

Anarchist Communism

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM IS a distinct body of social and political ideas. Anarchist communism offers a radical alternative to the statist belief systems which have proved their bankruptcy in the twentieth century.

Marxism in both its Bolshevik and social-democratic varieties has proved a disastrous failure. Reformist feminism has made women bosses and prime ministers, but has left the majority of women still tied to the family and in low-paid jobs. Ideologies based upon capitalism, eg fascism and liberal democracy, were either blatantly murderous or hypocritically so. Only anarchist communism remains to be tested as a fully coherent approach to organising the world. As the second millennium draws to a close, its latter century has seen the almost-unrestrained rise of the state and with it virtually continuous warfare — plunder dressed up as the “global economy” and ecological devastation. The people of the world in the next century deserve much more than has been available to the great majority so far. The rise of capitalism, the technological state and imperialism have eliminated the human factor from social life. The individual in the advanced industrialised state has been removed from the community and isolated into concrete boxes, with television as the main link to the world outside. The poor majority in Africa, Latin America and Asia struggle to survive as their way of life is increasingly dictated by the needs of the insatiable global economy, with their own elites encouraging and benefitting from this exploitation. Racism and nationalism are if anything stronger, stirred up by various elements in the ruling class and taken up by many people in the working class as they see can see no other answer to their problems. Women are under attack world-wide with the rise of religious fundamentalism and the generalised obsession with the “decline of the family” and “moral values”.

Anarchist communism is the alternative. It places the individual at the centre of its approach, for only active, thinking persons can ever be free. However, the individual does not exist separated from the rest of humanity. Capitalist exploitation whilst destroying “natural” communities has created and is creating social solidarity on the basis of class identity and reality, where people choose to identify with each other rather than being forced into a community because

of tradition. The ruling classes of the world are waging a desperate class war against the numerically-vast population of workers and peasants. In the search for profits the producing classes are subject to ever-more savage assaults. But it is out of this struggle between exploiter and exploited, between the oppressors and the oppressed, that the mass of the population will achieve the realisation of human freedom. Social revolution is the only way of achieving liberation.

Anarchist communism is often attacked as being a utopian dream since it is both anti-capitalist and anti-state. The argument goes that both of these are necessary because of “human nature”. Won't new forms of exploitation and new classes arise? Isn't it inevitable that some people have more power than others? Isn't the state necessary to keep order? We say a loud “no!” to these arguments.

Within the general context of a stateless and moneyless society, the new social order will operate through a building of community ties and along with them the creation of bodies which will be expressions of individual and community desires. There is no antagonism here between the individual and the collective for two reasons. Firstly, the individual belongs and survives within the context of the collective, so the workers and community councils as the new forms of administration will be an extension of the individual within society. Secondly, the workers and community councils (which need not necessarily be separate bodies) will have built into them a number of devices preventing the abuse of power. For example, they will be assemblies of the people themselves and should any form of delegation be necessary then the delegates will be directly elected, easily-removable and temporary.

Also, given the development of communications technology, mass participation, either within a popular assembly or via link-ups of local groups and individuals, will be possible. The assemblies at the local, district, regional and international levels will be able to plan for the future on the basis of input from participation at various stages of the peoples' assemblies. Given that there is

no coercive state apparatus to enforce decisions made within the various popular organisations, there will be no physical imposing of undesirable options. The aim throughout will be to achieve results on the basis of consensus and compromise.

Anarchist communist society will be a moneyless society. Goods and services will be made available on the basis of needs. There is a limit to the number of fridges, carpets etc that people can consume, and given the downgrading of possessiveness, the inability to accumulate wealth through the amassing of possessions, the absence of advertising, and education for sharing, there will be a limit to the demand. One of the functions of money is to act as a “store of value”. This allows individuals in capitalist societies to accumulate enormous sums, well in excess of what they can ever spend. In a moneyless society there is no means of accumulating wealth, thus creating another obstacle to the reemergence of a ruling class.

It may be objected that this basis of social organisation is fine for local village-sized populations but is unworkable on a larger scale. However, there is no reason why it could not operate on a larger scale if it is based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and federation which would still allow for freedom and solidarity. Even within capitalism, when examined, huge organisations and corporations are little more than conglomerations of small groups organised within a given managerial structure. Local, small-scale efforts are channelled in a particular direction. There is no reason why those efforts could not be channelled voluntarily for the common and individual good, with the impetus coming from below.

For an anarchist communist society to operate effectively, education in the widest sense must prioritise a socialisation process which stresses personal growth, a love of freedom together with a sense of responsibility and solidarity. Subtle Capitalist education has effectively gained an acceptance amongst most of the population of the system that exploits them through a subtle process of brainwashing and a distortion of the natural tendency towards social solidarity by stressing patriotism, nationalism and loyalty to the company. An anarchist communist approach to education would allow the natural tendencies to develop so that individuals would be able effectively to participate in the new society with confidence and responsibility.

Most other ideologies aim to dominate and control nature and indeed the last two centuries have witnessed a total transformation of the natural world as it has been twisted and distorted to fit the supposed needs of human beings. Now, nature is giving its reply, to such an extent that the very existence of humanity is threatened. Anarchist communism seeks to work in harmony with natural forces, utilising appropriate levels of technology to meet people's needs. There are enough resources on the planet to provide a living for all, without destroying the planet in the process.

Anarchist communism is the only ideology which challenges all exploitation and oppression, whether it be of workers by the bosses, women by men or the environment by human beings. It alone emphasises both freedom of the individual and solidarity within the community and struggles for a society which is free of both economic exploitation and the oppressive state. Anarchist communism alone can point the way forward to survival and well-being.

ACE: Anarchist Communist Editions

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

NEW! *Anarchism* — as we see it. A newly-revised edition of our very popular pamphlet. Describes the basic ideas of anarchist communism in easy-to-read form. 60p and SAE. ***Making Progress***. Describes how and why the ACF was formed, and the continuing evolution of our ideas and practice. A “beginners' guide” to ACF! 30p and SAE. ***Manifesto of Libertarian Communism*** by Georges Fontenis. A key text of anarchist communism. Though flawed, the best features need to be incorporated into modern revolutionary libertarian theory and practice. 60p and SAE.

Role of the Revolutionary Organisation. Anarchist communists reject the Leninist model of a “vanguard” party as counter-revolution-

ary. What then is the role of a revolutionary organisation? This pamphlet sets out to explain. All libertarian revolutionaries should read this fundamental text. 60p and SAE.

OUT NOW! A completely revised new edition of our hugely popular *Basic Bakunin*. 60p and SAE.

Also due out by the time this mag appears — *Aspects of Anarchism* — collected articles from the pages of *Organise!* on the fundamentals of anarchist communism.

IN PREPARATION. Our long-awaited pamphlet on ecology should soon be appearing, as well as our *Manifesto for the Millennium*. *The Myth of Labour's Socialism* is now out of print.

ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

PEACE OFF!



50p

Oct-Dec
1994

Issue 36

INSIDE

Keep it
Fluffy?
Fighting the
Criminal
Justice Bill

Processed
Peace —
Ceasefire in
Ireland

South Africa
— Workers v.
ANC

Yob Culture

Cinema

And Loads
More!

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.

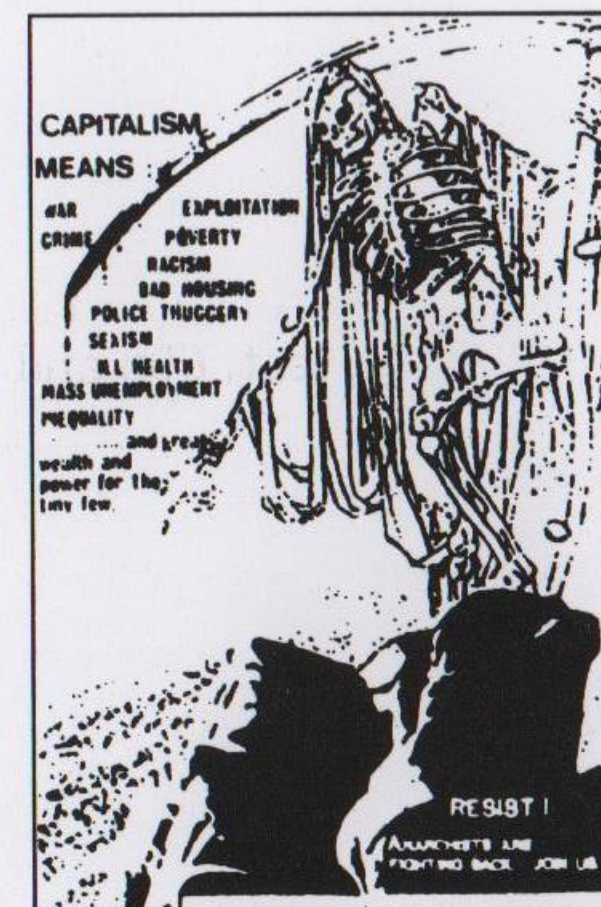
We reject sectarianism and work for a united, revolutionary anarchist movement.

A Manifesto for the Millennium

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 should be ready by January. Draft copies of the Manifesto are available from the London address for £1 per copy inc. postage.

At the Anarchist Bookfair on October 22 at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube Holborn) we are having 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 will be a French comrade of the Organisation Communiste Libertaire who participated in the March 22 Movement, one of the catalysts of the May 1968 events.

Posters and stickers



Bundles of this poster can be obtained from the London address. Please send a donation, or get a single copy and photocopy 'em.

London ACF have also produced an A5 leaflet explaining the basic ideas of anarchist communism. Again, send a donation for a bundle to the above address.

Our last two lots of different stickers 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.

Processed Peace — The IRA Ceasefire and the Pax Americana

"PEACE", IT APPEARS is the in-thing around the world. Palestine, South Africa and now Ireland have all been beneficiaries of the "Peace Dividend" brought to us by the New World Order plc.

We were a bit cheated this time though. No handshaking after talks in Oslo or embraces on the Whitehouse lawn! We had to make do with Reynolds, Adams and Hulme in Dublin. Not very spectacular at all.

But seriously folks. When the representatives of the ruling class, and would-be ruling class, stitch up a deal and call it "peace" you'll have to excuse our cynicism. We have to ask what's behind it and whose interests does it serve?

The end of the cold war following the collapse of "communism" has, with the death of the "red menace" meant that the strategic importance of Ireland, North and South has, to put it mildly, diminished. The possibility of a "Cuba on Britain's doorstep" has receded somewhat. With the disintegration of the evil empire of the USSR the possibility of Ireland leaving the orbit of Western Imperialism is now zero. And hasn't the Republican top-brass dropped all this socialist nonsense anyway?

For some time now the stage has been set for America to step in and play its World-cop role and the Irish nationalist and Republican leadership has been rapidly sliding itself into the ANC/PLO role.

Below: Bogside rioter, 1969.



