

Revolutionary Violence

THE ISSUE OF violence within the anarchist movement has long been controversial.

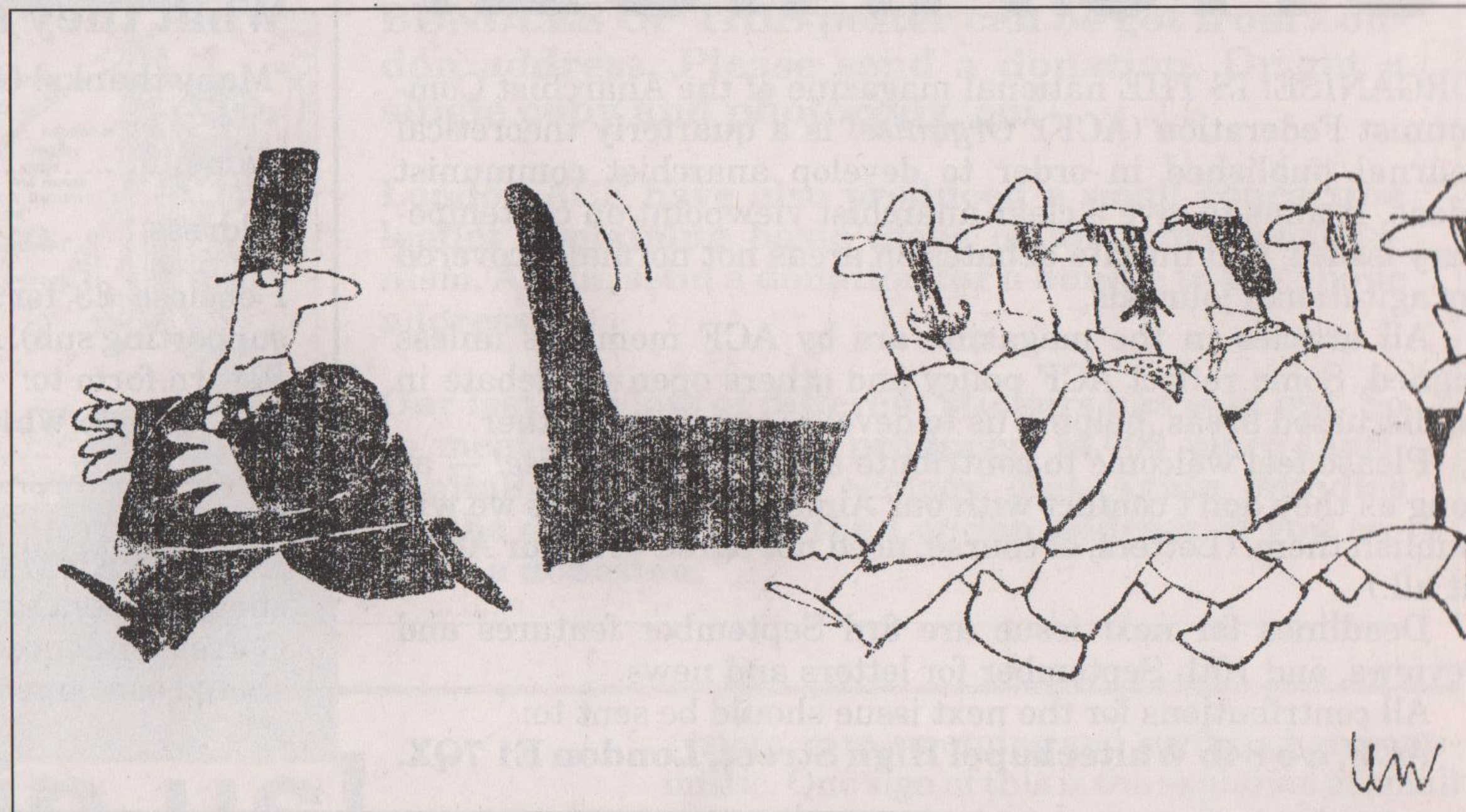
The early anarchist movement associated with Bakunin was openly insurrectionary and the anarchist communists of the late 19th century regarded acts of terror against oppressors as perfectly legitimate. Kropotkin, Malatesta, Most and others enthused over acts of 'propaganda by the deed'. This idea stressed the importance of exemplary actions like strikes, occupations of public buildings etc, by small groups of revolutionaries that would ignite an already revolutionary situation. It very quickly turned into the idea of determined individuals carrying out individual attacks on kings, presidents and capitalists. Given the severe repression in France, for example, after the bloody crushing of the Paris Commune and where open activity was difficult, this was understandable. The State, through the media, were able to so closely associate violence with anarchism that the two ideas became almost interchangeable in the public mind, to the detriment of the movement. Today there are many so-called anarchists who reject the whole revolutionary tradition. So, how should revolutionary anarchists approach the issue?

The first point to make is that it is states acting in defence of privilege and exploitation that practice violence on a large scale. The assassinations of heads of state pale into insignificance in contrast to the normal, everyday actions of the state. In a real sense, states are organised violence. The armed forces, police, prisons and so on are institutional forms of violence used to protect the status quo. And the status quo is in itself violence for it means mass poverty, homelessness, poor health and despair. Should anyone question this legalised everyday terror they are met with the full repressive fist of the state.

State violence

And states are not content to inflict violence on their subject populations, but relish the opportunity to apply it to other peoples. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are perhaps the most horrific examples of this. Some leaders, such as Hitler and Stalin, excelled in murdering millions in both the domestic and external fields of operation. In this context, the bomb throwers and armed expropriators of our revolutionary history must be seen for what they were — heroic, if misguided people acting in self-defence against 'normal' state violence.

With the exception of pacifists, most people accept self-defence as legitimate. To defend oneself or one's family from attack is readily understood and ac-



cepted. To defend the oppressed and exploited class is just an extension of this principle. To use appropriate and measured violence against the incarnation of violence which is the state, is no more than to launch a counter-attack. A violent insurrection or general strike must be seen in these terms — legitimate, justified and necessary self defence against the monster of the capitalist state. Anyone who refuses to acknowledge this, necessarily accepts the 'right' of the capitalist state to devour us.

A key point however, needs to be considered, namely that individual acts of violence, however well intentioned, justified by anger, poverty or despair are generally counter productive. Individual terror and group conspiracies are quite easily containable by the state. Rather than inspiring the masses to insurrection, they have generally appalled them, especially given the huge propaganda machines available to oppressors.

Revolutionary mass violence is, however, a different thing if it expresses a determination to overthrow exploitation and oppression. And it takes various forms. The seizure of workplaces, banks and other property is inherently violent since it forcibly removes their possession from their owners. To not do so would be to capitulate to the system of exploitation.

Anarchist revolutionaries defend every method used by the oppressed against the enemy from peaceful and legal protest up to and including violent uprising. Violence as a goal in itself is unjustified and indeed in revolutionary situations working class people have tended to shrink from its use. Not so the state, which on finally securing victory, unleashes a reign of mass terror. Anyone doubting this should look at the aftermaths of the Paris Commune or the Spanish Civil War.

Revolutionary violence is the clear expression of the masses' refusal to continue any longer with the old ways. Some-

times, however, determined minorities, often inspired by Marxist-Leninism, have managed to seize control of such movements for their own ends. The October Revolution of 1917 led to the creation of one of the world's most brutal states. This mistake must not be repeated. Either the revolution is about smashing the state once and for all, or it merely brings about another form of oppression.

Attacks

During the last ten years, the working class has been subject to ever-increasing attacks. Mass unemployment is now seen as 'normal' by those unaffected by it. There has been a large redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich, leaving millions in a state of near destitution. Exceptionally regressive taxes have driven millions into a hand to mouth existence. State inspired racist violence is common in some parts of our cities. Given this context, is it surprising that we have had outbursts of near-insurrectionary violence? The poll tax riot was a clear and welcome expression of class anger, as were the 'hit squads' which immobilised vehicles and stood up to the police during the lengthy miners strike of 1984-85. When black people form self-defence groups against fascist attacks, they are justified. When demonstrators retaliate against police provocations they are justified. When a whole class rises up against the state and capitalism, it is justified.

When, later this year, we hear stories of old people freezing to death due to the imposition of value added tax on domestic fuel, perhaps those who condemn revolutionary violence will have a cause to think. Capitalism and the state aren't going to go away or be reformed. They need to be destroyed, and unfortunately violence by the working class is almost certainly a necessary ingredient in this process.

ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

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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.

Editorial

Fight the Criminal Justice Bill!

JUST LIKE the poll tax, the Criminal Justice Bill is a flagship of the Government's legislation and rule, and just like the poll tax, this flagship can be scuppered. It was through mass revulsion against the poll tax, thousands upon thousands refusing to pay it throughout Britain, thousands organising and mobilising against it, that the Government was forced to withdraw it.

This time around, in grey Britain, anyone who questions the status quo, by behaviour, attitude, dress, politics or sexuality is singled out as a target. We have already had assaults in the media and the House of Commons on single mothers, beggars and those who dare to mention sex education. Scapegoat after scapegoat is frantically sought out. Anything to take attention away from the economic reality

of four million unemployed and the end of the artificially created 'boom'.

Now under the umbrella of the Criminal Justice Bill a whole range of groups will be victimised. Gypsies, travellers, squatters, ravers, will be singled out for attack. The police will increase their powers. They will have greater 'stop and search' powers, and it will be an offence to refuse to undergo a search. The right to remain silent will be taken away. It will now be a criminal offence to stay in a squatted building 24 hours after being served with a possession order, with a six month jail sentence or £5,000 fine as punishment for disobeying. This at a time when the streets are full of homeless and 800,000 homes lie empty. Travellers will be evicted from land they camp on and councils will no longer have to provide sites for Gypsies and travellers. People

getting together for a rave will be arrested, with no need for a warrant. These powers could be used against hunt saboteurs, against anti-road campaigners, and in the future against strikers if necessary. There will increased and extended use of detention against young 'offenders'.

Alliance

The Bill is attacking a whole range of groups. What is encouraging about the resistance to the Bill is the alliance that is being built between the different groups under attack. This alliance must not allow itself to be taken over by the Labour Party trying to make out it acts in their interests and channelling the resistance into an electoral jamboree. Nor must it allow itself to be hijacked by one of the Leninist vanguard groups, in particular the SWP, looking for more party fodder. Self-organisation and mass action against the Bill are the order of the day. An injury to one is an injury to all!

Railworkers

THE LEADERS OF RMT, the rail union, are anxious to come to some sort of deal with the Railtrack employers over the signals workers' pay and conditions. Railtrack, actively backed by the Government, is equally determined to make an offer that the union could make the signals workers accept.

Railtrack has hugely misjudged the mood among signals workers by appealing to them directly and bypassing the union. What they fail to realise is the simmering anger there over the pathetic 2.5% pay offer. Many earn less than £150 a week and have to work more than 13 days without a break, with shifts up to 20 hours long! This explains many of the accidents that have happened over the last few years, thanks to the fatigue of rail workers. The depth of anger has terrified the RMT leader Jimmy Knapp into calling for more than the derisory offer, but he and his fellow bureaucrats intend to limit the actions by keeping it to one-day stoppages and not involving other railworkers. But the strikes, if anything, have increased the confidence of the signals workers. They will have to go beyond the token one-day stoppages im-

posed by the union if they want to win. Equally they must go out to other rail and transport workers, and draw in the tube and bus workers, who are also under heavy attack from the bosses. Signs of this anger among other railworkers can be seen in the two unofficial stoppages in May-June. In Birmingham drivers left their engines for an hour over the disciplining of two workmates, resulting in disciplinary procedures being dropped. In Leeds 150 guards struck to attend a two hour mass meeting when one of their workmates was threatened with disciplinary procedures. They have continued with an overtime ban demanding the reinstatement of their mate. Similarly 1,000 busdrivers struck in late June on Merseyside over the recruiting of new drivers on lower pay and the cutting of sick pay and holidays.

