But as we said, many are not joining unions or failing to renew membership because they see that the unions are not defending their interests and indeed are opposed to their interests. No, we are not scabs. In our book that means any one who betrays class solidarity. We have never done this. Cut out the abuse and the crap about being on the wrong side of the class line. The unions are betraying the workers, even the sacred NUM, and as events unfold over the next period of struggle, we will soon see who is on the wrong side of the class line.

TROTWATCH adds:

It would have been better if the 'credit' published at the end of the article in the last *Organise!* had been the one we suggested — "Thanks to Trotwatch for information on the Leninist/Daily Worker" rather than the one that got printed — "Thanks to Trotwatch for information on Dave Douglass". When we heard *Organise!* was publishing a debate between the ACF and DD on the union question, we sent in a copy of one of DD's regular columns from the *Daily Worker* with some comments of our own about the issues raised by DD's support for Class War, his role as contact for 'Class War Colliers' and his role as columnist for a Leninist party newspaper. We sent no other information about DD's job or his position in the NUM.

The suggestion that Trotwatch helps in some way in the compiling of 'blacklists' of socialists is complete nonsense. Trotwatch is an "anarchist commentary on the life of the left", our purpose is to publish critiques of contemporary leftist ideas and practice, from a revolutionary communist perspective. Sometimes our jokes are quite funny as well. We have not publicised any information about the political affiliations of individuals involved with leftist organisations that was not already in the



'public arena'. We never offer any information to anyone, other than anarchist-communist comrades we already know and trust. Our only sources of information about the activities of the left (thus far) have come from the pages of the published left press.

What 'confidential' information does DD believe Trotwatch has disclosed via *Organise!*? DD has written signed pieces in the *Heavy Stuff*, and his column in the *Daily Worker* includes both his name — and a photograph. If DD and Trotwatch decide to pursue the issues raised here, we will publish our debate in the next edition of Trotwatch out in the autumn.

DEAR COMRADES,

Unfortunately I have not seen the recent articles upon the recession which may or may not have similar perspectives as mine. The articles upon the 'New World Disorder' left much unsaid. What was not absolutely explicit was that it appears that capital has no way out of its current crisis. Capital needs to grow, to accumulate, but it seems that all its avenues of growth have now been explored and exhausted. It has created and filled its markets world-wide for its commodities, its means of producing these commodities, and finally its credit (its fictional capital). It has reaped profit from its welfare society, its deficit spending, its exploitation of cheap raw materials, by dumping commodities in the poor world, by exploiting cheap labour there, by selling arms the world over (even to the poorest and most vulnerable) by creating new technologies and so new toys for consumers, by hawking credit, financial services and investment to the poor world.

But where is capital continuing to grow now? Unemployment is rising world-wide — not only in the sick areas of Europe and America, in the previously cast-iron economy of Japan, but in the poor world, particularly Africa, we are witnessing levels of poverty and degradation which are indescribable. The attempts to restart the world economy by reviving world trade through the GATT talks are becoming ever more drawn out. Indeed there is

continuing talk of trade war as three new capitalist blocs crystallise — Bush began it, Clinton seems to be continuing it, over steel, aircraft, cars and more. We must wait and see particularly how the two most intransigent players in this dangerous game, France and the USA continue the brinkmanship. Even though Clinton has taken the helm, American capital continues to sink further into its own degeneration — the Rust Belt is still rusting, the Sun Belt continues to undermine the previous centres of US capital. The only area of US strength though is its military — but US capital cannot cure its ills by simply policing or bullying the rest of the world.

After the passing of the Russian bloc and the spectre of so-called communism, the Western world has turned to a variety of ideologies to motivate and explain its actions. We have witnessed both the promotion and death of democracy — in Russia and Italy respectively. We are seeing the rise of a variety of nationalisms: the extreme right in Germany; Serbian, Croatian and others in what was Yugoslavia; America First in the USA; the various nationalisms of the breakup of the USSR. A variety of humanitarianisms are being promoted, for instance the Somalia adventure of the USA, whereas Angola and Mozambique are being treated to US/South African sponsored insurgents.