Gerry Adams, once the epitome of terrorist nastiness is now Gerry "world statesman and peacemaker" and John "the balloon" Hulme may yet make it to Oslo (for the Nobel Prize).

Compromise

The role of the British state in all this is the usual one. Much talk about peace and much carrying on of war.

The forces presently holding hegemony in the British state realise that the war in the Six Counties will not be ended without "compromise" on their part. The Republican movement, for its part has also long realised that the armed struggle, which could probably be continued indefinitely, will not achieve its vision of a united Ireland. Compromise, is, therefore, inevitable. And, without doubt the IRA ceasefire represents an acknowledgement of this inevitability.

Undoubtedly the long-term aim of the most clear-sighted of the British bourgeoisie is a lasting "peace" in Ireland. The price of continued war just isn't worth it and the IRA bombing in the City in '92 has obviously shaken those it was aimed at. If this "peace" requires reunification then Ireland will be reunified on *British terms*. If "peace" could be achieved without reunification then this would be another option, *but it can't, so it isn't*. When we say on British terms we mean that the British state will accept some form of political structure, introduced over a period of time, which will involve Dublin in the administration of the 32 counties. *As long it does not create political instability.*

The trick for the British state will be to offer enough to incorporate Sinn Fein whilst successfully marginalising/neutralising any forces which could jeopardise the

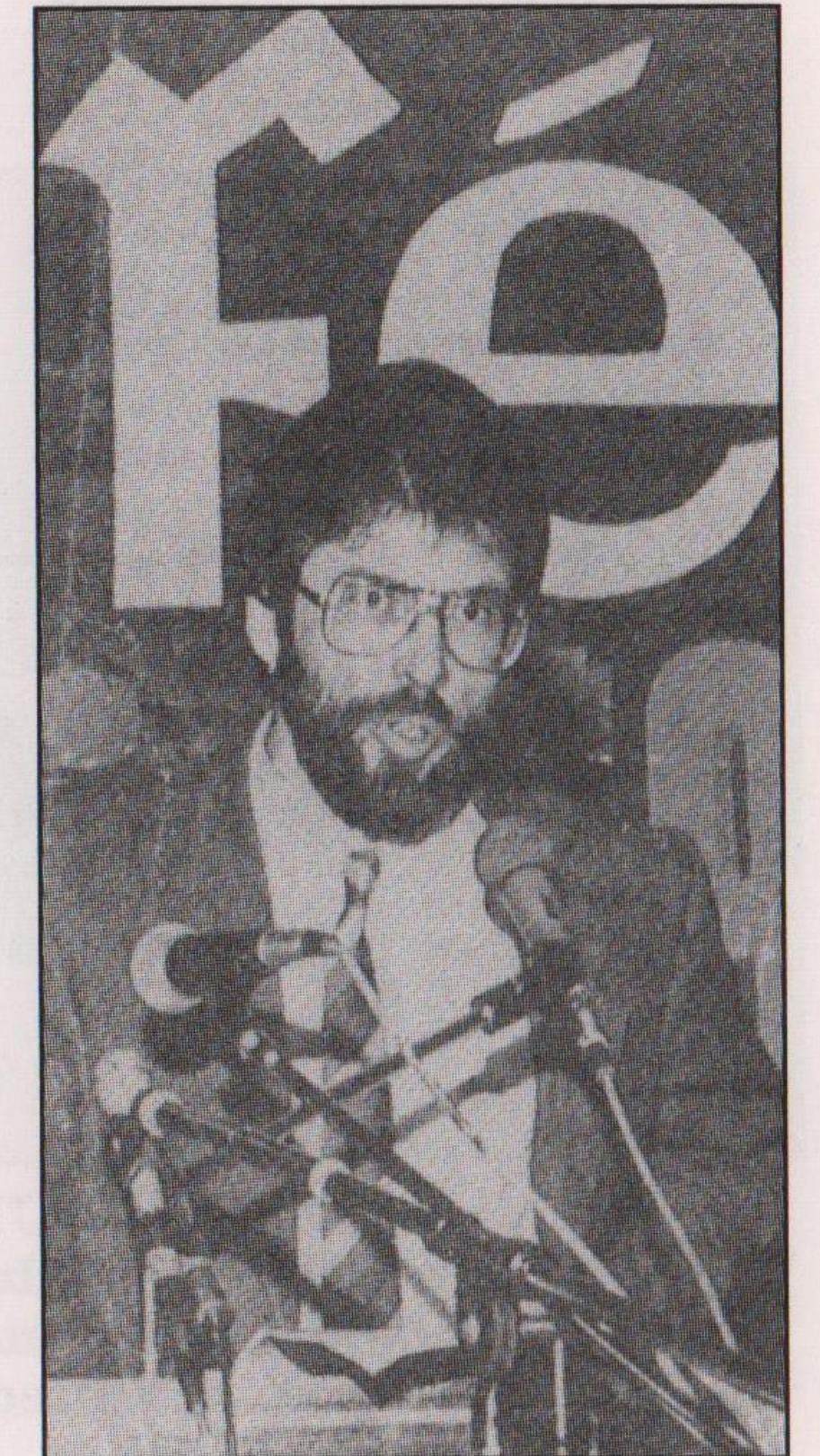
"Peace Process". Neither side, the British state nor the Republican movement can be seen to have sold-out or to have accepted defeat.

At the moment the Republican leadership is using mass mobilisations, particularly around the Border Roads campaign, as both a show of strength and as a means of keeping nationalists occupied. If Sinn Fein's place at the negotiating table isn't soon in coming, demoralisation may creep in, possibly leading to schism in republican ranks. If this happens Sinn Fein/IRA will be forced to either resume the armed struggle or to liquidate those who wish to.

Paramilitaries

The other force which could jeopardise the "Peace Process" is, of course, the Loyalist paramilitaries. But, since it has been the British state which has generally armed and trained them, they may be less of a problem to "neutralise" than some may think. What will be important will be the loyalty (to the British *government*) of the *security forces themselves*. Since the ceasefire the obvious collusion between the security forces, particularly the RUC, and the Loyalist paramilitaries, has continued unabated. Although the Army has started wearing berets rather than helmets it has not, unfortunately, taken to wearing flip-flops. Places such as Crossmaglen, for example, remain large scale open-plan prisons. Only time will tell us where the loyalties of the various military intelligence agencies will finally lie.

For the Unionists, particularly the moderates (UUP, Alliance) the offer of a referendum, confined to the Six Counties and therefore a foregone conclusion in favour of continued union, is a sop. The non-sectarian land of milk and honey may be far away for northern Catholics, but everything points to Unionist political domination being gradually emasculated in favour of some form of power-sharing in



Above: "Now should I change my first name to Yasser or Nelson?"

a 32 county set-up. After not-inconsiderable sound and fury the "sensible" Unionists will come to accept this. "Nelson" Adams may have his Orange FW DeKlerk after all.

Bogus

So what does this all mean for revolutionaries? For the myriad groups of the British/Irish left it's generally been very clear. After years of support, critical or otherwise, for the Irish National Liberation struggle, they have to decide whether to condemn the ceasefire as a "sell-out" or to welcome it. For the various Trotskyist groups, who change their line as often as their underwear, and who do so with such consummate ease, there's no problem. As they have said all along, the "petit-bourgeois leadership of the Republican movement" inevitably "sold-out" the struggle because only the working class can lead the National Liberation struggles to a successful conclusion (under the leadership of... whichever Trots are speaking). What they don't say is that National

they don't say is that National Liberation, even if "lead by the working class", is an impossibility. National "independence" from one Imperialist power inevitably means "liberated" nations being in thrall to a rival power. When the world is totally dominated by Imperialism, the only alternative is *worldwide communist revolution*. Any other anti-imperialism, whether based upon nationalism or a leftist variant of nationalism, is essentially bogus.

So much for the left. What

of we anarchist and libertarian communists? Do we support the ceasefire? We have never called for an IRA ceasefire, mainly because such a call puts the "blame" on the Republicans and ignores the *fundamental* cause of the war.

What we can say is that the ceasefire may have effects unforeseen by both the Republican leadership and the Brits. The mass mobilisations, the marches, demonstrations, pickets etc, which the Republican Movement has instigated, may develop a dynamic

which the leadership may find difficult, perhaps impossible, to contain or stop. Although this dynamic might not immediately develop ideological autonomy, the nature of the demands (for demilitarisation, opening up of the border) and the means used (direct actions, even if mainly symbolic) may lead many to revolutionary conclusions. We can only hope so and with our meagre forces try to assist this development. One thing is for sure; as long as the conditions which created resistance re-

main, the resistance will continue. We have to encourage that resistance and, where we can, try to win the leadership of ideas within it. At least an IRA ceasefire means that Irish libertarian activists may have one less body of armed men to dodge. Rest assured we will continue to work towards the day when *all* the guns of the bourgeoisie are silenced, and not with the aid of any Imperialist power but with the undefeatable power of a united revolutionary working class!

Signalworkers — Not Much of a Victory

THE SIGNALWORKERS' ACTIONS came to an end when the rail union RMT negotiated a deal with the Railtrack bosses. RMT deliberately limited the actions only to the signalworkers and to limited strikes rather than an all-out strike.

At the same time the government and the boss class were determined that the strike would fail: the government fully supporting Railtrack, whilst *The Financial Times* and *The Spectator* expressed the views of the capitalists in their calls to sack strikers. The Institute of Directors increased its strident demands to Michael Portillo, the Employment Secretary, to

make strikes in "essential" services illegal. Portillo expressed his sympathy with these demands. Railtrack had already shown its willingness to force other railworkers to do the work of the signalworkers during strikes. At the same time they continued, with the help of the media, to peddle the lie that they were able to operate almost complete services during strikes.

The government was determined to make its 2.5% ceiling on pay for the public sector stick. And in fact RMT settled precisely for that. Not only that, it agreed to changes in working practices, and payments for increased productivity which would be paid in advance. These deals would have to be introduced locally.

The only benefits of the strike were that Sunday working was kept out of the standard working week, shorter hours and more holidays were agreed. But these have to be balanced against the attacks that the signalworkers will now receive through implementation of the new productivity deals.