Criminal Justice Bill demonstration

Sunday July 24: Join the Anarchist Communist Federation contingent on the Criminal Justice Bill demo at 1pm at Hyde Park, to march to Trafalgar Square. Watch out for our banners and flags or ask for details from ACF c/o London address.

A Manifesto for the Millenium

At the last National Conference of the ACF it was decided to adopt the document presented by one comrade as the basis of a new Manifesto of Anarchist Communism. This is now being worked on by ACF comrades and hopefully should be ready for the Anarchist Bookfair in October in London.

At the Bookfair we hope to have a public meeting to present the Manifesto. It will give an analysis of the current changes that capitalism is going through and will present an anarchist communist strategy to build a new revolutionary movement. Also at the public meeting we hope to have a French comrade of the Organisation Communiste Libertaire who participated in the March 22 Movement, one of the catalysts of the May 1968 events. We will of course also have a stall at the Bookfair where you can buy ACF literature and meet and talk to ACF comrades.



Above: Striking posties join firefighters' march.

Firefighters

IN LIVERPOOL chief fire officer Andrew Best attempted to impose new contracts on firefighters. Thousands of firefighters demonstrated on the streets in mid-April, joined by striking postal workers.

The FBU, the fire brigade union, eagerly accepted the chance of talks, and sabotaged the chances of gaining more. The contracts were withdrawn but Best is determined that wages are kept down and that cuts are imposed. If necessary he and other fire chiefs around the country will impose this through 'natural wastage'. Firefighters went on to only answering 999 calls and Best threatened a 40% cut in wages. His middle management flunkies attempted to threaten firefighters over this action and the refusal to implement unnegotiated brigade orders. But when they went to the stations to carry this out they met with such anger that watches said they would all be disciplined rather than let one of their workmates be victimised. This was all done on an ad-hoc basis by word of mouth. Middle management were so terrified that they passed a vote of no confidence in Best and his lieutenants and said they would not discipline any firefighter. This anger is not confined to Merseyside. All over the country there are signs of discontent. In Essex five stations in April said they

would refuse to answer calls unless disciplinary action against a firefighter was dropped. Management was forced to back down.

The FBU will do its utmost to sabotage any escalating unofficial actions. Unfortunately there are still many firefighters who have illusions in the FBU. Any effective action must involve action outside and against the union.

Postal workers

LIVERPOOL postal workers took unofficial strike action for five days in April against the suspension of a workmate.

Some 2,000 were involved in the action and the postie was reinstated. The leader of the UCW, the post union, Alan Johnston, eager to sabotage the strike, took a plane to Liverpool to address a mass meeting and persuade the workers to return to work. Strikes against the reorganisation of postal services also took place at sorting offices in Southend, Oxford, Bristol and Cardiff.

Italy — Victory of the Populist Right and Neo-fascists

THE ELECTIONS of March 26th and 28th in Italy led to the victory of the right/extreme right alliance led by the businessman Berlusconi.

This alliance is composed of his party Forza Italia, the Northern League and the National Alliance (ex-MSI, fascist). They have an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies, and a relative majority in the Senate. The alliance of the left, the Progressist Cartel, could not go beyond the maintaining of the seats of the PDS (ex-Communist Party) and some small gains for the Rifondazione Comunista (ex-members of the Communist Party, hardliners, in a new party with some of the extreme left). Other parts of the Cartel, the Greens and la Rete (anti-Mafia, composed of social-democrats and radical Christians)

Below: Berlusconi.



gained only a few seats. The Centre (the Christian Democrats renamed the PPI — Italian Popular Party, the Pact for Italy led by Segni, the Republicans etc) suffered severe defeats to the profit of the right.

Berlusconi created his party out of nothing in just two months thanks to his economic and media power, using his three radio channels, television channels directly and indirectly controlled by him, press agencies and newspapers. The 'political message' of this rich businessman consisted of simplistic and demagogic statements easily digested by a potential mass of voters alienated by the political establishment and still conditioned to a great extent by the media. The magic word is 'new' and all the political parties are using this when they talk about their 'new' parties on the up, ready to clean up the old system.

Not So New!

But Berlusconi is far from new. He owes his economic fortune to the alliance of the Christian Democrats and Socialist Party that ruled up to recently, and in particular to his 'godfather' Bettino Craxi, ex-secretary of the Socialist Party, affected like so many others by recent financial 'scandals'.

Apart from the lies about newness, the other slogans are 'no to the communists' — actually anyone who has expressed the slightest doubt about Berlusconi — the 'free market' — magic term to mean the law of the jungle and privatisation of public enterprises, in particular health and education, lower taxes, and the creation of a million jobs. In reality only the rich and the professionals will pay less tax; the mass of working people will continue to be taxed on their wages. As regards a million jobs, the Ital-



ian economy is in a period of sweeping restructuring which means a cut in production and so a cut in the workforce.

In the electoral campaign Berlusconi was allied with the Northern League of Bossi and the National Alliance of Fini. The League itself is a relatively new formation and is concentrated in the north, above all in Milan and Lombardy. Outside of the usual slogans of 'less tax, more freedom for business, immigrants out' is its insistence that the more productive northern regions should not pay for the social costs of the poorer southern regions, and the demand for the creation of three large regions federated for foreign affairs, defence etc, as well as autonomy for tax-collecting and what the taxes are spent on. So, starting out on the same basis as Berlusconi, the League goes one better and calls for localism of an almost tribal nature. And this with the example of Yugoslavia on the border.

As for the National Alliance, this consists of the fascist MSI and some extreme right ex-members of the Christian Democrats. In its

transformation from MSI to National Alliance the fascists increased their vote from 4% to 13% nationally, especially in the South and in Rome where they gained the majority of MPs.

A number of points have been under-estimated in the recent past. The rise of racism and violence against immigrants was explained as the actions of a tiny minority — Nazi-skins and other fascists — when the whole problem of racism is much more widespread. Many of the petty-bourgeoisie shopkeepers and small businessmen — and sections of the urban and rural working class — cast their vote for the fascists, blaming the recession and its consequences — sackings — on immigration, when this was a move by the big capitalists, national and international. Another disturbing fact was that 50% of young voters between the ages of 18 and 25 voted for the fascists!

As for the Mafia, they used the votes they controlled to support Berlusconi and the National Alliance, where before they had strong links with the Socialists. But now

the Socialist Party has collapsed under the weight of the scandals and they are looking for influence through other political parties.

The victory of the right was also due to the defeat of the social movements against the restructuring plans of the previous government of the socialist Amato. These movements were very large, but the unions sabotaged the struggle, making sure no general strike took place, and that strikes were either regional, or sectional. Despite a growing movement outside the unions or in the process of breaking with the unions that managed to organise strikes, actions and demonstrations (see *Organise!* 29) it was not possible to defeat the Amato government, aided as it was by the unions.

The victory of Berlusconi is an end result of the process which began in 1992 when the first inquests about corruption in the political world began. All of a sudden, politicians, entire political parties, men considered untouchable, stood accused. And this in a country where scandals, State-sponsored massacres, attempted *coup d'états* had been the norm for decades and where the judges were totally

complacent. Now some little-known magistrates put all in question.

This wasn't due to the fairness of the system. The prosecutions led by these magistrates were given the green light because Italian capitalism had to change. The collapse of the Christian Democrat reign and the 'scandals' coincided with changes in the world — the collapse of the East European regimes. The status quo imposed by the USA on Italy, which barred the Communist Party from entering the government and which resulted in a 'historic compromise', came to an end. The Christian Democrat-Socialist alliance, robbed of aid by the USA, faced mounting popular discontent.

The Communist Party, preparing for government, changed its name to Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) going over completely to social-democracy, and dropping all pretence at acting in the interest of the working class, and now began to talk about the national interest. And then the activity of the judges began. The number of Communist officials indicted was small in regard to the other Parties, but in the eyes of 'public opinion' they were seen as

part of the system of corruption.

The vote for the right is the result of an inter-class phenomenon, where workers, shopkeepers, youth, managers, bosses are all drawn into a movement where the regionalism of the League right up to the rehabilitation of Mussolini and fascism and the re-introduction of the death penalty are on the agenda.

The whole history of struggle of the post-war years has been forgotten among the working class. Already the magistrates have cleared the Masonic lodge P2 of involvement in corruption and the 'politics of tension'. Berlusconi was a member of this lodge. Thus concludes 10 years of inquests into plots, political murders, unexplained massacres and bombings in which leading politicians were heavily involved.

Movement

The autonomists, the squatted social centres that have sprung up all over Italy, the anarchist and libertarian movement, the workplace coordinations of the base committees (COBAS), all play a very secondary role in this hypermedia hype scenario. Their

lack of combativity point to a weakness of analyses and difficulty in developing a revolutionary identity in this new situation.

The principal problem is the weakness of a revolutionary identity and a vision of a new society — Utopia. As a member of the Anarchist-Communist Group of Rome remarked: "The presence in the struggles has never been absent, certainly, but it is trapped, in most cases, in the sacrosanct practice of 'left unionism', limited to local or specific struggles, with little staying power and without being directed towards a social confrontation".

What appears paradoxical, is that the reactionary right are seen by many young people as 'revolutionary', bypassing the radical movements of the '70s and '80s. Even the experience of the social centres, which prolonged to a certain extent this movement, has not succeeded in getting out of its youth and minority ghetto, and has been transformed from a movement confronting the system to one of defence.

Despite this objectively negative scenario, there are possibilities to develop struggles against the attacks about to be launched against the working class, and to point out the false promises of the Berlusconi government. One favourable sign was the attempt by 50,000 anarchists, autonomists and squatters to storm the National Alliance HQ in Milan during a march to commemorate the resistance to Mussolini, which was, however, thwarted by the police.

Information from an interview with a militant of the Italian FdCA (Anarchist Communist Federation) in the French paper *Alternatif Libertaire*, and from an article by a correspondent of the Anarchist Communist Group of Rome in the French magazine *Courant Alternatif*.

ACTIVE RESISTANCE

Out now! second issue of Active Resistance, the ACF paper for young people. 40p a copy plus postage. A few copies of first issue still available. Write to London address for copies, bulk orders.

Exporting Murder — Toxic Dumping in SA

THOR CHEMICALS — the British owned company notorious for its callous treatment of black workers employed at its Cato Ridge plant near Pietermaritzburg in Natal — is again at the centre of a major controversy, this time involving the import into South Africa of toxic wastes.

Three senior executives are facing charges of murder after the death of a worker from mercury poisoning in July, and Thor Chemicals' parent company in the UK is being sued by three South African workers for damage to their health suffered at the Cato Ridge plant.