Here in Britain we are promised national recovery and we are given a budget supposedly to provide it. Our beloved 'man in grey' even has to promote the idea on TV to help us swallow the idea even though we have the inkling that all is not well: rising unemployment, in reality over four million; wages held down, public sector wages pegged to 1.5%; continued attacks on the poor, VAT extended to fuel, to be only 50% compensated. Capital can only increase its exploitation of the working class as it scrambles for answers to the crisis of the boss class. I can see no answer to the crisis, nor can anyone else — a new Keynesianism won't work, as has been mooted even by Japanese economists, nor will a new and improved monetarism. The other classical route out of such crises is war. Both world wars and various 'police actions' have come to the aid of capitalism in the past but this seems not to be an option now — the level of destruction required would be too great. Barbarism, of one form or the other, seems the only future.

Barbarism or the revolutionary transformation of society are usually counterposed as alternatives. I believe this to be the case now, although these alternatives are not being voiced generally or even in part by working class. I do

feel that the class struggle will necessarily intensify over the coming years as capital continues to fail to deal with its own degeneration.

This may seem to be an odd perspective to be held by a libertarian communist, but this seems to be the only logical analysis of current trends. But there is one task which must be undertaken, framing means by which revolutionaries can usefully engage in what must be a coming expansion of the class struggle. In this engagement we will have to negate all of those tendencies towards social democracy which have infested the working class — the unions, the Labour Party, the pseudo-revolutionary Trotskyists who are ready to bury class consciousness and class struggle in dogma and substitutionism. It will be our task to aid the class as it struggles, hopefully moving from class consciousness to revolutionary consciousness.

We face considerable obstacles, though, the working class is hardly at its most combative. It will not simply be a question of turning up wherever we can but of carefully considered action, intervention, which will raise the profile of the revolutionary idea and give the class confidence in its own capacity to act and create. We will have to relate ourselves to the interests of the working class as they develop, to aid and inform as much as we can. More than anything else we will have to negate every possible destructive influence we can — nationalism, social democracy etc.

It may not be apparent to everyone, but the time is coming, yours, libertarian communist greetings,
J.C. (Sheffield)

DEAR ORGANISE!

Ta for *Organise!* 28. A good issue. I especially liked 'Reading the Detectives'. Not so sure about 'Against Exploitation' article. In particular the sentence... "anarchist-communists find no room for such objectivity". To base our politics instead on morality puts us on very shaky ground. We have to explain ourselves when we use 'morally unjust' otherwise we come across as liberals.

K. (Vancouver, Canada)

BLACK MASK & UP AGAINST THE WALL MOTHERFUCKER. 144 pages. Unpopular Books and Sabotage Editions. (No price given on review copy). Box 15, 138 Kingsland High Rd, London E8 2NS.

This book is a collection of articles published in the two magazines mentioned in the title. *Black Mask* was created by the New York Surrealist Group and the New York Anarchist Group and appeared from 1966 to 1968.

As such, it was a portent of the revolutionary storm to come in 1968, plugging in equally to the riots of poor blacks in Watts, the anti-Vietnam War resistance, and the flowering hippy counter-culture. It was aware of other developments throughout the world like the French Situationists and the English Heatwave group. Indeed in many ways it echoed the development of the French Situationists in that a revolutionary critique of Art developed into a revolutionary critique of society as a whole.

Up Against the Wall Motherfucker was a continuation of the *Black Mask*, with a mixing of the most combative of the counter-culture with the previous political developments. Unfortunately the concentration on dope and acid, a symptom of the times, seems to have affected the form and content of the Motherfuckers' political statements. Long, shapeless rants praise the 'Hip Community' and Ying-Yang symbols are dotted throughout. We have such statements as the "hip tribal nation forms as the eventual replacement of amerikan all-government". Illusions in the counter-culture as a means to both fight and replace the capitalist set-up marginalise the Motherfuckers. The earlier *Black Mask* articles about the Newark and Detroit riots, the discussions on art, sexuality, the youth revolt are far more interesting and coherent. The book lets the two groups speak for themselves through their articles and leaflets. However, a little more information about how the groups formed, and what happened to them would have been appreciated.

REFRACTED PERSPECTIVE. The Left, Working Class Trade Unionism and The Miners. Dave Douglass. 60p. 12 pages.