As a result of the previous productivity increases over the last few years, the workload of many railworkers has increased considerably. In

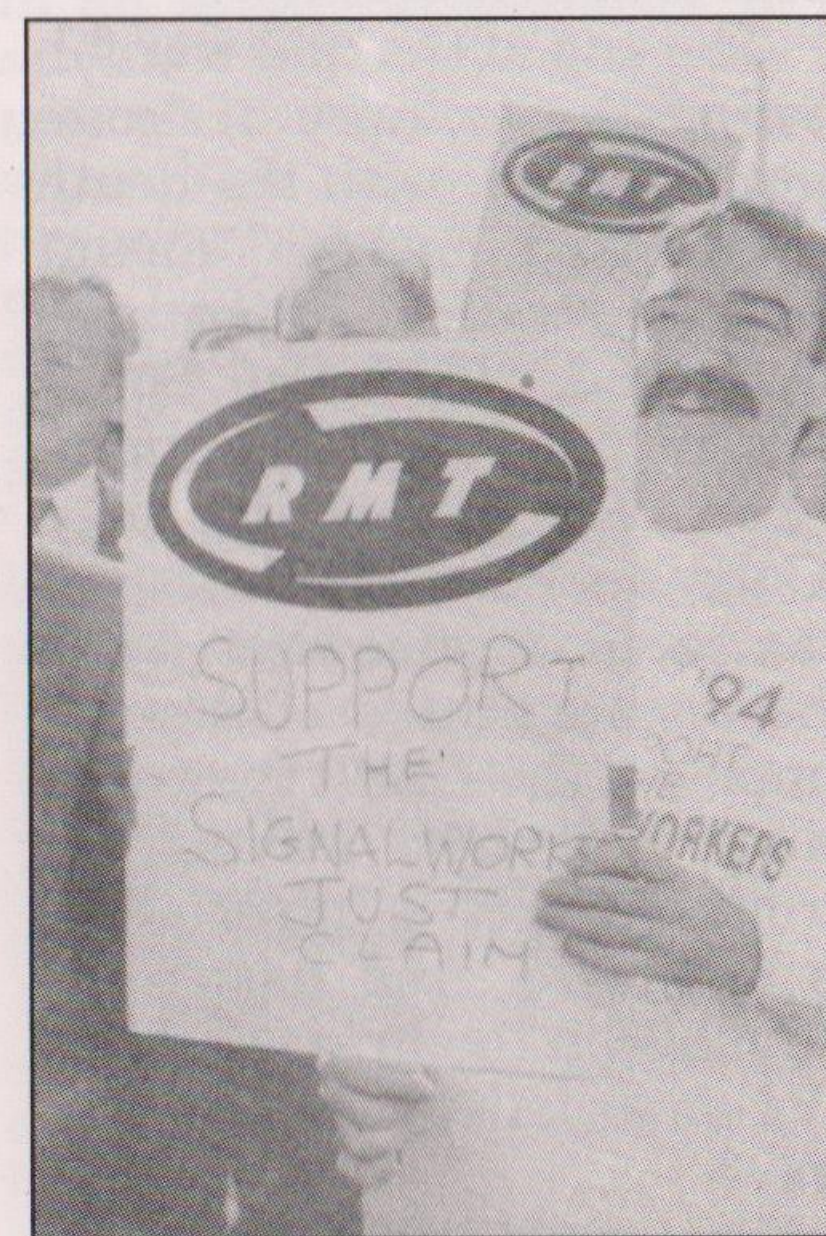
some areas two signalworkers now do work that was originally done by 100.

These savage attacks come at a time when Horton, the chairman of Railtrack, pays himself £2,335 per week for a three-day week and when a new Railtrack Head office is being constructed costing £7 million — twice what it would cost to pay for the signalworkers' increase — whilst £146 million was spent restructuring in 1993/4, which led to a huge new layer of bureaucracy of managers, but no extra money spent on services.

The signalworkers have failed to gain the victory that so many on the Leninist left claimed, in particular the Socialist Workers' Party.

The deal was rushed through by RMT with no time for signalworkers to study the small print. At the same time the strike ended with the signalworkers not completely demoralised, as has happened with the miners. But signalworkers will have to be prepared to go into action again quickly, and must seriously think about developing methods of organisation outside the control of the union.

The strike could have achieved a much better result if other railworkers and other transport workers, in particular on the buses and London tube, had come out in concert with the signalworkers, and if the actions had broken free of the deathly grip of RMT, and



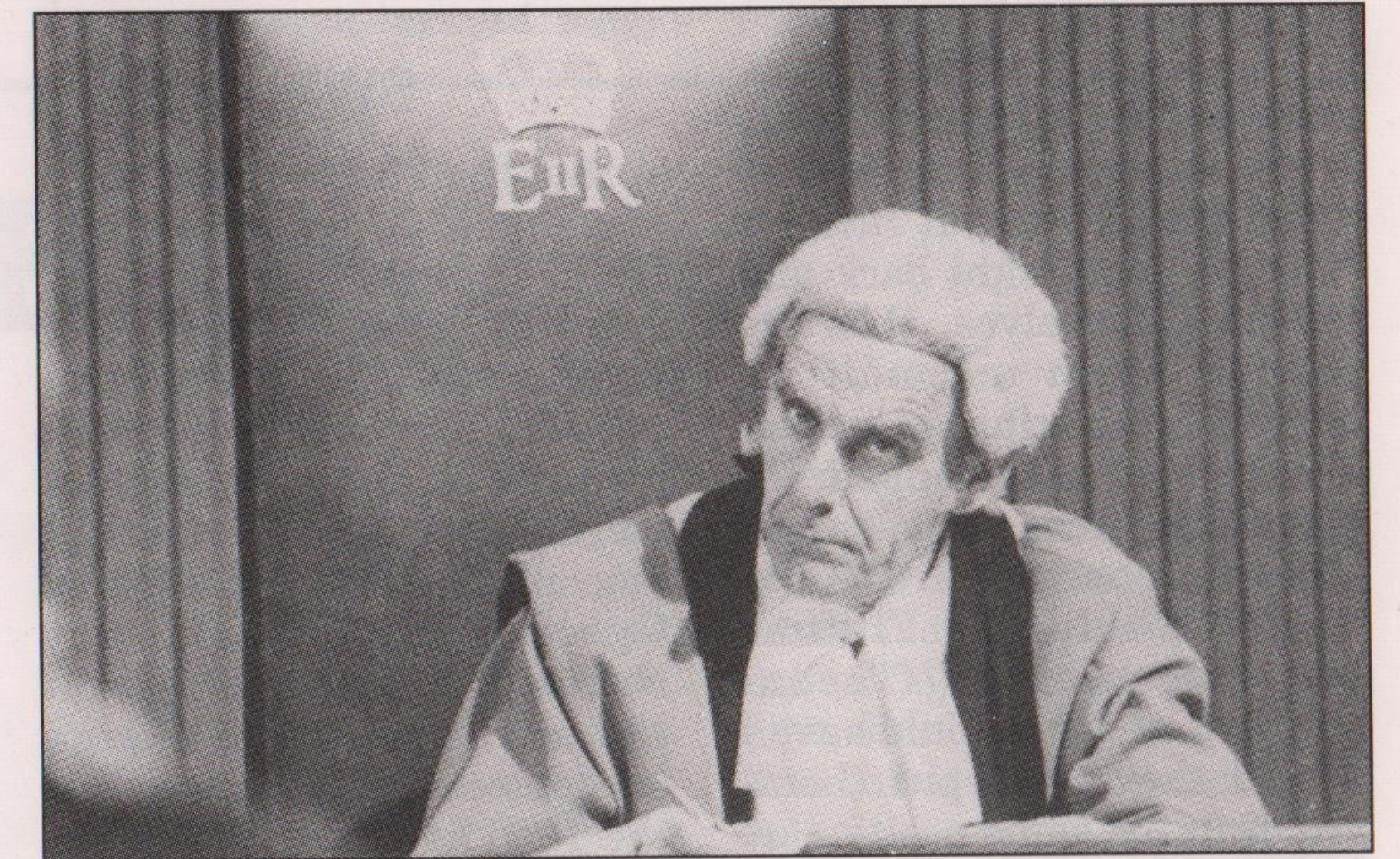
if support had been built on a massive level in other workplaces and outside the workplaces in the neighbourhoods.

This support would have meant not just talking about the pay demand, but showing how the attacks on railworkers have eroded the service, and forced many to work overtime. From here we could have gone on to the effect this has on safety standards, and the priority that capitalism is giving to road transport over public transport.

The links have to be shown between the attacks on railworkers, the public transport system and the road-building schemes of the government. Active solidarity must be established between the fights against the motorways and the struggle of all transport workers.

Keep it Fluffy? or Fight the Criminal Justice Bill!

THE MASSIVE AND joyful turn-out to the Criminal Justice Bill demo in July showed the depth of opposition to the legislation about to be passed by the Major government. We explained all the repercussions of the Bill if it was enacted in *Organise!* 34. Now we look at the opposition to it, and how effective resistance could be organised.



Above: "Are you a squatter, traveller, raver or striker? Guilty!"

The Bill is being directed above all, as many already know, at squatters, travellers, ravers, anti-road resisters and hunt saboteurs. This is because at the moment the principal opposition to the system is expressed through these specific struggles and life-styles. The defeat of the miners and other heavy battalions of the working class meant that the struggle against capitalism shifted its ground. Whilst action continued in the workplace (in subdued fashion and on a fragmented basis) and indeed is now gathering strength again, opposition was showing itself at a cultural level and in direct action against roads. This explains the chief targets of the Bill.

Of course, some of the opposition to the Bill is designed to shackle any genuine resistance to it — a seeming contradiction. But this opposition — which argues for the signing of petitions, lobbies of Parliament and so on — recognises the legitimacy of the system and is only interested in keeping it pleasant. The civil

liberties group Liberty, in the handout they produced on the Bill, has the telling little ditty: "Keep it sweet, keep it right, remember, this is a peaceful fight". Oddly enough, this was illustrated by a graphic of a baton-wielding, riot-shield-carrying cop. The leaflet had the advice to enlarge and multiply the poster, encouraging people to spread this message of non-resistance! Another defender of complete lack of real resistance was Steve Platt, editor of *New Statesman and Society*. This boring weekly rag has always supported a soggy right-wing Labour viewpoint, singing the praises of Kinnock, and denouncing the class violence of the miners' strike. Steve Pratt was one of the sponsors of the Coalition Against the Criminal Justice Bill, also supported by the "fluffies" of the Freedom Network and the Socialist Workers' Party. Enthusiastically writing in *New Statesman* he whinged on about "Some unpleasant verbal badinage of the kind that denies the essential humanity of the people in blue uniforms".

Attacked

Police attacked demonstrators after the May 1st demo against the Bill, and then after the Hackney Homeless Festival and at a demonstration at Hackney Town

Hall against the Labour Council's support for the Bill. Most recently they used considerable violence against the homeless and unemployed in Oxford who were occupying a large empty building as a protest against the Bill, and with the intention of providing both a social centre and shelter for the homeless. They did not attack the massive demo in July on any large scale because of the numbers. They feared the crowd would fight back, leading to a re-run of the Battle of Trafalgar Square, which led to the defeat of the Poll Tax and was a major factor in the fall of Thatcher. The Major government is in a much weaker position than the Thatcher regime, and the police tactics at the July demo were specifically designed to avoid this. This does not mean that they will not attack us where they are numerically superior and away from the glare of publicity, as has been proved by events described above.