The latest controversy erupted when Greenpeace New York and South Africa's Earthlife Africa, together with the Environmental Justice Forum, revealed that a US company, Borden Chemicals and Plastics, had dispatched a shipment of 160 barrels of

'spent mercuric fluoride catalyst' at Thor's Cato Ridge plant. Thor Chemicals already has a massive stockpile of imported toxic waste, believed to be in the vicinity of 4000 barrels, including the remnants from its British mercuric chloride plant, which was moved to South Africa after it was discovered that workers in the UK were being poisoned.

Demonstrators from both Earthlife Africa and the Environmental Justice Forum picketed the Cato Ridge plant on February 21st in protest at the new shipment. Similar protests were held at the Borden plant in Louisiana on the same day. Protests by Greenpeace activists in the US have now forced Borden Chemicals and Plastics to agree to take back the shipment.

Earthlife Africa has also revealed that the Department of National Health seems to be acting irregularly by allowing Thor to burn and dump wastes despite its inability to meet

the minimum safety standards to qualify for an operating permit.

The Department of Water Affairs has also given Thor permission to dump toxic mercury wastes on its premises rather than at a regulated toxic waste dump. The site is not registered, as is required by law, nor have any written guidelines been provided for its management.

South Africa's environmental organisations are demanding that the government ban all further imports of toxic wastes. The African National Congress has pledged to end all imports of toxic waste into South Africa after winning the election in April, although only time will tell whether — out of line with their performance so far in other areas of policy — they will actually do so.

(Information sources: Norm Dixon, Chris Albertyn and Earthlife Pietermaritzburg).

Rwanda and Burundi — 'Ethnic' Massacres and Colonial Origins

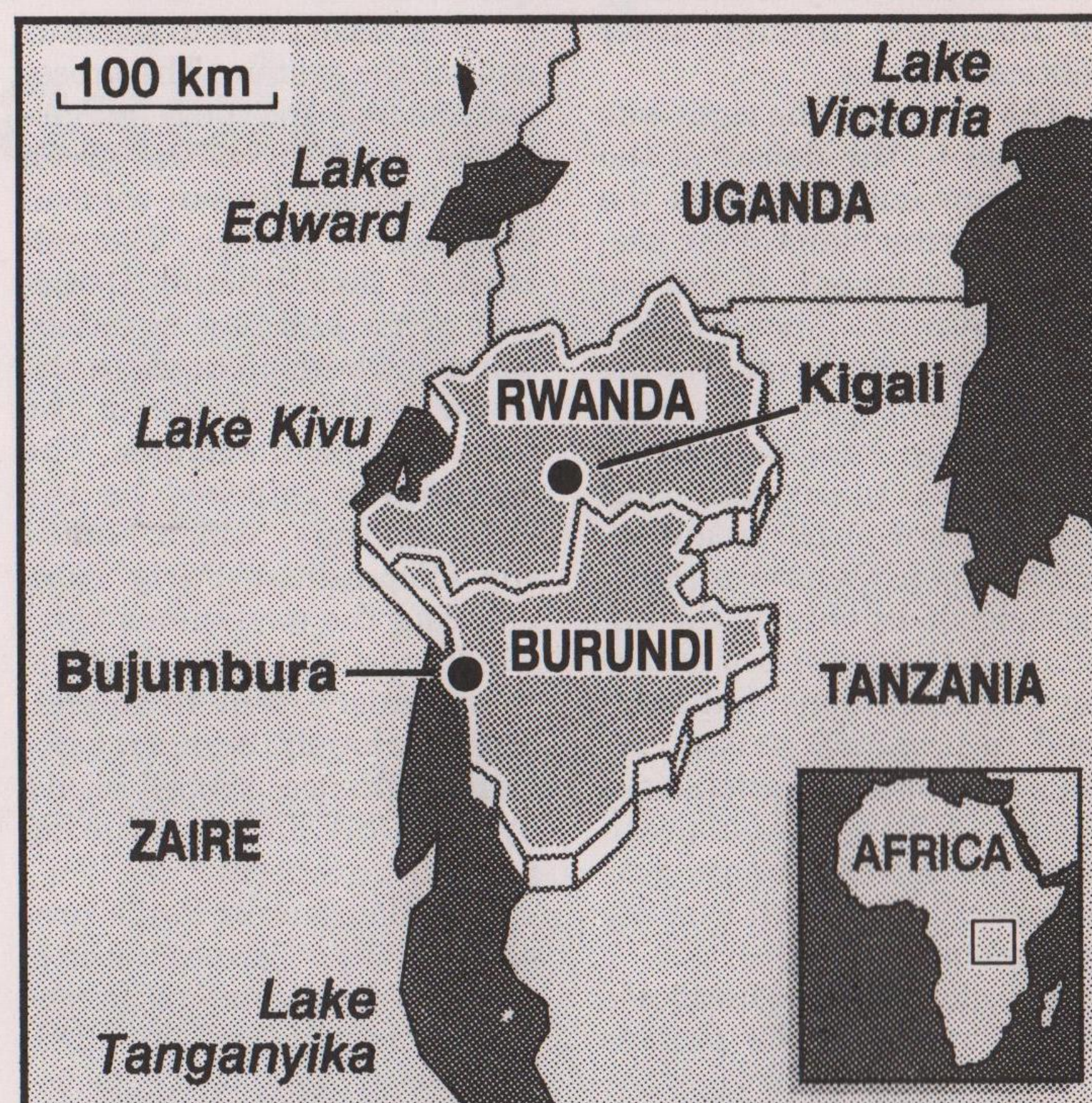
PERIODICALLY, RWANDA AND Burundi hit the pages of the Western papers with the same images of massacres and mass waves of refugees.

The journalists fill page after page with their descriptions of primitive tribalism, which they see as responsible for the instability of these two States, with the recurring undercurrent of paternalistic racism which makes Africans into big children who haven't grown out of barbarism. This allows the West to wallow complacently in its self-styled economic superiority, a spiritual and 'racial' superiority. But if we want to really understand the tragic events in these two countries we cannot ignore the colonial period and the massive effects that they have had on African societies.

If we believed the papers, the Burundi region, which is

now separated into the two countries of Rwanda and Burundi, always suffered from bloody confrontations between Hutus (80% of the population) and Tutsis (19%) since the beginning of time. Nothing could be further from the truth. Before colonisation, it was a kingdom reigning over more than 200 clans, whose élites were divided into four 'social categories' (Bahutu, Batutsi, Baganwa and Batwa) which were more or less 'superclans' which had different vocations and which competed for the official posts dished out by the courts of the king and the princes.

The arrival of the colonialists profoundly shook this rigidly hierarchical society. First



of all the colonialists turned the 'social categories' (not

classes in the strict sense) into races, in line with the racist and evolutionist theories of the 19th century. They opposed Tutsis to Hutus, seeing the first as the race of lords and conquerors, and the second as sedentary peasants. They laced this with large helpings of racist mumbo-jumbo, calling the Tutsis 'semitised Hamites' or 'Europeans with black skins'. The fact that their researches had shown that intermarriage was the norm didn't change in the slightest their theory that all the African 'races' were not at the same level; the Tutsi were more advanced than the Hutu, themselves more advanced than the Twa (seen as Bantuised pygmies). As to the Ganwas they were arbitrarily labelled Tutsi, because of their social status as provincial governors.

Obscure

This theory served as the base for administrative reorganisation by the Belgian state in 1929. Colonial exploitation required the help of a small part of the local population, and the Ganwa aristocracy was chosen as best assuring social peace. The number of chiefs was reduced from 133 to 35 and the Hutu élite was marginalised, losing all the positions of chiefs, which had accounted for 20%. This wasn't to the profit of the Tutsi.

Solidarity

We express our solidarity with the poor of Indonesia and the criminally oppressed victims of Indonesia's genocidal war in East Timor, and we uncompromisingly condemn the suicidal policy of greed-driven deforestation.

Deforestation of Indonesia: A Policy Driven by Greed and War

INDONESIA IS TO send a delegation on a PR visit to the European Parliament in April to shore up concerns about the massive environmental damage being inflicted by the timber trade on tribal people in Indonesia and to head off possible calls for wood import boycotts because of alleged indiscriminate logging.

The delegation — made up of a team of businessmen in the industry — will, in the words of Indonesia's plywood king, Bob Hasan, leader of the delegation and head of the Indonesian Forestry Community: "explain to the European legislators at their session in April how Indonesia is taking good care of its rain forests ... After gaining the right understanding about Indonesia's forest development, European politicians hopefully will stop supporting boycotts of rain forest wood imports from tropical climate countries, including Indonesia."

Environmentalists say the timber industry in Indonesia — home to some of the world's biggest tropical forests — has damaged about 30% of the country's 147 million hectares (363 million acres) of tropical rain forest.

Desperate

Pledging to comply with calls by the International Tropical Timber Organisation to ensure all hardwood timber comes from managed forest by the year 2000, Indonesia, which earned \$5.21 billion from the timber industry in 1992, has nonetheless stressed the need to balance conservation with its economic interests. Following the neighbouring Malaysian government's line of blaming the victims for deforestation, instead of those holding timber concessions, Hasan has said global deforestation can be equated with poverty, as poor people desperate for food turn forests into agricultural land (nearly one-sixth of Indonesia's 185 million people live in poverty).

Yet clearly it is the ruling

sis, but of the Ganwas and their two aristocratic lines, the Batare and Bezie, who controlled 25 of the posts.

Plural societies

As we can see, to put the problems down to tribalism is dangerous as they obscure the fact that pre-colonial Africa was not made up of united ethnic, cultural and linguistic units, but of plural societies living in interdependence.

The new idea of ethnic identity linked to political allegiances was a result of colonisation. The post-colonial states were founded on ethnicity, which gave riches and privileges to the right group.

After the Belgians left, the two countries took different directions. In Burundi, the Tutsi held on to their privileges, whilst the Hutu took power in Rwanda.

In Burundi, the history of the last 30 years is that of political instability. The single Party, UPRONA, with the help of the Army maintained Tutsi supremacy. The Hutus paid dearly for this — 80 of their leaders were murdered in 1965 (23 of whom were MPs who had assured their majority in Parliament), 200,000 were butchered in 1972. Their next door neighbour Rwanda, was subject to internal struggles between Hutu factions, because most of the minority Tutsi population had preferred exile to death.

The two States used the colonialists' false version of

their history. In Burundi they insisted on the traditional superiority of the Tutsi. In Rwanda, they emphasised the stages of Hutu emancipation from Tutsi domination.

In Rwanda a vicious form of state racism was maintained with a politics of quotas and identity papers giving 'ethnic' origin. The Rwandan revolution of 1959-61 overthrew a feudal and colonial regime but it failed to destroy the myth of the 'racial difference between Hutu and Tutsi'.

Things are hardly better in Burundi. If there is no mention of 'ethnic' identity on identity papers, it is because power is in the hands of a minority. A Hutu fraction rules over the mass of the population in Rwanda calling it people's power, whilst the Tutsi minority in Burundi call for national unity to mask their domination.

Turning point

The attack that cost the lives of Presidents Habyarimana of Rwanda and Ntaryamira of Burundi came during a chaotic period.