OUTSIDE AND AGAINST THE UNIONS. A communist response to Dave Douglass' text. Wildcat. 40p. 15 pages.

The first pamphlet was a text delivered to Class War's International Conference in 1991. It claims to address the Socialist Workers Party, orthodox Trotskyists, and "elements of the situationists". As the *Wildcat* pamphlet points out, its purpose was to "stifle criticism of trade unionism in and around the anarchist movement". Much of Douglass's pamphlet is taken up with justified criticisms of the Leninist vanguards, and he does criticise the NUM bureaucrats including King Arthur. He defends mass pickets and hitsquads against the criticisms of the Left. However he tries to amalgamate Leninists with 'situationists', that is, as *Wildcat* says "a code word for class struggle militants who are against the unions from a communist point of view". He makes

out Leninists are anti-union, when they are great supporters of unionism. Many Leninist militants keep union branches going, as *Wildcat* wittily remarks: "the Leninist intellectuals of and by themselves can only achieve a trade union consciousness".

Douglass implies trade unions are somehow the property of workers: "Can you wonder that industrial and unionised workers identify more with their Trade Union branch, lodge, shop stewards committee or whatever than they do with the revolutionary donkey constructed out of somebody's Book of Revolutionary Organisation". Douglass uses a valid attack on vanguardism to disguise his defence of unions. The unions he cites appear to lack union bureaucracies, operating as networks of independent local branches. Using the classic line spouted by any trade union leftist, he says that if members were to mobilise they could determine policies. *Wildcat* points out that the 1977 productivity deal, which divided miners between regions, engineered by 'workers' friend' Tony Benn, was pushed through by the NUM executive despite a national ballot rejecting it. In 1983 NUM leaders ignored an 80% strike vote in South Wales. In April 1984 Lancashire miners held an area delegate meeting to send Lancashire miners back to work. 30 miners then occupied Bolton HQ.

Douglass makes out that support of the unions is better than support of the Leninist parties because the latter has more loyalty from the class. If we followed this logic, then support for the Labour Party or a love of royalty should also be uncritically supported.

As *Wildcat* point out, unions are not workers' self-defence organisations but structures to negotiate the rate of exploitation by the bosses of the workers. Negotiation is not just an economic activity, it is a political one — is a form of political representation. Representing people is not about fighting for their interests. It is about maintaining the loyalty of a passive 'constituency'. *Wildcat* point out the NUM differs from other British trade unions in being radical and left-wing. This is because of the existence of a militant rank and file. The rhetoric of officials protects them and helps them keep control. But many of the most important strikes among miners were unofficial, or started out as such.

The debate on the unions will continue, of this we are sure. Revolutionary anarchists need to take a long hard look at the hand of trade unionism with its weakening grip on both the class and revolutionary militants. So read these two pamphlets and see whether the struggle should be inside the unions or 'outside and against' them.

Aims and principles

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

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

3. 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 an 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.

Why we still need a national revolutionary organisation

THE ANARCHIST Communist Federation has consistently argued the need for a national revolutionary organisation in this country. We continue to stand by this argument.

We have always opposed the localist and parochial ideas that have been argued for within anarchist circles. We know that attempts to set up local and regional networks, if they are not tied to the need for national organisation and consistent revolutionary theory, are doomed to failure. We are all for the establishment of local coordinations that enable revolutionaries to pool their efforts and resources. However, if these are put forward as the solution to the present lack of progress of libertarian revolutionaries, and indeed if these are actively

counterposed to the establishment of a national revolutionary anarchist organisation, we must argue that they are no substitute for the building of such a body. The Class Struggle Anarchist Network and many local Solidarity Groups have all collapsed. The attempt to establish borough-wide coordinations in London in 1992 was more or less still-born.

All round Britain revolutionaries share similar positions to ours. We urge them to consider joining the ACF. We have survived the present bad times because of our devotion to the need for a revolutionary organisation and because we have valued the development of theory alongside an outgoing practice. Now there are possibilities in the coming few years if the signs of increased militancy in the working class (at Fords, the firefighters, the railworkers and the miners) herald a new willingness to struggle. We need to be there to put over our ideas of self-organisation, and the more of us united in one body the better.