Obviously we must defend ourselves against violence from the police. We fail to agree with the Fluffies of the Freedom Network that we should peacefully accept any attacks. We cannot let them impose their pious morality on us. If they try to stop any resistance against the attacks of the State then they themselves are acting as cops. In-



deed, attempts were made by some Fluffies to tear the masks off of some demonstrators who did not choose to be recorded on video.

Ironically enough, one of these apostles of Fluffery is rumoured to have received a hefty whack from a police truncheon when he positioned himself between the pigs and the demonstrators.

We say that raves, squats, anti-road occupations must not be attacked and broken up when the Bill is put into action. If people fight back and defend themselves, then we support them unconditionally, with no strings attached. What would have happened if mass resistance to police attacks had occurred on the July demo? Would the Fluffies have denounced this? (The answer is Yes!, they would have.) Would they have put themselves in the same position as Militant did after the Battle of Trafalgar Square? (Yes again!)

The Fluffies almost withdrew from the July demo be-

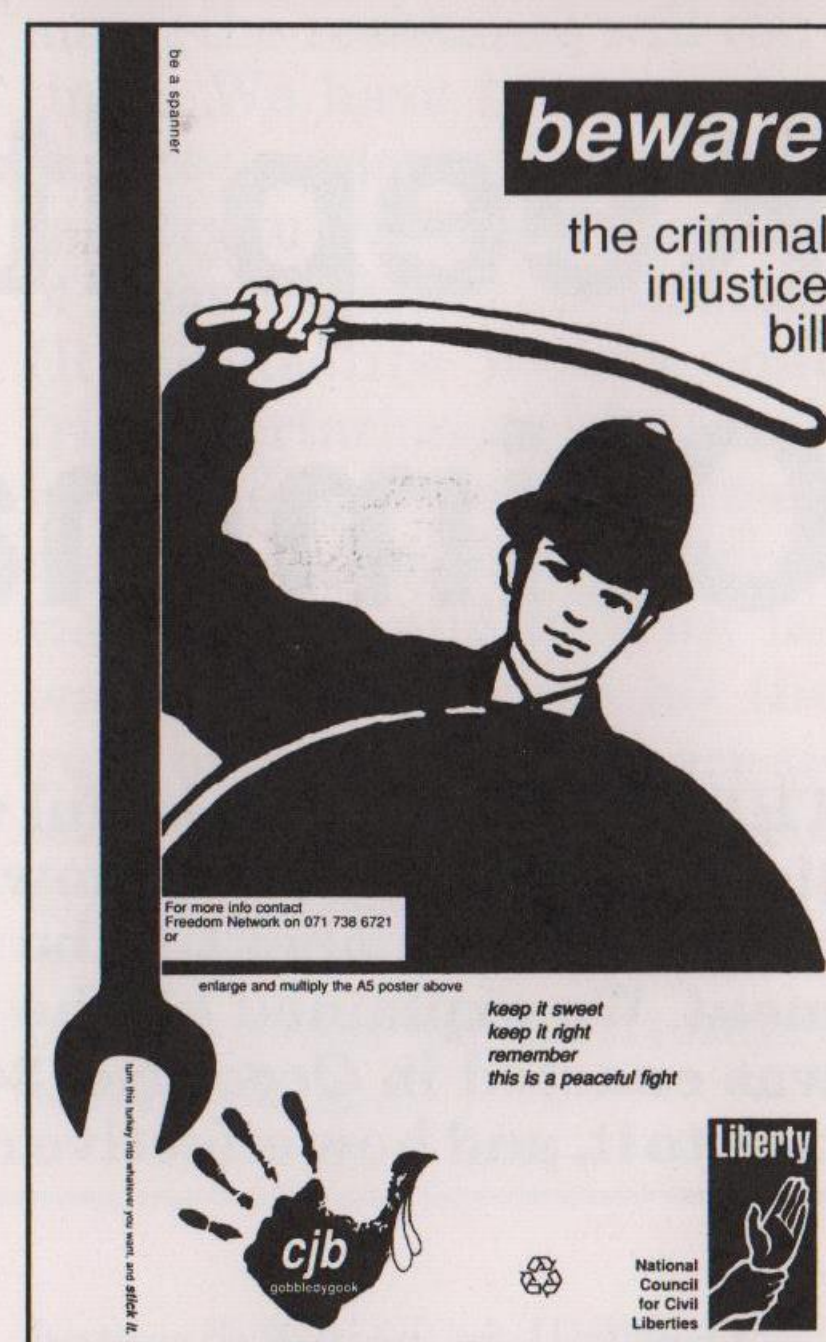
cause they feared that the Socialist Workers' Party and anarchists would seek confrontation with the police (indeed they made sure that the date of this October demo was moved forward so that it would not coincide with the Anarchist Bookfair and lead to the participation, they hoped, of fewer anarchists).

SWP

But the Fluffies have nothing much to fear from the SWP. In their own way they intend to keep the fight against the Bill as fluffy as possible. This means they will try to direct the movement towards appealing to the Labour Party and the TUC to fight on our behalf. Fat chance! When Labour enthusiastically supported large sections of the Bill and when the TUC has never done anything but sabotage any struggle! In fact the SWP are enthusiastically arguing that the main object of the Bill was to attack the unions! As usual

they've got it completely wrong! Does anyone remember during the fight against the Poll Tax how the SWP said that community-based resistance would be a failure and that non-payment was a non-starter? Remember how they did a quick U-turn when it became clear that many thousands were refusing to pay the Poll Tax? Of course the Bill could be used in future against striking workers — and not against the unions who are there to control any workers' action that gets out of hand — but the main target is the groups and sub-cultures already mentioned. This is because they are in opposition to present society and because the Major government wants to please its supporters amongst the big landowners and farmers, the landlords and the hang'em and flog'em brigade in the Home Counties.

The Criminal Justice Bill must be met with mass defiance and mass resistance — as if it did not exist in the first



place. The law must be flouted and any attacks on raves, squats, anti-road actions etc, must be met with mass mobilisations. The lines of contact and networking already in place on a national and local level must be strengthened, extended and enlarged. Unity of all those under attack and mass resistance are the watchwords!

Riot! An eye-witness account of the Battle of Park Lane

THE ANTI-CJB DEMONSTRATION on 9th October ended in what the media and the Police described as the "worst" riot since Trafalgar Square.

They blamed "anarchist trouble-makers" for the riot and claimed that we didn't have a legitimate right to be present. As if a piece of highly-repressive legislation would not naturally interest us. Liberty criticised some police action but said it was a difficult event to police. All were convinced that a major calamity had happened and professed horror at the violence. (This on the day that Britain joined the US in the military build up in the Gulf!)

What horrified them most was that mounted police were routed and driven from Hyde Park. Later, police repeatedly failed to storm the Park from the Park Lane side as they were pelted with missiles and attacked with a ten-foot battering ram. The reaction of those of us in the park was one of elation. It is a long time since we have felt this sense of class power in the face of the State's thugs. Walking through the police encampment at Marble Arch I was

struck by the stunned silence. Their omnipotent self-image had been shattered

Arrests

Of course given time to reflect, it was obvious that not everything was ideal. As in any riot, heavily-armoured police inflicted far more injuries than they took and many more people were arrested. Some camera crews were attacked, but the television-coverage showed clearly the faces of those attacking the police. We can expect more arrests of people identified from pictures supplied by the media. For these reasons we should make it clear that anyone who turns up at a demonstration with the sole purpose of turning it into a riot is highly irresponsible. However, this isn't what happened and we support unconditionally anyone who resisted police provocation.

What seems to have triggered the violence was police

reactions to sound-systems being brought to the park. They do not like losing control and tried to stop them. Any police action comes with the implicit threat of violence, but the ravers who were partying would have none of it and drove the police back. Park Lane and the Marble Arch roundabout were blocked and the police eventually let one of the trucks into the park. But they soon sent horses in to disperse the crowd. This provoked the full-scale riot, as demonstrators used the space to throw missiles at the horses and the round shield units and forced them away. People drifted down towards Park Lane and this is where the police were humiliated again as they failed to storm the Park. In the front line a fire breather celebrated by blowing flames at them.

As we expected, the fluffies condemned the attacks on the police with at least one trying to unmask a rioter. Paul May of the Judith Ward and Birmingham Six campaigns was the most blatant member of the coalition to condemn the

rioters. We feel that the police's racist framing of innocent Irish people on its own would justify any attack on them. However, many of the Coalition expressed regret that police had been injured. Jeremy Corbyn thought that everything happened as the result of bad policing, while the SWP surprised us by expressing support for resistance to police provocation. What their stance is on people taking a few precautions and coming prepared with masks and firecrackers is unclear, and I heard at least one of their members complaining about the "bad example" set by one of his comrades who joined the riot rather than getting on their bus.

Class War

Class War's stance was totally clear and their leaflet was produced as "evidence" that everything was pre-planned. The media never say that American women who arm themselves against rape pre-planned their shooting of rapists. Nor do they say that the massive police armoury

including shields, clubs, horses and vans driven at speed were examples of pre-planned violence. No, the fact that many of the rioters didn't mask up and that they didn't take CW's advice of getting close enough to be sure that their missiles hit the police rather than demonstrators, show that what happened was spontaneous. Of course the

usual rumours floated around of agent provocateurs, of the police wanting a riot to justify the CJB and even of CW being an MI5 front. The reality was that the riot was a spontaneous and totally legitimate reaction to immediate events and to the increasing police repression of recent years. The fact that some people thought that a riot was suffi-

ciently on the cards that they should come prepared doesn't change this reality. Many of those appearing in court were of no fixed abode. (The media added an interesting racist angle by focussing on the fact that two of those accused are Spanish.) The number of NFAs highlights the media hypocrisy. No doubt some of them were squatters or travel-

lers. This legislation will grant the police the right to seize travellers' homes, with violence if necessary, and landlords will be granted the right to evict squatters violently. Anyone who plans this sort of violence shouldn't be surprised when they get hit back. We can expect more retaliation to this and other repression in the future.

Yobs and Boot-Boys

BEFORE THE CRIMINAL Justice Bill has even got through parliament, John Major has started planning the next law and order attack on us.