For the first time, Burundi had elected a Hutu President, a consequence of the democratisation in course. But Melchior Ndayaye was murdered five months later in a failed putsch which cost tens of thousands of lives. His replacement, Ntaryamira, also a Hutu, failed to calm things down, and Hutu armed factions began to confront the

Army, mainly Tutsi, on a daily basis. In Rwanda the state was involved in guerilla warfare with the Rwandan Patriotic Front from 1990. The RPF, talked about its anti-dictatorship stand, but had difficulty in getting rid of the Tutsi label it had been saddled with. The majority of the guerillas are exiles who served in the Ugandan Army.

As for the involvement of the French State, its support for the dictator Habyarimana has never been denied. Several hundred soldiers of the Force d'action rapide are permanently stationed in Bangui (Central Africa) and intervened in the Rwandan capital to protect the 400 French there and bolster the Rwandan government at the same time. Habyarimana was a close friend of the Mitterrand family.

Now 2,500 French soldiers are intervening there under the cover of 'honour, decency, dignity'. Practically all the French politicians of left and right backed this intervention. Officially, this 'temporary' and 'exceptional' mission is to protect the civilian population who are fleeing from the East to the West of the country away from the war between the Government and the RPF. This intervention has been approved by the Security Council of the UN. Once more France acts as the *gendarme* of Africa with the consent of the USA and of Russia. To help this come about, they are once again cuddling up with

Mobutu, the President of Zaire, with whom they had ceased all civil and military cooperation, and are keeping him sweet with financial contributions. And all this while the dictator Mobutu carries on his own ethnic purification (mass murder) in Katanga against the Balubas, because his principal opponent Etienne Tshisekedi is a Baluba.

Intervene

The French troops are positioned across the border in Zaire ready to intervene in Rwanda. This is in a region where second generation Tutsi refugees live (the same as those who in Uganda formed the RPF) and which is controlled by the radical Zairean opposition, who adopt fiercely anti-French language.

The French hope to kill two birds with one stone, but at the same time risk a many-sided confrontation. Already the Zairean Army have led several attacks on the local Tutsi population. If the French troops move directly into Rwanda, they will create a country of two zones, one controlled by them, and one by the RPF. The French State shows itself ready to prop up dictators in its zone of influence in Africa. Where 'democratisation' has taken place those newly come to power quickly pledge allegiance to France.

New markets

The United States is newly involved in Africa. No longer is this through the funding of anti-Communist forces but as a financial power eager for potential new markets, as is happening in South Africa (see *Organise!* 33), France must now control Africa in competition or concurrence with other Great Powers, with the risk of certain African leaders selling themselves to the highest bidder (as has happened or been threatened by Mobutu, Bongo, etc).

The cons of humanitarian aid — Somalia yesterday, Rwanda today — and the defence of International Law — Kuwait yesterday, tomorrow? — are alibis to maintain or consolidate the zones of influence of the Great Powers.



France — Mass Action Against Wage Cuts

THE GOVERNMENT OF Balladur attempted to reduce the minimum national wage for people under 26 by 20%. This was to apply only to people with less than two years' higher education and was designed to increase divisions based on qualifications.

Since the end of the '70s, the crisis does not seem to have greatly affected the capitalists, whose profits boomed. At the same time, the attacks by the bosses and the State multiplied and reactions to them were partial and defensive. The social movements were greatly weakened in this period and the bosses and State showed they were capable of maintaining a social consensus.

But in March a large movement of protest against these new measures from school students, students and the unemployed shook all this. Unlike in 1968, the school students and students did not mobilise against a law that affected their studies, but about the future as wage-earners.

This movement had its contradictions. Some students, united in the student unions IUT and BTS, said they did not want to be paid like 'supermarket cashiers'. On the other hand in further education and technical colleges working class students strongly contributed to giving the mobilisation a radical character (especially in Lyon) even if others, less disadvantaged by their social background, were put forward as spokespeople for the media. Also to be noted were the greater number of students — noticeable in comparison to the movement of 1986 — who saw that university diplomas were no longer necessarily a passport to a more privileged social position. Most present students are future wage earners concerned by the increasing growth of temporary and part-time work or are future unemployed.

The government, speaking through the mouthpiece of the mass media, attempted to split the movement by denouncing the *casseurs* who turned up to demonstrations as outsiders to a 'responsible'



movement. The *casseurs* (breakers) are alienated working class youth from the inner cities and suburbs who have vented their rage at their miserable existences by breaking shop-windows during the demonstrations. The accusations of the government were well thought out. Faced by a mass spontaneous movement that was out of the control of the student unions and the political parties, the old bugbear of outside agitators was conjured up just like back in May 1968. In actual fact severe police provocation had led to defensive violence which ignited this outbreak of anger. This indicates a very deep despair and anger in French society. But it also indicates the absence of political perspectives going beyond the simple repeal of a law. This is thanks to the lack of a real social movement able to propose an alternative to capitalist logic at the level of ideas and action.

A tie-up with the workplaces did not come about despite a simmering tension in many workplaces. All the same, the potential for this was higher than in May 1968, when a fringe of radicalised students called for such a link-up, but when the student movement and the workers' general strike developed simultaneously but with different dynamics and goals. The Stalinists of the Communist Party (PCF) and the union

they controlled — the CGT — were able to sabotage any radicalisation. The latest movement shows that the possibilities for future link-ups are strong. The youth in education mobilised against a law that directly concerned the mass of workers. At the same time, the practices of self-organisation (strike committees, coordinations) were widespread, reflecting the same development over the last few years in the workplaces, where the Stalinist influence has been greatly weakened.

Hijacks

In the '70s the left was able to hijack the social movements and turn them to their own reformist and electoralist ends.

Now, the Socialists have been exposed by their ten years of loyal management of capitalism, and the PCF is discredited by the collapse of the 'socialist' bloc. But the cantonal elections showed they were still capable of channelling discontent because of the lack of a credible social alternative.

Balladur was forced to withdraw the law, and on 31st March 40,000 demonstrated in a victory demonstration. In the aftermath gangsters were accused by the media of manipulating young people in the disturbances at Lyon. There was talk of anarchists and

Trotskyists infiltrating the movement on TV and in the press. Certainly at Nantes, where 20,000 mobilised, the libertarian movement was well implanted, not as outsiders but as activists. They were able to spread their ideas widely and make a strong presence. Here, the streets were occupied four times in a week, despite police attacks and many arrests. Indeed, there and at Lyon the situation was semi-insurreccional.

The French libertarian movement has been enthused by the new movement. There seems to be a great determination to break out of the ghetto and spread revolutionary ideas amongst the mass of the population.

As two Nantes comrades noted: "That the anarchist communists that we are, can act and make politics, on bases other than manoeuvres of committees and declarations of principles... that this way of acting and of thinking in concert with the greatest number of people possible allows the opening of the political debate, the sense of collective action, and that far from isolating us, radical, coherent positions, revolutionary positions, can have a widespread response, allow a globalisation of separated struggles, reinforce the social movements and allow the emergence of an anti-capitalist and libertarian political current."

CARMAGEDDON

In part two of our series on traffic (see *Organise!* 34 for part 1), we look at the social and health effects of traffic. In the next issue we conclude by looking at false solutions and opposition to the traffic system.

CAPITALISM WANTS MOTOR traffic for profit for the road lobby and for the rapid movement of goods and people (as either workers or consumers). 'Mobility madness' also derives from the need of the business people to commute within and between the zones of power in each city to make business decisions. Cars also promise individuals freedom of movement and are important status and identity symbols.

Freedom

Cars promise individuals the freedom to go where they want, when they want. This is particularly attractive to young people eager to escape the straitjacket of the family. This is a bourgeois freedom however, achieved (if at all) at the expense of others as part of the "war of all against all". Other drivers are obstacles and restrictions to the individual's inalienable right of movement. In practice of

course, the net result is more congestion and delays for motorists, increased pedestrian danger and fear (particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and children), and further noise and air pollution. This 'freedom' is also empty because the effect of the accompanying tarmac, concrete and pollution is to "make everywhere like everywhere else". Additionally, as Aufheben point out, the individual's inalienable right of freedom of (motor) movement is enforced and guaranteed by the State (through traffic laws and road construction). The car has everything to say about (for) its owner in terms of identity and status while simultaneously stopping direct communication between people.

Motorisation

Cities and towns of the past were built to the scale of the walking person, and pedestrians, vehicle users, horse, cart,

carriage cycle, bus, car, lorry had the same physical access to buildings. This equality has disappeared with the increasing speed (and volume) of motor traffic. Along main arterial roads barriers are put up to speed traffic flow and prevent pedestrians from crossing and motorists from parking; car users and bus passengers can no longer use local shops. The next stage is that a hypermarket opens elsewhere killing off small shops and forcing pedestrians and bus users to shop there or go to the more expensive shop on their estate (with the monopoly of local trade). Arterial roads have two functions — to take people in and out of cities, and to be the lifeblood of all the towns along their route, providing shops, schools, pubs etc. This latter function is lost as the barriers turn arteries into freeways and towns along the route become blighted and die. Cities become compartmentalised, area by area. At the core a hostile city centre defended by an urban motorway, its inhabitants gone. It is surrounded by a series of enclosed camps hemmed in by arteries which have become freeways. People can only enter or leave the city at controlled exit points to





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go to work. The whole is physically connected but without clear communication points and with no social contact. Further out a series of scattered isolated encampments cluster the ring road. Workers commute to the city centre from the outer suburb, and others travel out to ring road factories. Cities devoid of life with traffic endlessly circulating around ring roads. The poor from different areas never meet, leading totally separate existences. Thousands of people live in their own niche within areas, many isolated and atomised in their own homes.

Health

Exhaust fumes (carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons) are a major contributor to global warming and acid rain, and cause much ill health and environmental damage. The average car pollutes more than two billion cubic meters of air in its life. In Britain emissions from car exhausts have increased 73% since 1981; a 1993 government study found 19 million people in Britain were exposed to pollution exceeding EC guidelines.

In 1965 there were eight million cars in Britain; by 1995 there will be 18 million; by 2025 36 million are predicted. Children and the elderly are particularly at risk from exhaust pollution, which causes asthma and bronchitis. Greenpeace International calculates 7.5 million elderly people are at risk and nine million children. Asthma is one of the few treatable chronic diseases which is advancing in Western countries. Children are more vulnerable because they exercise more and so breathe in more air (youngsters under three breathe in twice as much air as adults for their body rate). Asthma now effects more than one in seven children in Britain; the number of young children admitted to hospital with it has increased 13 times since 1960. It is the greatest single cause of hospital admissions after heart disease and strokes.

Space

Speed consumes distance: forms of transport occupy space, and the faster they are, the more space they need. A car travelling 40 kilometres an hour (kph) requires more than three times as much space as one travelling at 10 kph; a single person driving a car at 10 kph needs six times as much space as a cyclist travelling at the same speed. Germany's cars (including driving and parking) commandeer 3700 square kilometres of space, 60% more than that occupied by housing. Each German car is responsible for 200 square kilometres of tarmac and concrete.

The radius of activity of the well off has expanded immeasurably over the last 30 years; that of the poor has changed very little. The emphasis on speed and 'time saving' leads to transport and planning policies where basic facilities such as shops, schools, leisure and work are spaced widely apart. Most people feel that they have less time despite faster means of transport. Those without cars (35% of the population in the UK) and those who do not have access to them during the day, must spend time searching for other facilities, waiting for buses,

trains or friends who can give them lifts, or walking. The working class, women, children and people with disabilities are particularly affected. For women travelling alone after dark there are the potential dangers of waiting at bus stops, for late trains (more dangerous after years of cuts due to lack of guards and conductors), or using underpasses which prioritise the motorist at the expense of the pedestrian. Women are also more likely to have the main responsibility for children in hostile urban environments (including escorting duties necessitated by the danger from traffic). In Britain women spend thousands of hours escorting children, at a cost of £10 billion a year (using Department of Transport cost benefit criteria).