In the lead up to the party conference he gave a speech in which he attacked "uncouth yobs". The speech poses as an attack on crime and criminals but in fact it is an attack on the working class. "Uncouth" and "yob" are words the ruling class use of the working class. Hooray Henries and student high jinks were not on the agenda. When the middle class see a group of young men with cockney or geordie accents hanging around after the pubs shut then the thought "yobs" goes through their brains. And it isn't just the middle class: women, older people and other "vulnerable" people have been taught to fear groups of working-class youth. But when you actually look at the statistics it isn't women or the old who are attacked, it is overwhelmingly young men who are the victims of violent assault in the street. Women face violence in the home. The popular fear of violent street crime is largely a media invention, the coverage varying with editorial whim and the prevailing climate more than with the levels of violence on the street: you are far more likely to be killed or maimed by a middle-aged, middle class drunk with a company car, than by a working class yob. But this isn't to say that intimidation or violence from gangs of anti-social young men isn't a problem. I have been on the escalator at Leicester Square when a bunch of drunken young men got on. They joked about wanting to do over some beggars and then one of them started to taunt me. One of his

companions still had his wallet out with his police identity card clearly visible. And this is the heart of the matter. The reason there are so unruly yobs around is that the ruling class need them. They need them to man the police force and the army. (Yes, I do mean "man".) And if the occasional prisoner gets a bruising, if the odd Argentinian POW, civilian in Belfast, or woman tour operator in Cyprus gets beaten, or murdered or raped, then they pretend it never happened, say it was justified, find someone to frame, or talk of "rotten apples". The reason that *The Sun* and the government react so strongly to attacks on "our boys" is that if you look too closely, you'll notice that they are just the same as the "uncouth yobs".

Machismo

The media are full of positive images of male machismo. Sport, film and TV promote hard, tough masculinity. Hendon Police trainees used to pack out the TV room to watch the antics of Carter and Regan on *The Sweeney*. They needed their minds filled with violence so that they could go and seize shoplifters or attack striking miners and printers, and suppress all opposition with violence and the threat of violence.

And it isn't just the ruling class's hired thugs who are the targets of this imagery. Neo-Nazi boneheads can absorb it and then go out and attack blacks and Asians. If just enough violence happens to scare the most peaceful ele-

ments and keep us divided: black from white, male from female, old from young, gay from straight, even Saints from Pompey and Celtic from Rangers, then people's minds are distracted from the real divide: the rich and powerful from the rest of us.

The ruling class also model themselves on the macho culture. Boarding school and rugby teach the young to be tough and unfeeling, and incidentally stop them from having any real contact with their working class peers. And when they have become tough and unfeeling, they can start wars, they can make people redundant, they can squeeze benefits and they can sell arms to mass murderers, all in aid of Capital and the State. Heseltine and Portillo are just the sort of men this system hopes to churn out and which the right glorifies. Kelvin McKenzie, Ian MacGregor and Margaret Thatcher may have slightly different educational backgrounds but their brand of macho ruthlessness is just how the ruling class likes to see itself. For them, hard is good and fuck what it does to other people.

So don't be fooled. It is the ruling class yobs who cause far more death and misery than the most anti-social working class lad can dream of. And beware of the gloss that sections of the revolutionary left put on the macho image. None should cry over the odd hospitalised copper: they had it coming. And if Kenneth Clarke were found stabbed to death one day, we'd feel the same sense of elation we did when Ian Gow and Louis Mountbatten got their comeuppance. But we should be wary of glorifying the same

kind of machismo that the current system likes to promote. Is it really so great that a bunch of rich school kids got a beating? Surely their parents should be the real target. The children are forced into a role just as much as we are and a beating is hardly likely to do anything except make them into harsher masters for the future. After all, that is precisely the purpose of their public school education. But that doesn't mean that we should all be shy and retiring. When change does happen, the ruling class will use its hired yobs against us. And no doubt in the frontline against them will be those same law-defying yobs from the working class that John Major has attacked. So we should avoid the type of middle class leftism that pretends to support the working class, but sneers about the "underclass" or the "lumpenproletariat" whenever it sees a group of youths hanging around the street corner. And in the meantime we should support each other in our communities against anti-social crime.

What kind of world is this when people have no choice but to call the police for help when threatened, and where they can set up neighbourhood watch schemes because people haven't been helping each other anyway?

No, we should take inspiration from Derry in the '60s, the mining villages and Brixton frontline in the '80s and the bailiff busters in the '90s and build a real neighbourhood watch which will keep the yobs out even if they are in uniform. Then the only people who ring the police will really be grasses and not frightened pensioners.

UCH — SAVAGED NOT SAVED

THE FOLLOWING TEXT was produced as a leaflet by people fighting to save University College Hospital. The ACF did not have a hand in its production. Nevertheless, we feel that the information and the opinions expressed in the leaflet are deserving of wider circulation and that is why we are re-printing it in *Organise!*

THE SWP doing Bottomley's dirty work for her:

Q: What have Virginia Bottomley and the SWP got in common?

A: Among other things, they both claim that University College Hospital (UCH) has been saved.

About 700 jobs and hundreds of beds have been lost, and the main Cruciform building — which everyone associated with UCH — has been closed. Yet for different, equally-manipulative reasons, the "Health" Minister and the "Socialist" Workers' Party are both agreed on the lie that "UCH has been saved". Goebbels: "The bigger the lie the more it's believed", would have been proud.

What's left of UCH?

Well — now-merged with the Middlesex, there's the administration — really useful if you've had a heart attack. And there's the Accident & Emergency — but that was never planned for closure in the first place. Instead, as with all A & E's without a hospital attached, it's been left without adequate back-up, giving most patients just 48 hours to stay before being moved on. There are, however, 40 or so extra beds for those who need intensive care, who can now stay on a bit longer. Nevertheless, staff are now complaining that whereas before it used to take just a couple of minutes to move such patients to a specialist ward in the old Cruciform building, now it takes up to half an hour to get to the Middlesex because of heavy traffic. What's more the recent death of a six-month-old baby at UCH A & E shows how dangerous it is to have an A & E separate from the specialists (now based in Middlesex) who were previously on site; at the same time the cuts ensured that the equipment for monitoring the baby wasn't working. It looks

like the parents are going to sue the over-worked nurses involved, using the Patients' Charter. The much-lauded Charter is used intentionally to blame individual health workers in order to fend off attacks on the real murderers: the managers and accountants who push through the cuts demanded by Bottomley and her genocidal government.

Apart from this, there's a



private wing (great!). Also "saved" (we're not sure they were planning it for closure originally anyway) are the Urology department (much reduced), the clap clinic and Obstetrics. And there's a new children's ward: however, at the Middlesex there used to be two children's wards, and now there's only one — which means that between them, one children's ward has been lost, even though on paper UCH's has been "saved". Similarly, by classifying some beds which were previously the Middlesex's, and by counting the beds existing towards the end of the run-down of the UCH, the health authorities can claim that UCH has lost "only" 70 beds instead of the 300+ that have really been lost. Lies, damned lies and statistics. Moreover, three weeks after Bottomley said the UCH had been saved, it

was announced that the latest plan being considered was to sell off the whole UCH site (the land fetching millions on the property market) and to move parts of the UCH to various other hospitals. If this comes about UCH will merely be an administrative label on some bureaucrat's door.

To say all this means the hospital has been saved is like saying that a formerly healthy adult, who has had both legs and arms amputated and is on a life support machine, has been saved. Well, technically yes — but it hardly constitutes the victory the SWP like to make it out to be.

With saviours like these

know perfectly well this is bullshit? As in all hierarchies, the individual has to repress their point of view and preach "the party line". During the strike, SWP strategy was designed to gain the maximum publicity and to show how radical they were compared to the union leadership, by pushing for demands that they knew the leaders would not meet. The predictable sell-out of the strike by Unison was the "victory" the SWP wanted: confirmation of something they knew beforehand would happen, but did nothing to undermine. In fact, they had encouraged a faith in the union which they knew would inevitably be betrayed. It was only afterwards that they needed to find a happy ending, so that they could encourage others to repeat the tragedy at other hospitals. The SWP's main concern was recruitment to a self-proclaimed image of themselves heroically and successfully leading the working class to victory, even if this victory is a myth. For them this is more vital than the development of any real struggle by the poor, honestly facing the horrific extent of their defeats and the reasons for them.

The struggles at UCH

During the struggles at UCH the SWP did everything to minimise the efforts of non-SWP members. During the work-in aimed at stopping the closure of Ward 2/1 in Nov-Dec 92, SWP members played as much a part as anyone else involved in the struggle — though it was probably the support of junior doctors which really won this battle, admittedly only a temporary reprieve. In the strike of Aug-Sept '93 they played a more significant part — not all of it helpful by any means. For instance they did much to ensure that the cheerful demos which had previously disrupted traffic got turned into boring routine affairs. And in the occupation of Ward 2/3 in September, admittedly suggested by an SWP member, though broken into by a non-party hospital campaigner,

they did much to dampen the high-spirited atmosphere. When occupiers met with a few SWP union stewards to discuss the occupation, the occupiers were told the stewards represented the decisions of the strike committee, and these decisions were: vetting to decide who should be allowed into the occupation, to be carried out by the branch secretary and chair, both SWP members. People would have to book themselves onto a formalised rota days in advance just to be able to spend a night there, reducing the occupation to a chore and duty, killing off the social dynamic going on. The effect of these changes was miserable: a lot of people, particularly locals who visited regularly, were put off from coming. And there seemed little point in giving out leaflets encouraging people to come, if they had to be vetted first. People now felt they were only there with the tolerance of certain officials, and no longer joint partners in the struggle.

The openness of the occupation, with free debate flowing back and forth informally, was replaced with an atmosphere of intrigue and secret whispering. It was only later that the occupiers found out that these demands of the SWP union officials weren't at all proposed by the strike committee: it had been an SWP manipulation from the very beginning.

The second occupation of Ward 2/3 was organised by us — UCH Community Action Committee — without, unfortunately, a strike at UCH, and completely independently of any political party. We had hoped to extend the occupation of one ward by getting loads of people back from a TUC Health Service demo on November 20th. We failed, even though the occupation took nearly three weeks to be evicted. During this time, the SWP were even less supportive than the rest of the media — the occupation only got a mention after the eviction. We could never, of course, pretend that "we saved UCH" — not just because it hasn't been saved, but, more vitally, because if UCH had been saved it could not have been down to us, but due to a more general and much more combative movement, involving a considerably greater section of

the working class than the few people who initiated the occupation. Unlike the SWP, we have no pretensions to being an indispensable vanguard, able to win victories on our own. And, of course, UCH has been, by and large, a defeat, and to ignore that is to confuse and demoralise any chance of a fightback, which is

where the SWP and Bottomley have so much in common.

If a fight is to develop to save the hospitals or to stop the horrific attacks on the poor, it will not only have to bypass the parties and unions, but attack them as enemies and obstacles to our struggle. Our health and our lives can not be "saved" by the professional liars of the Left,

Right or Centre, but only by ourselves organising not just an organisation with a name on a banner or logo on a leaflet, which is just an image, but organising specific actions and critiques, correcting our failures and weaknesses.

UCH Community Action Committee, c/o BM CRL, London WC1N 3XX.

THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST THE ANC



WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY argued in the pages of *Organise!* that the ANC was an authoritarian, pro-capitalist organisation and that the mass of the population in South Africa, the working class of town and countryside and the poor, could expect nothing from the new regime.

As we said in *Organise!* 33: "The new regime that is being created will also face trouble from amongst the black industrial working class and from the urban and rural poor . . ."

The first signs of this opposition erupted with the strikes that broke out in June and accelerated by late July. In fact the expectations of the working class are high, with more strikes this year so far than any year since 1987, with nine million days lost in strikes. These strikes involved all the important sec-

tors of the South African economy — mining, metal, telecommunications, transport, post, health service and retail. The strikes in the major industries were preceded by 48 different disputes amongst catering, metal, paper, oil, municipal and court workers. These disputes in the working class even set off a strike amongst the police of the ex-homeland KwaZulu! One of the most important of these strikes was the Pick 'n Pay retail chain where a national strike of 20,000 workers took

Above: Mandela — not so popular now.

place. Workers occupied the stores defying court orders and police actions. Pick 'n Pay workers were fighting for a 229 rand monthly increase, derisory when one considers that many are on R200 a week. This compares to the daily income of R1,000 for the Pick 'n Pay bosses, who made vast profits under apartheid, and offered their employees a laughable R175 over a 16-month period. But the strikers were also fighting against the racist practices of Pick 'n Pay, which tries to sell itself as an enlightened employer.

On 13-14 July police attacked the strikers with stun-

grenades, rubber bullets, tear gas, batons and police dogs. It is significant that the apartheid regime very rarely used stun grenades against strikers, whereas in their first confrontation with the working class the ANC-led regime used it immediately. In further attacks on the strikers the police arrested 800.

The new regime is a government of "National Unity" between the ANC and the old rulers of the Nationalist Party. In this new regime unity is indeed forged — between the new black ruling class and the old white ruling class. Junior partners in this government are the long-time allies of the ANC, the Stalinist South African Communist Party, who will attempt to control the working class to the benefit of the regime, through their influence in both the union bureaucracies and among many ordinary working class people.

It is highly significant that the Minister of Police, Sydney Mufamadi, is a SACP leader and a former Assistant General Secretary of the union COSATU, which has an alliance with the ANC and SACP, and to which the strikers belong! In fact not one minister or MP having membership in the ANC, SACP or COSATU supported the strike, whilst ANC and SACP ministers said that the violence was caused by the strikers. As to the union leaders, the attitude of Enoch Godongwana of the metalworkers union NUMSA, a component of COSATU, was indicative. He sang the praises of "orderly strikes" completely under the control of the union, with "normal" collective bargaining. This was a side-swipe at the direct

action tactics of the Pick 'n Pay workers. Despite these attempts by the unions to shackle workers, direct action tactics have continued with the recent lorry-drivers' strikes, where road blocks were set up by the strikers.

Silent

Mandela has already warned that industrial action would harm the prospects of foreign investment. On 18 July he hurriedly met with his old ally Sam Shilowa, General Secretary of COSATU. The following day, union leaders lowered the wage demand to R196 over 15 months, which is a 30% drop and comes close to the bosses' offer, the difference being a measly R5.90 per week. The bosses refused to accept and under pressure from the strikers, the union leaders were forced to revert to the original demand. Soon after this, the union settled for the lower offer!

The Communist Party remained silent on the strike until after Mandela had tried to end it, only then to come out in support of the strikers. This of course means nothing with its members serving in the government and controlling the police which brutally attacked the workers.

The ANC-led regime has already planned its repression against any opposition from the mass of the population with its retention of detention without trial, and the taking over of broadcasting by ANC hacks. Already ANC, SACP and COSATU ministers are enriching themselves and living in lavish style. Even before the election, Peter Mokaba, the former head of the ANC youth wing, was attempting to

extort from the Miss South Africa beauty contest, a big money-spinner for white capitalists. He said that the contest was biased against blacks (Yes, it was, but why should black women feel any more liberated by being allowed to participate in this cattle market?) and demanded £50,000 to be paid into a trust fund run by him and a business partner. This was dropped after the white capitalists complained over Mokaba's head to an ANC superior. Since then, Mokaba has seized control of this degrading event to line his own pockets.

Thugs

Once the ANC and its allies in SACP and COSATU came to power they made sure they awarded themselves huge wage rises. Mandela got R784,350, cabinet ministers R470,000 and MPs R193,200 compared to average black working class wages of R8000 a year. Other signs of the ANC intention to exploit and repress working people was its adoption of the military dictators of the former homelands of Transkei and Venda, General Bantu Holomisa and Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana, who served the apartheid regime faithfully, and who were placed on the ANC electoral list. Tokyo Sexwale, former high-up in the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and implicated in torture of dissidents, is now Premier of the new PWV province around Johannesburg. For her part Winnie Mandela has manoeuvred away from any repercussions over the murders committed by her and her bodyguard of thugs and is now nicely ensconced as deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology! She has bought a huge mansion in a wealthy part of Cape Town, and the air tickets and luxury accommodation of her gang of thugs are paid for out of taxes. Now, under mass popular pressure, Mandela has been forced to make a statement that he will reduce ministers' salaries.

The first budget passed by the new government retained VAT on basic foodstuffs, which was a great burden for the working class and which the ANC had promised to abolish. Company tax was reduced, despite enterprises like

Anglo-American increasing their profits by 23%.

Not only in the workplace and the streets did the working class challenge the old order. The homeless began to act with squatting and occupation of the land. Johannesburg City Council counter-attacked by bulldozing one of the squatter camps on the outskirts of town on the coldest night of the year. The Minister of Housing, Joe Slovo, the strongman white leader of the SACP, condemned land occupations and said that workers' families had to join the housing queues and that squatters were being manipulated by "outside forces"! This statement should be viewed in the light of 1.3 million homeless, massive overcrowding and that fact that the much promised housing programme promised by Slovo has led to one house being built. And this while a massive Olympic stadium is being built in Johannesburg. Some of Slovo's chums in the police came out with the pathetic statement that these squatters' actions were instigated by Nigerian drugs barons!

Unlikely

This brings us to the key component of the electoral package promised by the ANC — the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). This set targets of, for example, one million homes being built, redistributing farmland, providing water and electricity to townships and rural areas over a five-year term. This would cost an estimated R135 billion rather than the R39 billion estimated by the ANC. Considering their promises to the IMF, World Bank, and big business, and the ANC decision not to tax the rich, as well as their pledge to keep State spending in check, these promises seem highly unlikely. Jay Naidoo, ex-COSATU leader and now Minister in charge of the RDP, is urging workers to show restraint and remember the ANC's obligations to the World Bank. At the same time, Joe Modise, ex-guerilla leader and now Minister of Defence, backed up by the former Umkhonto leader Ronnie Kasrils, a leading Stalinist, are urging that the Army should be built up. The budget on security — which includes

the Army and police — was increased by 10%, which means that this equals all of the budget set aside for the RDP. Meanwhile Mandela is urging that arms production be increased so that profits can be made from the international arms trade.

This process of sell-out is not confined to the upper echelons of the ANC. Many trade union organisers have been given jobs in personnel management by the bosses, whilst many others have got well-paid jobs in the many government bodies and committees.

The euphoria that brought the ANC to power is evaporating and many working class people, who voted them in, are beginning to question their politics. The Communist Party has suffered as well, with internal dissent and the expulsion of some old-time Stalinists, who didn't want to adapt so readily to the SACP's new tactics. In Natal, Harry Gwala, a local leader, was thrown out of the Party after the election. He had criticised the deal that the ANC and SACP had struck with the right-wing tribalists of Inkatha in Natal. This involved fixing the vote there so that Inkatha got a (false) majority, and then fixing up power-sharing with them in the province. It may well be that the SACP's participation in the government may seriously undermine it. We hope so. The SACP is the last Stalinist Party in the world that was growing and recruiting amongst the working class in the run-up to the election, at a time when all others in the world were disintegrating.

The foundering of the SACP could open up the way to working class self-organisation. But capitalism always has one last line of defence to fool the working class — the extreme left. Already several British Trotskyist groups have set up branches of their organisation in South Africa — these include the Socialist Workers' Party, Workers' Press and Militant. All of these groups enthusiastically supported a vote by the black South African working class for the ANC-SACP-COSATU alliance, suddenly discovering after the election that this alliance was betraying the working class. From singing the praises of the ANC to denouncing it was very easy for these slippery advocates of "critical support" for every repressive, anti-working class regime like Iran and Iraq. Total amnesia on supporting a vote for the ANC is now widespread. These outfits are as much capitalist rackets as the ANC and SACP — they wish to come to power at the expense of the working class.

The small numbers of anarchists in South Africa must seriously consider the questions of organisation and strategy. They must orientate themselves to the mass struggles of the black working class — be it in the workplace or in the homeless struggles — and to the construction of a specific anarchist communist organisation. They must clearly and loudly call for the development of a mass movement based on self-organisation. To remain in a self-imposed ghetto now will be a luxury that they will not long be able to afford.

Spread anarchist ideas through the Arab world!

AS WE MENTIONED in *Organise!* 34 the comrades of Al Badil al Taharrouri in Lebanon have completed the translation into Arabic of *Anarchism*. This book is considered by many to be the best introduction to class struggle anarchism, and was written by the veteran libertarian communist Daniel Guérin. The translation, with notes by George Saad, has already been processed on a Macintosh, and now the comrades need to pay for the cost of printing. 2,000 copies will be distributed in Lebanon and the other Arab countries whilst another 2,000 will be distributed in Europe amongst Arab workers there. Anyone wishing to make donations to this important project should send IMOs etc made payable to Agora 2000 via BP 177, 75967 Paris cedex 20, France.

Unholy Holy Alliance

THE RECENT UN Population Conference in Cairo highlighted the increasing determination of religious leaders to dictate morality. The Vatican teamed up with the mullahs of Islam in an attempt to squash any move towards making contraception more readily available and to prevent the conference taking a pro-abortion stance.

The conference itself had as its supposed aims the recognition that limited population growth is necessary for economic development and that this must be accompanied by the "empowerment of women". President Clinton said his aim was to make family planning available to every woman in the world by the year 2000.

However, it is doubtful whether western governments are motivated by a genuine concern for the people of the Third World, especially women. Rather, it is a question of the West's fear of the world instability that could result from increases in population in countries that have high levels of poverty. The worry is that the West will be "swamped" by refugees, the number of whom on a world scale has already increased from five to 15 million in the past 15 years. The emphasis on population control is thus a desperate move to contain the problems of poverty within the Third World itself, without the West having to spend much money on aid.