Community

Ordinary but diverse contact is important to people's well being. Traffic affects the number of friends and acquaintances that people have — the more the traffic, the less the contacts. Streets with lighter traffic (around 2000 vehicles a year) have close knit communities where residents make full use of the street — sitting and chatting on front steps, children using pavements for play and teenagers and



adults hanging out and chatting on the street.

With medium traffic flow (about 8000 vehicles a year) there is a decline in street use, though friendliness and involvement remain. With heavy traffic flow (over 16,000 vehicles a year) the street is used solely as a corridor between the sanctuary of individual homes and the outside world. There is no feeling of community and residents keep to themselves, ie isolation and alienation. In this process the street is the first to go.

Motorists view pedestrians, cyclists and children playing in the street as intruding on their space. As the volume (and speed) of traffic increases, their attitude becomes more ruthless. People's use of the pavement is the next to go, due to the noise, air pollution and vibration caused. The street loses its attraction to people — children abandon their play space (and adults keep them inside), and adults drive rather than walk.

With heavy traffic residents abandon their front gardens and front rooms in a

retreat from vibration and noise. Finally people become 'traffic refugees' and abandon their homes, moving to quieter areas. Poorer people are left behind, trapped and condemned to blight.

The refugees are replaced by more poor people — those who can't afford to buy or rent elsewhere. The street is now deserted and alienation leads to greater anti-social crime. As thefts and assaults increase, people take refuge in cars, putting another twist on the downward spiral.

Advertising: The Poetry of Capitalism

CAPITALISM IS A system that seems impossible to crack. Its strength is in the inability of its only opponents (the working-class) to wake up from their induced lethargy. A subtle interplay of media manipulation keeps us passive, inanimate and impotent. For the purpose of this article I want to focus on one aspect of this intellectual lobotomy: advertising.

Personally I find mainstream advertising to be the antithesis of everything creative and artistic in society. For capitalism to sell unnecessary produce it needs to create artificial appetites. It has to stimulate craving for the 'good life' (please note that by 'unnecessary produce' I mean such indispensable necessities as blenders, remote control folding beds and 15-minute car polish and other such items we couldn't live without).

So as a result we have the creation of the modern advertising industry. Around the time of the beginning of mass production advertising skyrocketed into a global billion-dollar industry. With the development of new technology (TV, compact disc, satellite communications etc) advertising found ever more accommodating outlets for its main targets: you and I.

Manipulation

By now I'm sure that one question is on your mind: "What's so bad about advertising?" There are several answers to this. Firstly, advertising is manipulation. TV and newspaper ads entice us with concocted images of sumptuous food, dashing new technology and whiter than white clothes that makes average punters blow their hard earned wages on items that are usually useless, frivolous and, more often than not, have built-in obsolescence just to maximise the amount of profit that can be extracted from the hapless worker. Children are manipulated towards torturing their par-



ents into buying them THAT toy "just like on the telly".

We are mentally bullied, extorted and fettered by advertising. To the demoralised and wary worker advertising creates a little piece of paradise that could be his or hers. The blatant cerebral exploitation

of advertising is something that we as libertarians should resist.

That brings me on to another crippling factor of advertising. Despite government claims advertising is still quasi-subliminal, you will often hear people humming a snatch of a jingle or coming out with a

well-known slogan. Some slogans have now become sayings in the English language! These images, slogans and general white noise are deliberately ingratiating, so that we are always thinking about product X.

It is ironic to see that an artificially-created industry, born to serve capitalism's needs, has now become an industry in its own right. Advertising agencies now sell ads for revenue to their prospective clients.

Production

The production of ads is another area for concern. TV commercials cost tens of thousands of pounds individually. On an annual scale the amount of money used in research, production, distribution and release is nearly into the £1 billion mark. The waste of such money is criminal. The amount of resources involved in such ads also defies sanity. A good example of this waste would be junk mail. Millions of tons of paper are wasted annually on this idiotic exercise in futility.

"Sex sells" is a familiar saying. In some "less professional" areas of advertising sexism is rampant. Ads for various brands of pornography are mentally and physically degrading to women. Throughout the industry as a whole, women come off worst in terms of employment. It is estimated that out of the (surprisingly small number of) people who work in advertising (approx. 15,000), half are women. However, this is a very bottom-heavy pyramid. Women mostly perform the roles of receptionist, accounts clerk, tea-lady and secretary. Advancement is notoriously difficult to attain. In fact advancement is impossible to attain if you



"One day, son, all this will be junk mail"

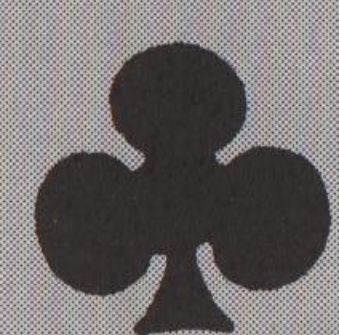
don't possess a cut throat disposition. In the throes of executive power struggles people are often disregarded and thrown upon the economic scrap heap.

Ad people have the highest rates of stress-related illnesses among the 'professional' classes. The 'competition' demanded by capitalism even treats its lackeys with inhuman disrespect. Advertising is said to be a people business. So is cannibalism.

Advertising is a method of covering up one-company domination of the relevant market. If a product is owned by one company and is then advertised under another brand name or trade mark, then no one gets alarmed at the economic expansionism of one group of capitalist profiteers.

We in the ACF are libertarian communists. We oppose the use of mental coercion on any section of the population. In an anarchist-communist society we will not live by Puritan standards of comfort, but we will not allow anyone to manipulate people into giving up their basic necessities in favour of false luxuries. However, in the present-day, ordinary working class people, dejected and exploited, find no comfort in simple necessities. They want their flash car, they want their rich food and they mean to get them even if they deny themselves the essential items that they need to survive. Why? Because the all-embracing advertising industry has told them that this is what they need. The new car will make them attractive, the new outfit suit will make their mates jealous and the new lager will make them look 'yuppie'. It doesn't matter if the car does only 25 miles per gallon, or if the clothes wear out after six months. It even doesn't even matter that the trendy beer costs £2.50 a bottle. The ad man has buried himself in the worker's subconscious. No one is immune to this manipulative device. Even the politically 'aware' are just as vulnerable to this brainwashing.

As libertarians we should do everything to change this materialistic society. One step on that road is to reveal the ad man's promises for what they really are: fool's gold.



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Poetry and Revolution

THE AUTHORITARIAN MENTALITY has always been suspicious of poetry. Plato saw poets as subversive and wanted to ban them from his Republic, while the Nazis murdered the anarchist poet Eric Mühsam because they were frightened of his words.

Poetry's subversive edge is usually left out of the school curriculum, or forgotten when anthologies are compiled, although some of the earliest British poetry is noticeable for its demands for social justice, and for its praise for resistance to tyranny.

Chaucer's contemporary, Langland, wrote 'A Vision of Piers Plowman', which in spite of its religiosity vibrates with indignation at the corruption of the rich and powerful and their oppression of the peasantry. Langland's vision was written at about the time of the Peasants' Revolt, much like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and *Romance of the Rose*, but Chaucer lacks any concern for the poor and dispossessed — probably why he is taught on the 'A' level syllabus and Langland is not.

Langland's religious background results in the absence of any idea of resistance to injustice, but resistance is notable in the early ballads of Robin Hood which celebrate the outlaws resistance to the Norman Yoke.

Expression

Because poetry can compress and express meaning in a way that ordinary prose cannot, it has frequently been chosen as the vehicle for spreading radical ideas and attacking the rich and powerful. The Romantic poets were inspired by the early ideals of the French Revolution and influenced by the writings of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecroft, two precursors of modern Anarchism. Byron's long satirical poems 'Vision of Judgement' and 'Don Juan' attacked the degenerate monarchy, while some of his short poems celebrated the resistance of the Luddites.

Byron's friend, Shelley, was the poet most closely associated with Godwin's proto-anarchism, and as Paul Foot has demonstrated in *Red Shelley* nearly all his poems can be seen as a direct and sustained attack on political tyranny and economic exploitation. Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for writing a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*. Shelley's early poetry includes 'Queen Mab', a long work criticising both Christianity and political tyranny, and 'Ozymandias', a sonnet which provides an ironic commentary on the vanity and futility of a tyrant's power. The political implications of 'Ozymandias' could not be avoided as the sonnet was first published in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* only two years

after Hunt had completed a three year prison sentence for criticising the future King George IV.

Two years later (in 1819) armed soldiers attacked a peaceful demonstration in St Peter's Field, Manchester, killing 11 people and wounding over 400. Shelley, inspired by outrage wrote the 'Mask of Anarchy'. So powerful was Shelley's poem that no-one would publish it until 1832, many years after Shelley's death. Nearly all of Shelley's work is imbued with hope, and he openly celebrates resistance, calling on people to "rise like lions".

The attraction that French anarchism held for artists after the Paris Commune (1871) was matched by a similar feeling among writers, particularly avant-garde poets. When police seized the subscription lists of the anarchist paper *La Revolte* in 1894, they found poets like Mallarmé, Quillard and Richepin included in the records. Nearly all the symbolist poets sympathised with anarchism, writing poems on anarchist themes, contributing financial support or writing articles and pamphlets supporting anarchism. Mallarmé even took his support to the extent of appearing as a character witness for the anarchist Félix Feneon, who was charged with possession of explosives during the so called 'Trial of the Thirty'. Verlaine wrote short poems about Louise Michel, the anarchist organiser, who had been imprisoned for her role in the Paris Commune and again for organising the poor. The American poet living in France, Stuart Merrill, claimed that "the symbolist is the anarchist in literature", and Viele-Griffin wrote of "the literary anarchy for which we have battled".

For late 19th century French poets, to call themselves anarchist meant to insist on maintaining their individuality as creators, to reject out-dated rules and to affirm the artist as the only judge of his or her own work. This can be seen clearly in the work of Gustav Kahn, who pioneered free verse and made the urban streets the subject of his poetry in *Aesthetique de la Rue*. His political anarchism was an extension of his literary radicalism.

One of the most uncompromising anarchist poets was Gabriel Randon, also known as Jehan Rictus (rictus is a death-like grimace), whose whole life was one of poverty and suffering. As a 16-year-old runaway he spent six years of his life as a clochard (tramp) sleeping in the streets and in doorways until he collapsed and was hospitalised. This self-identification with the beggars and rogues of the middle ages, his personal experience of hardship and his extensive knowledge of Parisian argot (slang) inspired him to create a new 'poetry of the people' and he created a series of song-poems called 'Soliliquies of the Poor'.

*To each in his turn the pavements
I walk in silence and in a desert
For 'r'th day the finest streets
The fullest of din and crowds
At mi'night are only great hallways
Corridors open to the sky.*

*I'm th' Emp'rör of the pavement
I'm th' roamer . . . the mash chewer
Th' stink at nights . . . th' along the gutters
The out-of-sorts, the long-mug
Th' angish chewer — the talk to himself . . .*

There was no romanticisation of the poor in Rictus' poetry. They are cold, tired and hungry. They rebel, but they remain without hope.