Mutilation

The Muslim countries are aware of the real western motives and Iraq, the Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan used this as an excuse to pull out of the conference. However it is a mistake to see this resistance to western interference as progressive in any sense. Their concern to preserve their "cultural and religious identity" is just a way of maintaining values and practices that are some of the most

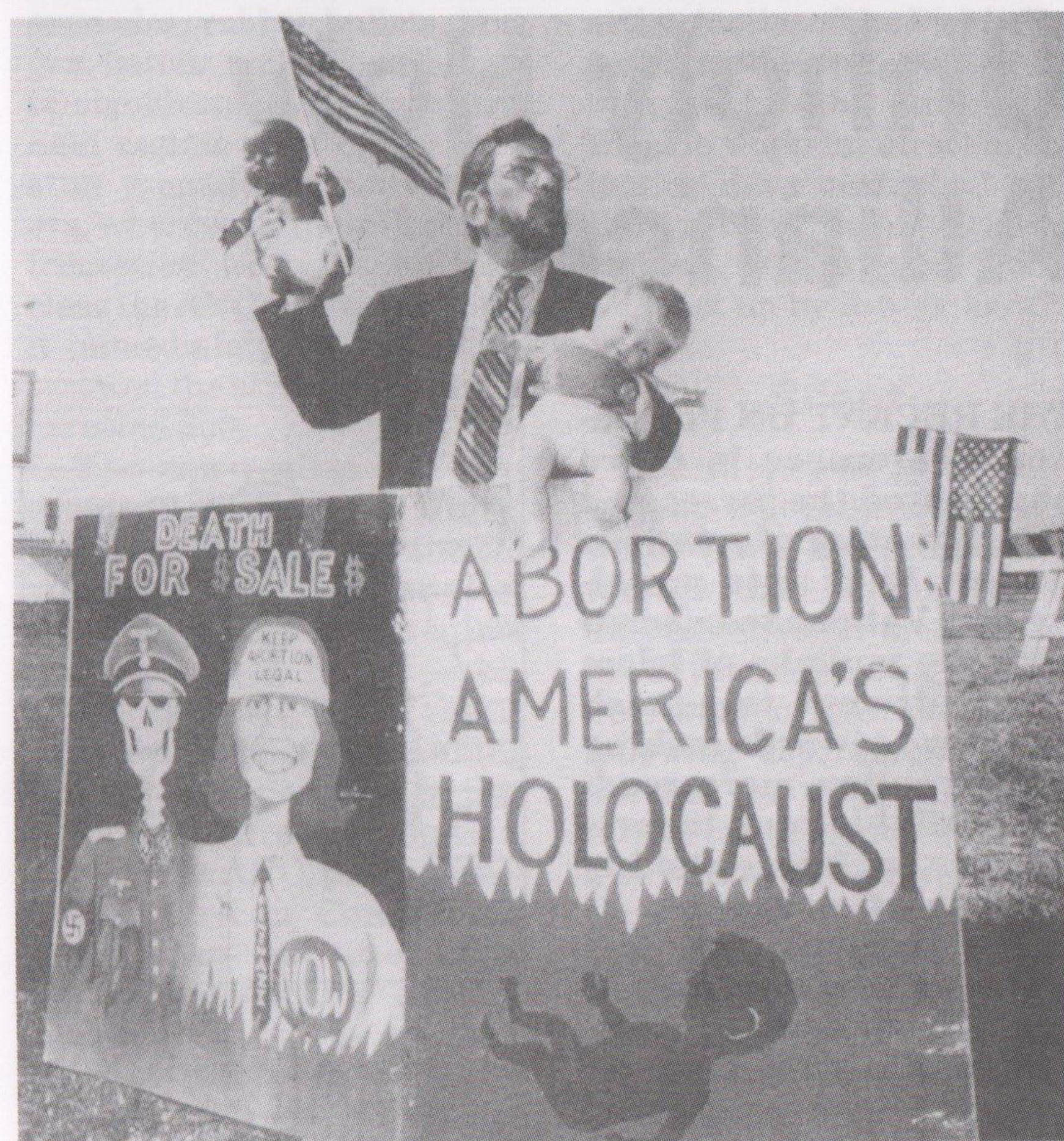


repressive in the world. In the Sudan, genital mutilation of women is still widespread and women in Saudi Arabia may as well not exist in terms of public life. The governments of these Muslim countries' main reason for attacking the conference is their hostility to the idea of "empowering women". They are worried that freely-available contraception will lead to "promiscuity" and the decline of the family, the male-dominated institution that makes sure women are kept in their place. Even Benazir Bhutto, female Prime Minister of Pakistan, who claims to be all in favour of the empowerment of women, does not want this to take place at the expense of the sacredness of life and the family. In other words, no abortion and women can have as much power as their husbands agree to.

Reactionary ideas, however, are not the sole preserve of Islam. Christianity also seems determined to keep women in their place. The Pope has obviously seen the common repressive element in all religions and has formed an unofficial alliance. In June, representatives of the Vatican met with Islamic leaders to discuss the dangers facing modern society: secularism, consumerism and individualism. One would have thought that they would be attacking the money-obsessed consumer society we know as capitalism. But this was not the focus of their discussion. Instead they talked about the

Below: Shoprite workers go into action.





decline of the family and sex. In other words, the major danger facing modern society is the attempt by women to have control over their own bodies and to free themselves from a lifetime of devotion to children and husband. This view is reinforced by the need for both religions to keep women producing the "faithful". The new catechism states that any family planning that is not abstinence is evil.

The Pope is joined in the political sphere by the far right parties in Europe. A Catholic party, L'Autre Europe (The Other Europe) in France advocates women returning to the home and forcing all children to have a Catholic education which teaches such values. The Northern League in Italy has many MPs in Parliament, including Irene Pivetti, the first female speaker of the Italian Parliament. They are busy trying to promote "pro-family" policies, using Christian beliefs as justification. (Why aren't these women staying at home, you might ask?)

These developments come on top of increased membership of reactionary evangelical churches in America which have been active for some time, claiming to have been the source of Reagan's victory and subsequent policies. Whatever they call the religion, they all have one thing in common: the determination to impose a "moral order" that

they claim comes from God or Allah. However, this "moral order" is remarkably similar to the order of patriarchal class society which is based on domination, obedience and conformity and where the rich have the moral right to rule and where women stay within the prison of the family.

False consciousness

The influence of these religious movements should not be underestimated, especially when they start joining forces. As one of the evangelist leaders in America, Pat Robertson, says, "I am convinced on the political scene that if the evangelical churches, the Roman Catholic churches, the Orthodox Jewish people, all of us work together, we can elect anybody to any office, at any level".

Fundamentalist religious movements continue to grow in the Muslim world as in their Western Christian equivalent. All these right-wing religious movements contain a high proportion of women activists who give the term "false consciousness" a new meaning. These women seem determined to make all women suffer the same fate that they have chosen for themselves; spending their lives as child-bearing assembly lines.

"Family planning is forbidden unless a woman has had so many children that her

health is in danger", says the wife of a Gama at al Islamiya member, the Egyptian fundamentalist group.

Resistance

Fortunately, there are signs of resistance to these reactionary, anti-women ideas. The Pope clearly did not have the support of his church members (perhaps the reason he needed to turn to the Muslims for support).

An organisation called Catholics Speak Out collected signatures from Catholics all over the world to protest the Pope's views on birth control. The Vatican was strongly criticised by American Catholics with a leading catholic theologian, Maguire, saying at the conference, "They (the Vatican) have run into a new problem in their lives — an articulate womanhood — and the women here are resisting them stoutly and strongly". The Population Institute estimates that 80% of Catholics ignore the Pope's directives on birth control.

In the Muslim world, the people themselves do not seem to agree with the fundamentalist views on birth control. Bangladesh actively promotes birth control and even in Iran, 65% of married women use contraceptives. There are also signs that Muslim women themselves are organising against those aspects of the religion that oppress women. The Muslim

Sisters was founded by three women who were fed up with being harassed by the "moral guards" when they were in their hotel room making plans to set up a rural health care project. They now claim to have support from women throughout the Islamic world and amongst Muslim women in Britain.

However, this resistance is still within the context of religion and so long as the basic premise of these religions, of a "moral order" being imposed by a superior being, is still adhered to, then it will never lead to liberation.

Rejecting only what is seen as the reactionary elements of a religion is like getting out of the prison cell only to remain in the yard.

The growth of interest in religion amongst ordinary people can be seen as a desperate attempt to explain their world and give them hope in a period where nothing else appears to be delivering the goods (Capitalism, "communism", democracy, science and technology). Many are rejecting the old order, but instead of creating their own order, they attach themselves to another set of beliefs imposed from outside, that controls and dominates their lives. The only true "moral order" is one that is created by ourselves, based on equality, freedom and solidarity. This can only be done by rejecting the shackles of religion.

Free Leonard Peltier

LEONARD PELTIER, a Lakota-Chippewa Indian, has served 18 years of two life sentences, after a frame-up conviction for the shooting to death of two FBI agents.

The agents were part of a massive military-type raid on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation on June 26, 1975. That infamous attack, documented in the video, *Incident at Oglala*, was the culmination of two years of a virtual war on American Indian Movement for their defence of Indian lands and culture.

There is overwhelming evidence of an FBI cover-up and the fabrication of evidence in order to get a conviction of Peltier. He was accused of killing two FBI agents, although

there is evidence the two were killed by FBI bullets. Peltier's last hearing was Nov 9, 1992 before the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. At that appeal, US prosecutor admitted, "We don't know who killed the agents". The appeal was denied. Over 25 million signatures from around the world have been collected calling for a new trial. Petitions won't free Peltier. There needs to be an active movement around the world that mobilises as many people as possible to demand his release.

Haiti — The American peace-keepers strike again

THE AMERICAN ruling class pick a hopefully easy prey for military muscle flexing after their tarnished reputation from intervention in Somalia.

Yet again the hawks in the Pentagon need to throw their weight around. The economic blockade that was implemented to punish the military regime of Cedras exacerbated the situation there and forced many poor and starving Haitians to flee to the US, thereby putting pressure on the Clinton administration to intervene. Clinton needs to stop refugees seeking asylum in Florida, and, he hopes, placate the right wing. He is already forcibly sending refugees back from the Guantanamo US base in Cuba where they fled to Port-au-Prince. But the Clinton administration knows that this is not enough, and the situation in Haiti must be "stabilised" to cut off the flow of refugees. This was one of the reasons for military intervention — not some deep love of "democracy". The generals who overthrow Aristide were allowed free rein in Haiti for three years before this.

Aristide was elected on a reform programme and the USA fears that if this is implemented it will encourage the masses in Haiti to take action against the local ruling class. Aristide has to be kept under control. The CIA had characterised him as a dangerous radical, starting off a smear campaign in which he was called a "psychotic manic-depressive with homicidal and

necrophilic tendencies". He is mistrusted by many of the US ruling class. The Clinton administration believes that he can be easily handled. They are prepared to put him back in power in order to keep the Haitian masses quiet. They realise there may be a danger of things getting out of control if expectations are high and the Haitian ruling class is attacked.