Rictus wrote articles in the *Revue Anarchiste* and read his poems out at anarchist gatherings. He refused to compromise or tone down his attack on capitalism and died in poverty.

Resurgence

Britain, like France saw a socialist resurgence at the end of the 19th century, but although it was a socialism strongly flavoured with anarchism, few British poets became anarchists. One minor poet who did was Louisa Sarah Bevington, who had written several slim volumes of poetry before becoming interested in anarchist ideas. She saw no distinction between being a poet and being a revolutionary. In the last few years of her life she wrote widely for the anarchist press, in *Freedom*, *Commonweal*, and for To-chatti's paper *Liberty*, to which she also contributed poems. Working with the London Anarchist Communist Alliance she wrote several pamphlets, which still retain a relevance to our own time.

A second minor poet associated with the late Victorian anarchist movement was the Scot John Barlas, who wrote for the Socialist League paper *Commonweal*. Barlas took part in the 'Bloody Sunday' demonstration in Trafalgar Square in 1887, where he was badly injured by blows from a policeman's truncheon. Bar-

Need an Antidote?

Aylesbury group of the ACF have produced a local agitational magazine. *Antidote* No 2 is available containing articles on Suing the police, Emma Humphreys, The BNP. Copies (including a few of Issue 1) can be obtained (free or donation) by sending an A5 SAE to Aylesbury ACF, PO Box 406, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 8LS.



Pen & ink drawing by George Grosz, showing the arrest and interrogation of Eric Mühsam.

las is usually remembered for firing a pistol shot at the Houses of Parliament as a gesture of contempt. A gesture for which he was arrested and imprisoned. Oscar Wilde stood bail for Barlas, partly because of a shared interest in anarchism. As a result of his truncheon injuries Barlas suffered from repeated bouts of depression and eventually died in a Glasgow asylum. During his lifetime he wrote several volumes of poetry, some of which are regularly reprinted.

Oscar Wilde is always mocked as a dilettante and jester, but this is the literary establishment's method of defusing Wilde's work. His plays represent a scathing indictment of the morals and concerns of the ruling classes, disguised as comedy, but much of his work is more overtly political. The plays are an attack from within the ruling class, his later writings are from a position of exclusion. *De Profundis* was Wilde's justification of his homosexuality, but it is couched in strongly political tones. *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* is an incisive argument for libertarian socialism, but it is the 'Ballad of Reading Gaol' which is his most inspirational work. A poem based on his experience while in prison, it is a powerful attack on the notion of punishment.

The anarchist-communist Eric Mühsam placed culture at the centre of his political activism, fiercely defending freedom of the individual from encroachment by right and left. His socialism was anti-statist and he was a tireless campaigner for sexual emancipation and for prison abolition.

Mühsam's main weapon was his razor sharp verse and he became one of Weimar Germany's most acute social critics. His satire provided a focus for his political

commitment. His 'Der Revoluzzer', written in 1907, became one of the most performed chansons of the Weimar period.

During World War One Mühsam was a revolutionary pacifist who refused even to carry out 'alternative labour service' and was consequently imprisoned for his anti-war stand. On his release at the end of the war he took part in the Munich soviet, which was brutally suppressed by the German State. Mühsam's anarchist colleague Gustav Landauer was murdered and Mühsam was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.

While in prison Mühsam wrote a play *Judas*, accounts of his revolutionary experience in Munich and many songs and poems, one of which became extremely popular. Called 'The Death of a Red Guard Soldier' it is based on Mühsam's witnessing the death of a young fellow revolutionary during the Munich soviet. It ends with these words spoken by the dying revolutionary:

"Even if you kill me
My belief continues to thrive
I myself may die, but
the revolution remains alive."

One of the last prisoners to be amnestied in 1924, Mühsam returned to radical activity, editing a paper called *FANAL* (Beacon) and now less bohemian and more political in his approach. Well known to the Nazis because of his many political and cabaret appearances, his new translation of 'The International' and his writings which included a popular play *For Reasons Of State*, based on the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, Mühsam became one of their first victims.

On the night of the Reichstag fire, Mühsam was arrested by the SS just four hours before a planned escape to Prague — a flight he had been forced to postpone because of lack of money. He was impris-

oned in a whole series of concentration camps and was savagely beaten in all of them. He was cruelly murdered by his captors on July 10th 1933.

Many of the French surrealist poets, including Benjamin Peret and André Breton were involved with the anarchist movement in the 1950s, contributing a series of *billets surrealistes* to the anarchist paper *Le Libertaire*. Their contemporary, Jacques Prevert successfully encapsulated anarchist ideas in his haunting poems. Prevert was a script writer by profession, writing a whole series of screen-plays for the films of Marcel Carne, among them *Les Enfants du Paradis* and *Les Portes de la Nuit*, as well as the sadly neglected full-length cartoon film *The King and Mr Bird*.

Prevert's poetry is sometimes tender, wistful and evocative of gentle melancholy, but it can also be mockingly satirical. In the poems of *Paroles* (1941) and *Spectacle* (1951), he ridicules the conformity and convention of society, attacking the social damage caused by capitalism, while praising the simple joys of love, and the colours, sounds and smells of the streets.

Relevant, effective poetry wasn't just written in the past — it still has a relevance and effectiveness at the late end of the 20th century. English poet Adrian Mitchell helped to provide a focus to opposition to the war in Vietnam with his poems. Utilising the rhythms of rock and roll in 'Zapping the Cong' and the direct lyrics of 'To Whom it May Concern': "I was run over by the truth one day . . .", Mitchell worked tirelessly to give a voice to the anti-war movement.

A decade later Mitchell was pointing at the insanity of nuclear war in 'On the beach at Cambridge'. His poems find targets in the alienation of everyday life, attacking the cruelty of the school playground in 'Back in the Playground Blues', where he likens the cruelty experienced by children to the beetle which gets its legs torn off, but "a beetle can't beg for mercy, a beetle's not half the fun".

The desire for rebellion expressed in 'Fuck off Friday', is linked to his activities supporting the miners during the miners' strike and to his opposition to the bombing of Iraq in the Gulf war.

A second poet who has been able to give voice to the fears and desires of our time is Heathcote Williams. Actor, playwright and sometime editor of the seminal underground paper *IT* (*International Times*), Heathcote has written several book length poems about the destruction of the environment by cars, the destruction of the elephant species, and the destruction of Whales. 'Whale Nation', the first and best known of these poems was originally published in *IT*. The response it triggered, particularly among young people, provides convincing evidence that anarchist ideas are in harmony with popular sentiment and that, (to paraphrase AWE O'Shaunnessy), poets remain the movers and shakers of the world.

The Relationship Between Anarchism and Pop Culture

AT THE LAST ACF conference we decided to have a permanent section of *Organise!* dedicated to culture. As we feel this area is open to debate, we welcome all contributions. *Organise!* editors.

IN RESPONSE TO a letter in *Organise!* 32, this is a positive step to highlight the importance of pop culture to the anarchist movement, particularly within the punk scene.

Punk Politics

There is a great deal of scepticism about the significance of punk to real political change, but the massively inspirational work of the Mekons, The Pop Group and especially Crass cannot be overlooked.

Crass were communards and anarchists who had belonged to the underground scene since the late sixties and early seventies and in 1974 were at the forefront of the first Stonehenge Festival. Consisting of five men and three women, not counting 'associate member', poet Annie Anxiety, Crass were initially inspired by the clarion call of the Sex Pistol's *Anarchy in the UK* and the sloganeering leftist rhetoric of The Clash.

Musically, they had more in common with Irish republican band Stiff Little Fingers. But their political stance, tackling such thorny issues as feminism ('Women'), nuclear disarmament ('They've Got A Bomb'), class divisions ('Time Out'), the hypocritical facade of hippies and yuppies ('General Bacardi') and, most infamously, the Falklands War ('The Immortal Death', 'How Does It Feel

To Be The Mother Of A Thousand Dead?' 'Sheepfarming In The Falklands') showed an ingenuity which went well beyond the contrived posturing of the 1977 comrades.

As punk turned to the record company safety of 'new wave' (a more marketable, apolitical version), Crass instigated what they termed 'real punk', with benefits for



anarchist and class struggle prisoners, heavy involvement with CND, squats and their own Anarchy Centres. By the end of the decade, comrades like Poison Girls, Conflict and Zounds had arrived and a 24-hour 'anarcho-punk' festival was held at the famed Zig Zag squat in London.

Universal

Eventually, anarchism and animal rights would be universally commonplace to the punk movement. The USA, Czechoslovakia, Germany and many other countries all had vibrant punk scenes. Indeed, punk was seen as an important revolutionary stance by the youth of Prague and Berlin who were not fooled by the new capitalist strategies any more than they had been by 'communism'.

Berlin in particular saw a large community of anarcho-punk (and socialist skinhead) youths living out their anarchist principles within a squatted 'no-man's-land' in 1991, fighting the police on the streets to maintain their autonomous community. Crass may have split in the symbolic year of 1984, as they often said

they would, but their influential anarchist ideals were firmly entrenched in the minds of virtually everyone active in the scene. Punk had provided a soundtrack to Thatcherism and all that went with it: the 1981 summer riots, the Falklands, the Miners' Strike and the Trafalgar Square Poll Tax rebellion. As the music itself grew more diverse, with forays into ska, reggae, dub, folk and performance art, so the ideals and aims grew gradually more sophisticated.

Chumbawamba, a commune-based, working class situationist group, gave the scene its new mentors, as their extraordinary albums, usually revolving around a single theme being looked at from different revolutionary perspectives, gained critical respect, something Crass never 'achieved'.

The Chumbas excel at producing music in diverse styles, from acapella folk to dance, via polka, thrash and ballads. Lyrically, they display imagination and knowledge regarding aid, communism, the futility of the vote, a future anarchist society, fascism, sexism and animal exploitation.

Relevant

By the arrival of the nineties, the word punk could now be applied to a massive range of bands and individuals and had an obvious relevance to the rise of New Age travellers and Riot Grrrls. The grrrl scene regularly name-checks anarchism and situationism and has committed itself (in Britain at least) to a positive, open-minded point of view, which is

Friends and Neighbours

If you like what you read in *Organise!* you might be interested in these publications:

Counter Information — Quarterly newsheet produced by independent collective. Information on struggle worldwide. Free copy with SAE from Pigeonhole Cl, c/o 11 Forth St, Edinburgh EH1, Scotland.

Subversion. Quarterly magazine of group of same name, with politics close to ours. Free copy from Dept 10, 1 Newton St, Manchester M1 1HW.

CHUMBAWAMBA

largely oppositional to what is seen as the domain of middle-class, separatist bores of mainstream and left-wing feminism.

Within Riot Grrrl there is an incredible network of young people (obviously largely female) communicating, interacting, sharing thoughts on politics, sexuality and lifestyle and pursuing an alternative to mainstream society.

Some now call themselves 'anarcho-fems' as well as Riot Grrrls, and that surely is an important sign of a serious political edge with their American grrrl friends also moving towards autonomy and generally a fuller understanding that their struggle is the same as that being fought by the pro-choice campaigners, the environmental groups, the anti-racist organisers and, in a lot of cases, the anarchist movement also.

Solidarity

Many are disappointed with the small-minded pettiness, sectarianism and numerous half-hearted phonies masquerading within the anarchist movement and will thus remain Riot Grrrls first with anarchist sympathies included in their 'grrrl positive/grrrl bonding' hypothesis. It could teach the rest of the movement some valuable lessons in sincerity and solidarity. And it teaches the world of music and popular culture a lot about artistic integrity and staunch no sellout attitudes. Within all this, there certainly is some revolutionary potential.

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 available from ACF (London), c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 at 75p including postage.

Dear *Organise!*,

Having attended a debate on the usefulness of Unions as a revolutionary vehicle (featuring the much vaunted Dave Douglass and some faceless socialist clone) and also following the debate (although that might be too mild a word!) between you and D.D. I thought you might like to peruse this item that comes from the local free paper. Typically the

agree with you about Scargill. Obviously running your own mine is better than being on the dole, but there are many pitfalls. Many cooperatively run workplaces because they have to exist within capitalism end up working harder and exploiting themselves for less wages because they have to compete against the better organised capitalists. Look what happened when the Triumph motorcycle

PIT BUY-OUT
SCUPPERED BY
SCARGILL

MINERS' leader Arthur Scargill has 'killed' an attempted workers buy-out of Maltby Colliery.

South Yorkshire miners had intended to bid for the Northern Group of pits which included Maltby, Selby and Kellingley superpits.

The ambitious plans had been backed by trade union controlled Unity Bank Trust, operated by the Co-operative bank.

Refused

But when NUM president Scargill heard of the proposals he refused to give his support.

He believed the plans were against national policy and refused to use union funds to privatise the pits.

This week a Maltby NUM spokesman said: "He should have listened to what

He won't release cash

by Sharon Hodkin

we were doing and let the men decide." Under British Coal privatisation plans announced last month, prospective purchasers have until 25th May to register an interest.

But Scargill's refusal to back Maltby miners has wrecked the buy-out bid.

"The issue is now dead. They have put our interest to sleep because without assistance from the banks we haven't got the £15,000 needed to register an interest," added the official.

It is the third time an attempted buy-out of Maltby Colliery has failed.

workers are yet again stabbed in the back by the union bosses. If the deal had gone ahead we could have had an end to profiteering bosses of both the management and Union type. A coal mine run by the workers would not need a Union to negotiate being fucked for the fat cat's profits, this is precisely why that bastard Scargill won't accede to the demands of the lowly workforce.

In discussion with my fellow miners I keep hearing surprised disbelief at the events that have occurred, but in my mind I'm not really surprised that this bureaucratic fat cat would rather fuck us all off so that he can keep his poxy job selling us gullible sods down the line.

I urge any of your readers who work in industry to seriously consider extra-union activity at the time of strife with the boss class. It's the only way to beat 'em, to make 'em fear us and eventually to destroy them. I've wasted too much time by having faith in the NUM and by not having the faith in the ability of us exploited to organise ourselves!

*Yours in solidarity,
CM, Maltby, South Yorkshire*

Editors' reply: Thanks for your letter. We are glad that you share our ideas about the unions and we wholeheartedly

works was bought up by the workers when it failed. They had to work longer hours and take home less to keep their heads above water, and finally they went under. Unfortunately, the only long term solution is overthrowing this rotten system and doing away with the wages system.

Spunk Press

Spunk Press is an electronic archive of anarchist and related material. It includes work from Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Noam Chomsky etc, magazines such as *Here and Now*, *Practical Anarchy*, *Love and Rage*, publications from the Anarchist Black Cross and much more. There are currently 180 items in the archive, which includes a catalogue. If you have access to a modem and appropriate software, or to a computer linked to the Internet, you can access the Spunk Press archive at:

gopher: etext. archive. umich. edu:/politics/Spunk
AnonFTP: etext. archive. umich. edu:/pub/politics/Spunk
WWW: http://www.cwi.nl/cwi/people/Jack.Jansen/spunk/Spunk_Home.html

Music Reviews

Rage Against the Machine. Cassette/CD/LP. Approx 55 mins. 10 tracks. £9.99. Epic.

This band makes the Levelers look like Simon and Garfunkel. Ten stunning and really powerful tracks flowing superbly one after the other — as they say on 'Take the Power Back': "The Rage is relentless we need a movement with a quickness". They are the best radical band of the '90s and a band for the '90s already making a major impact amongst the youth of today, sowing the seeds for the future. As they say again on 'Wake Up': "How long, not long, 'cos what you reap is what you sow". From 'Bombtrack' at the beginning the lyrics and the beat are beautiful: "Don't interfere with the thoughts of a militant mind" and "Landlords and power whores on my people, they took turns, dispute the suits, I ignite and watch 'em burn". Then 'Killing in the Name': "Now you do what they told you" with the response "Fuck you I won't do what you tell me". And many references to brain-dead fascists: "You justify those who died wearing your badge and your clothes in white", referring to the Ku Klux Klan.

'Take the Power Back' criticises the education system: "So-called facts are fraud... See right through the red white and blue disguise, with lecture I puncture the structure of lies installed in our minds and attempting to hold us back". They attack apathy: "But death is on my side, suicide... if we don't take action now we'll settle for nothing later" in 'Settle for Nothing' followed up in 'Bullet in the Head' with its attacks on

brain-dead people: "Believe all the lies that they're telling ya, buy all the products that they're selling ya". Nationalism is lashed with the lyrics: "You stand in line, believe the lies you bow down to the flag, ya gotta bullet in ya head". Get this record, it's really something.

Senser, Stacked Up. LP/CD/Cass. Approx 63 mins. 13 Tracks. (£5.95, although probably more if you buy from Over Price etc).

At over 60 minutes this album has got to be value for money in anyone's books. Although I'm not a follower of the singles market I'm pretty certain that this is a reissue of their previous releases, but to those of you who have yet to sample the Senser sound (where have you been?) this is the perfect introduction. From the opening track 'States of Mind', with its bruising defiance of the increasingly oppressive state, through tracks such as 'The Switch', 'What's going on?' and the deliciously tense 'Stubborn', this album continues to invigorate the listener with its unique fusion of metal/dance/ambient/rap. Lyrical content deals mainly with individualism but also tackles such topics as drugs (pros and cons), and the BNP. Side four is a bit of a disappointment in comparison with the first three, but what it lacks in production quality and power it more than makes up for in energy. Overall a stunning album and although I probably won't be able to call it my favourite LP of the year, I think it will remain one of my top three for many months to come.

Book Reviews

Childhood Severities

Severely Dealt With is the first volume of the autobiography of John Taylor Caldwell, the anarchist communist militant whose biography of Guy Aldred, *Come Dungeons Dark* (1988), *Organise!* readers may

of the book, all the more considerable in its incredible clarity of description. Written in an engaging and often witty style *Severely Dealt With* is immensely readable and difficult to put down (I read it in two sittings!). It's a welcome contribution to the body of authentic working class history that should appeal to politico and autobiography (not to mention political autobiography!) readers equally.

The second volume, covering JT Caldwell's subsequent political development and his many years of struggle in the anarchist communist cause, is eagerly awaited and will be reviewed, in depth, in the pages of *Organise!* In the meantime we recommend our readers to get hold of a copy and to make sure it gets stocked in their local library. Copies of *Severely Dealt With: Growing up in Belfast and Glasgow* by John Taylor Caldwell (Northern Herald Books) £5.95, can be ordered from Northern Herald, 6 Lilian St, Bradford, W Yorkshire BD4 9LP.

25 years of British Justice

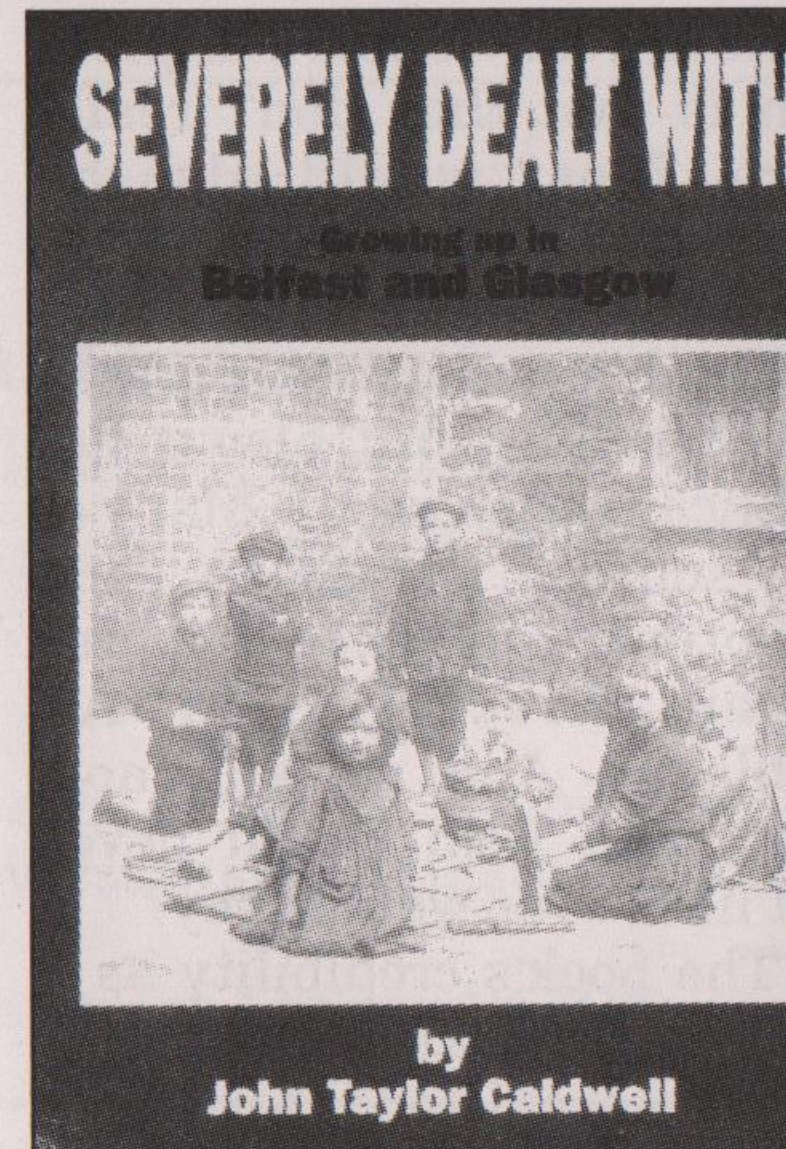
Trials by Ordeal. Irish Prisoners' Support Group

This book is a publication by the Irish Prisoners' Support Group who are based in London.

Their book is an investigation into the British judicial system's wrongful conviction of Irish men and women over the last 25 years.

The book details the torture meted out to them in prison by the authorities and the measures taken by the government to keep them there. The book is excellently written. Each case is analysed with precision detail. The chapters are arranged in such a way as to give a step-by-step account of arrest, falsification of evidence, torture, trial and conviction.

The book exposes a wide web of corruption and influence. The media's role is exposed via quoting old headlines such as 'Aunt Annie's Bomb Kitchen'. The Annie in question is, of course, Anne Maguire. Parliament is also known to be a major factor in the injustice of the criminal system. The repressive Rep-



vention of Terrorism Act is examined in detail and Parliament's role in the use of the 1883 Explosive Substances Act is also revealed. This Act was used to charge the Maguire Seven and Dessie Ellis.

Various subterfuges by innumerable prosecution workers are described. One example is the comic use of books, found in Noel Jenkinson's abode, as substantiating evidence. The books in question were by James Connolly, Che Guevara and Mao Tse Tung so obviously Jenkinson was a terrorist. (He got a life sentence.)

The police's treatment of suspects is graphic and accurate in the extreme. Tortures include: sleep deprivation, noise bombardment, and immobilisation. The book states that "Almost 800 civil cases were brought against the British authorities".

A whole chapter is devoted to the routine falsification of evidence and the infamous forensic evidence tests for nitroglycerine. One scientist called Douglas Higgs later admitted to the May inquiry that he had been "economical with the truth".

The book never leaves itself open to prosecution as its claims are seemingly well researched. A major endearing factor in the book is that it deals with non-Republican prisoners as well as 'POWs'. However there are some criticisms.

Firstly the book is preaching to the converted. These cases are already well-documented. Practically everyone realises that British justice is in tatters (Irish people have always known how British justice 'works'). The British public also realises that the courts will go to any lengths to

achieve a conviction. The problem is that they don't really care. Most would also be turned off by the legal jargon. Secondly the book's support for 'Irish' prisoners sometimes develops into full blown Republican propaganda. Many of the sources named in each chapter's reference list are taken directly from An Poblacht. And we all know that Sinn Fein would never tell lies . . . or would they?

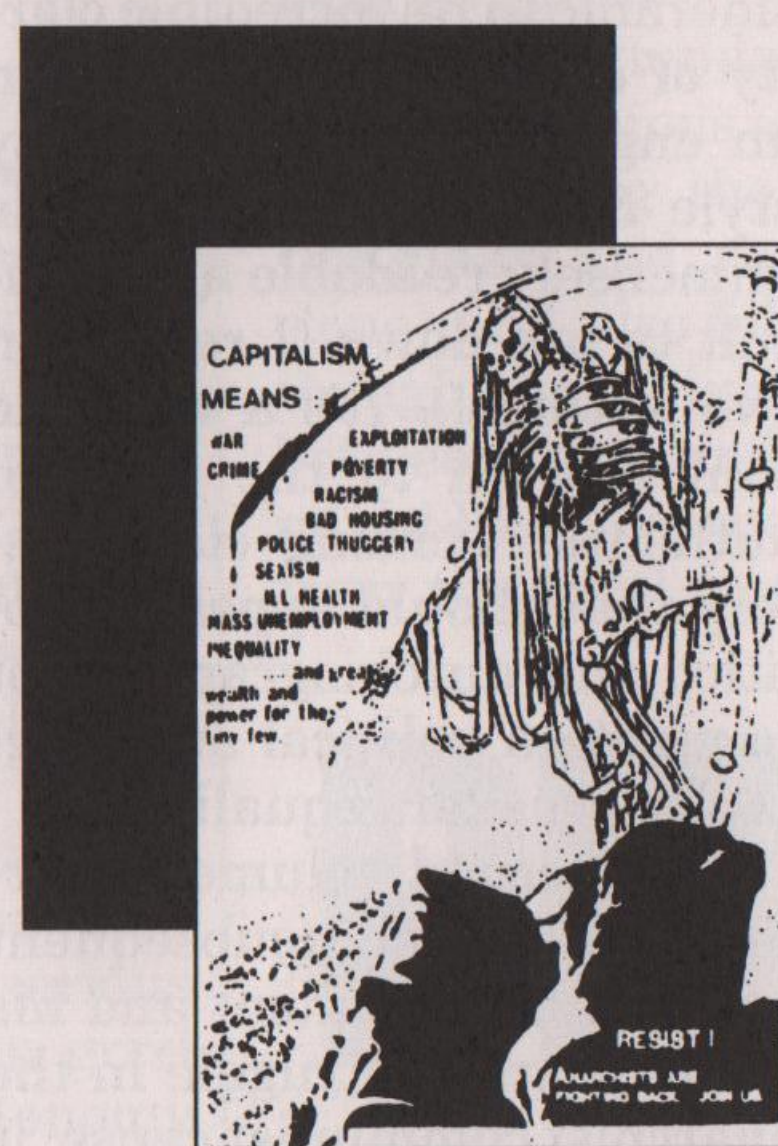
The book's credibility as a vanguard for all Irish people wrongly convicted is tarnished by the inclusion of an appendix written by two Republican prisoners: Ronnie McCartney and Joe O'Connell. These two get a free forum for their witless Republican politics: "The Irish Embassy should be fully involved, ensuring that the rights of all suspects should be safeguarded". Perhaps they don't realise that the Republic is just as ruthless with IRA volunteers as Britain.

As anarchist communists we should have no sympathy for these paramilitaries who live off the backs of the Catholic working class. Apparently the IPSG have no such reservations.

The book's solutions to these 'miscarriages of justice' are pure reformism. They fail to realise that the criminal system is irreconcilable with Republican sentiment. Their book goes on to say that 'miscarriages' are the result of the British presence in Ireland. They neglect to say that the police, the screws and the judicial system have their own agenda aside from maintaining British imperialism. They have to be seen to be combating terrorism, so, as a result, we have 'miscarriages of justice'.

Having said that the IPSG are not a proclaimed revolutionary organisation so we should not expect too much from them. Their campaigning is of vital importance in letting the judicial system know that we have not forgotten their injustice.

The book's role is to educate and inform and it does this admirably. This publication could be compared with any Anarchist Black Cross publication. The only major drawback is the support for Republicanism that would discourage many from becoming involved in a justice pressure group.



Posters and stickers

BUNDLES OF THIS poster can be got from London address. Please send a donation. Or get a single copy and photocopy 'em.

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

Our last two lots of different stickers has sold out. So to meet demand we've produced 14,000 more (anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, ecology etc). Again, bundles can be obtained from the London address, if you enclose a donation.

Join us!

THE LAST FEW months have shown how close to disaster the governing Conservative Party is.

The La-Bore Party is once again preparing to help administer British capitalism, with or without the help of the Liberal Democrats. It has no solution to the mess capitalism is in, either here or throughout the world. The fact that the establishment media is enthusiastically backing Blair for party leadership shows that they want to determine that the next Labour government has as right-wing an agenda as possible. Not that the other candidates for leadership could be realistically described as 'socialist'. The Labour Party whether it transforms itself into a US-style Democrat Party or remains as a social democratic outfit has no answer to the crisis of the system.

More and more people are becoming increasingly alienated from the system that can only produce mass unemployment and rising poverty whilst a minority increases its wealth, environmental destruction at a spectacular level, war and massacre all over the planet, increasing levels of racism and an ever more arrogant fascist movement, ever more repressive laws against those who question the values of the system in any way, and the appalling, soul-destroying vacuum in everyday life. Many turn in desperation to booze and dope to dull the pain. All around is cultural and spiritual desolation, where hypocrisy, cant and a daily diet of crap are dished up in the papers, on the radio and the idiot-box.

Stunned

Many feel stunned and helpless. At the same time the media makes sure with carefully planned reporting about Eastern Europe and the South that this is the best we can get, so be satisfied with that and don't complain. Yet many are becoming angry and politicised by the attacks of the system. About 20,000 mobilised recently in a demonstration against the Criminal Justice Bill, and many of these had never been involved in action before. A counter-culture, to a lesser or greater extent critical of the

system, is re-emerging and is vibrant and optimistic. One sign of this is the explosion of small magazines in the last two years. At the same time there are stirrings of militancy in the workplace.

One of the tasks of anarchist communists is to argue for and fight for the unity of struggle and against sectionalism. We are for the globalisation of struggle, for an anti-capitalist front that challenges the system at every level, be it 1) economic, where we fight over how we are treated at work or as unemployed, against the tax attacks by the State (poll tax, council tax, VAT on fuel) as pensioners against the treatment of the elderly, 2) anti-militarist, where we oppose their schemes for war and arms dealing 3) cultural, where we develop a critique of what passes for civilisation in their system and work towards a culture of resistance 4) sexual, where we challenge the oppression of women, the discrimination against gays, and rigid sexual stereotyping 5) ecological, where we challenge their agenda on the despoiling of the planet, and their motorway plans.

Fighting spirit

Dear readers, we think a new fighting spirit is emerging. We have to be there to argue genuine revolutionary politics, to argue for self-organisation and against the Leninist vanguards, who will attempt to hi-jack any new struggle or movement. We need a national revolutionary organisation. This cannot come about without consistent and untiring propaganda and activity. If you share our perspectives, then come forward now and join us.



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 3rd September features and reviews, and 10th September for letters and news.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:

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

Sell *Organise!*

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

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

Subscribe to *Organise!*: Why not take out a sub to *Organise!*? Better still take out a supporters' sub. Get your friends to subscribe or treat them to a sub!

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

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

Organise! to stay at 20 pages — but we need your help!

FOR SOME TIME now readers will have noticed that *Organise!* has fluctuated between 16 pages and 20 pages for each issue.

When we had something that exceeded the usual 16 page format but we felt should be included, then comrades dug deep into their pockets and financed the extra pages.

At the last conference it was decided to maintain *Organise!* at 20 pages, so we could provide analysis of events on a more comprehensive level. But to finance this we need your help.

Conference also decided to move towards a bi-monthly appearance of *Organise!* To

SUBSCRIBE:

What they said about *Organise!*

"Many thanks! *Organise!* continues to be brilliant".

Brighton subscriber

Name:

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I enclose £3 for a four-issue sub, or £6 for a four-issue supporting sub). Add 25% for overseas subs or institutions. Return form to:

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

IMPORTANT! Correspondence for ACF nationally should be sent to the Devon address (see Want to Join box). Correspondence for *Organise!* and for ACF (London) should continue to go to Whitechapel High Street.

ORGANISE! BACK ISSUES

BACK ISSUES of *Organise!* (from issues 19 to 34) are still available from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virius*. They cost 20p each & an A4 SAE:

- Issue 25: SOLD OUT!!
- Issue 26: Women & Revolution; Direct action; US Greens
- Issue 27: LA Riots; Yugoslavia; Malcolm X
- Issue 28: ERM; Recession; Detective Fiction
- Issue 29: Debate on the Unions; Italian workers fight back
- Issue 30: SOLD OUT!!
- Issue 31: Somalia; Travellers; Natural Laws
- Issue 32: SOLD OUT (You'd have liked that one an' all)
- Issue 33: Criminal Justice; Battle of Wanstead; Bad Attitude; Abortion
- Issue 34: Zapata; Artillery Mansions; Nationalism

Alternatively send us a fiver and we'll send you one of everything plus whatever else we find lying around.

Anarchist Communist Federation

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

ENGLAND

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

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

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

South East: Brighton, Canterbury, London (East, West & North), Twickenham, Woking.

South West: Buckfastleigh.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Portrush

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen, Glasgow, Dundee.

WALES

Lampeter, Pontypool.

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

I agree with the ACF's Aims and Principles and I would like to join the organisation.

I would like more information about the Anarchist Communist Federation

I am particularly interested in the Anarchist Communist Federation's views on

Name:

Address:

Please tick/fill in as appropriate and return to:

ACF, PO BOX 4, BUCKFASTLEIGH, DEVON TQ11 0YZ