Opportunity

Haitian working people used the opportunity of the US invasion to rush onto the streets and attack Cedras' police and soldiers, exacting revenge and seizing weapons. At first some of these were handed over to the US marines, but now many are being kept. Aristide issued an appeal asking that both Cedras' thugs and the masses hand over their weapons to the occupying troops. He is also prepared, under US pressure, to give an amnesty to Cedras and his gang, a gang which tortured and murdered thousands.

The US faces many problems with Haiti, just as it did with Somalia. Support for intervention in Haiti has not received popular support, despite a constant barrage of propaganda on American television. The US marines have the task of both controlling



the Cedras mobsters and making sure that the popular revolt does not race out of control. Behind Cedras are a tiny and very wealthy minority who live in spectacular opulence at the expense of the majority who face extreme hardship. The masses may well decide to sweep them away as well. Once again the USA may

be bogged down in another country they have invaded. From Somalia to Haiti, and perhaps again soon in the Gulf, they may find that it is not such a cushy number being the world's policeman. In this power-game it will be the working class in Haiti and US soldiers who will suffer the consequences.

Western Toxic Wastes Arrive in Russia

THOUSANDS OF TONS of hazardous wastes from Germany and France are being transported by train to the settlement of Svetlyi in the Orenburg region, according to a report from Moscow, received 15.03.94.

The wastes have been declared as raw materials for production of cobalt and nickel, though in fact they contain poisonous substances, including cadmium (8-10%), thallium (2-3%), selenium, germanium and arsenic — substances which may cause intestinal colic, acute kidney insufficiency and other potentially-fatal diseases.

According to Greenpeace Russia, five wagons loaded with Australian wastes are also being transported to Stavropol Krai.

In all, during the months following the publication of special GP report *Russia:*

making a Waste Colony, there have been revealed more than 17 schemes to export Western waste to Russia.

Taking the hazardous waste of other nations has always, of course, been a source of income for poorer countries (there are many such in Africa), irresponsibly greedy governments (such as the UK), and governments which have traditionally shown a callous disregard for the well-being of the majority of their peoples (such as South Africa). Russia, with Eastern Europe — is already heavily polluted by 70 years of mismanaged industrialisation.

Organising in the workplace — beyond rank and file

Day school jointly organised by the Anarchist Communist Federation and Subversion. 11-5pm, Sunday November 6, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube Holborn)

This day school continues the one we jointly organised with Subversion in Manchester last year. We hope to continue the interesting and stimulating discussions we had there, and talk about practical possibilities of organising. Info from London address.

PEDESTRIAN PROBLEM

IN THIS ARTICLE we look at the problem of motor danger and false solutions to it. Next issue we conclude this series on traffic by looking at Green Cars, Public Transport and opposition to Motorisation.



The Road Safety Myth

Until the 1930s road safety was seen as a problem caused by motorists. Private car drivers were a minority — more mileage was covered, and more journeys made, by bike. In 1935, after agitation by cycling organisations, rail unions and the newly-formed Pedestrian Association for Road Safety, legislation such as the driving test was brought in to control the danger. Road safety ideas were brought in, centred around education, engineering and enforcement. Ever since “road safety” has been the territory of professionals such as road safety officers, road and vehicle engineers, traffic police, doctors, lawyers and the Department of Transport. The road safety lobby (RSC) has succeeded in suppressing the earlier anger and hostility against motorisation by legitimising the danger it creates. Generally people’s anger following an “accident” to a pedestrian is directed on the behaviour of a deviant minority (eg speeding drivers) rather than car use in general. The lobby maintain (with the support of official figures) that accidents — injuries and deaths — have decreased and so roads are “safer”. The official accident figures are too low however: accidents are under-reported (due to police and hospital methodology, for reasons of insurance claims etc). The majority of accidents (80-95%) are excluded from these statistics on the grounds that they are “damage only”. Accidents have also decreased because vulnerable road users

have stayed out of the way as danger has increased. Between 1955 and 1990 the chances of 10-14 year olds being killed on the roads nearly doubled; a half of male deaths for 15-19 year olds are from motor vehicles. The DoT makes the reduction of perceived risk secondary to casualty reduction in order to continue with its programme of motorisation: reducing the safety of the environment for the pedestrian. It implies that no-one is responsible, and that “unforeseen circumstances” are to blame.

Because of their pro-car bias, many “road safety” measures in fact produce the opposite effect — “Everything that supposedly produces more danger in fact produces more safety...and everything that is supposed to produce more safety produces more danger...Better roads, better sight lines, fewer bends and blind corners, less traffic; better lighting, better weather conditions...make greater danger...because every “non-restrictive” safety measure, however admirable by itself, is treated by drivers as an opportunity for more speeding, so that the net amount of danger is increased”.

The RSL method is to use excessive detail; divide and rule (eg talk separately of “pedestrian safety”, “cycle safety” and “the older road user” and portray an illusion of objectivity to obscure the central facts of danger on the road. Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is an increasingly popular lobby method. The official text on CBA for road casualties is *The value of life and safety: a search for a consensus estimate*.

There cannot and should not be a monetary value on life, and life and safety are not only different, but often mutually opposed. The real cost of motorisation is at least £30 billion more than motorists pay. CBA costing includes congestion, accidents, road-building and maintenance; it excludes the loss of revenue to public transport, stress, air pollution, noise, children’s escort time, and space (taken up on roads, in garages etc). CBA is only used to give a pseudo-scientific gloss to Department of Transport (DoT) places. The health disbenefits of mass car use (asthma, bronchitis, cancers, coronary problems, stress, social isolation, global warming etc) probably dwarf the numbers injured and killed on roads; they are not included in RS research and discussion. The rules of the game are biased against those most affected, who are also of course the worst off. CBA considers people as consumers, individuals whose power is determined by their income, rather than as political subjects. Although speed is a major cause of accidents, and creates worse injuries and a greater likelihood of death, the DoT regards speed reduction as bad. For them it creates frustrated motorists who act “aggressively and irresponsibly”. Pedestrians too:

“May take liberties with slow-moving traffic that they would not take with faster traffic. A mother who would never dream of wheeling her pushchair across an urban freeway may be tempted to do just that in a city street”.

What a cheek — a pedestrian trying to cross the road!

The department’s national campaign in the winter of 1989 was a typical exercise in blaming the vulnerable, those on the receiving end of “accidents”, rather than those responsible. Cyclists and pedestrians not wearing reflective or fluorescent clothing were “dimwits” — equally responsible for accidents as those in charge of powerful and dangerous machinery. There is little evidence that such “aids to conspicuousness” are beneficial. Also ignored is the evidence of voluntary tests and police surveys, which show that between one and two million motorists would fail the existing eyesight test. New findings also suggest that 20% of drivers suffer from night blindness. Similarly, Texaco’s “Care on the Road” campaign (1992) tried to shift responsibility for “being seen” further away from drivers onto children; and BP Oil’s recent campaign to get them young was called “Living with Traffic” (sic). Yet the evidence of children’s behaviour in traffic suggests that it is they who anticipate danger and behave responsibly, not the drivers.

The DoT’s motor bias leads it to stand truth on its head maintaining for example that:

“Travelling by car or bus is safer than walking”

Safer for whom? In 1990, three other road users were killed in accidents involving pedestrians; 1,014 pedestrians were killed by cars. Those who are the most vulnerable to danger are the least dangerous themselves. The introduction of compulsory seat belt legislation played a central role in legitimising the road safety lobby — yet evidence suggests it led to a lower level of care by motorists and therefore more danger for the vulnerable. In the two years following compulsory, pedestrian fatalities increased 14%; cyclist fatalities by 40% and rear seat passenger facilities by 27%.

Safety: False Solutions

Segregation is one method; it aims to reduce danger to vulnerable road users by minimising the possibilities of confrontation with motorists. This means footways and pedestrianisation for walkers; bike paths and lanes for cyclists (ironically, motorways in Britain started as a means of segregating the motor danger posed by cars). Experience shows however, that the only road-user groups to gain substantially from segregation are car and lorry drivers. This is because of the motor bias of the DoT (eg although most accidents to cyclists occur at junctions, motorists turning left have priority over cyclists in bike lanes). Equally important is the power dynamic of motorisation — cars have an immense greed for space, and the threat of danger and other motor problems tend to expand to nullify all but the most radical (total) safety strategies for pedestrians and cyclists.

Most cycling and walking, especially in rural areas, has to be unsegregated. Footways need to be protected from parked or moving cars (one third of “accidents” to walkers occur on the pavement). This can only be done by continuous barriers which prevent convenient crossing for those on foot. Footway space is constantly under threat/disappearing. Subways are rightly hated for their real and perceived danger. Visibility and surveillance are usually poor, and they are often badly maintained. Their steps are a particular problem for children and their carers, the elderly and people with disabilities. Even where they are well lit and populated (eg Birmingham City Centre) they put people in an unsatisfactory subterranean environment. Foot-bridges suffer similar disadvantages with the addition of “heights”. Pedestrian areas can be found in most central urban areas. They are a form of segregation for walkers. There are however, problems of access for the disabled and they can generate additional traffic in adjoining areas. These inner city areas are also atypical of most areas where people walk.

For cyclists, there is insufficient space for continuous cycle tracks or lanes. Junctions are dangerous (as noted earlier) and they have an inferior status: often blocked by cars, and badly maintained —

making them worse than nothing. The post-war British new towns, such as Stevenage and Peterborough, have a segregated network of cycle and pedestrian paths. This is inappropriate to older towns and rural areas where distances are too long to walk, the environment is isolating and dangerous, and there are obstacles to public transport and other problems caused by motorisation. Even an extensive programme of cycle routes such as the GLC’s proposed 1,000 mile network of the 1980’s would have left 93% of London’s roads without cycle routes, all with homes, shops, workplaces and other destinations on them.

Off road routes (eg Bath-Bristol pedestrian and cycle path) have been built on old railway sites, canal towpaths, bridleways and forest roads. They are very limited in availability and prone to appropriation by more space-hungry and powerful forms of transport. Cycle routes using side streets are also very limited in scope.

Traffic calming is another approach. It developed from pedestrianisation, environmental areas and the Dutch “woonerf” (“play streets” where the footway/road boundary is dissolved). Road humps, traffic islands and footway extensions are used to restrict speed; extend space for walkers/cyclists, children’s play etc; and create a more human environment. Most roads are not traffic-calmed however, even where it is fashionable. Officially, 80% of urban roads could be, but only a tiny minority are likely to be treated (and the effectiveness of TC is questionable). The average cost is £40,000 per square kilometre, ie £4.8 billion, which would take 57 years to complete. Limited TC can provide car parking space and be used as a bargaining counter or palliative by the road lobby. It cannot tackle the motor danger posed by rural roads. There is also the problem that danger could increase as motorists emerge from traffic-calmed areas, relax and increase their speed.

Problem of Power

We can see that “road safety” is a road lobby smokescreen to divert people from addressing the root of the problem — power. The power dynamic of motorisation with its social effects of fear, retreat and isolation, ill-health, injury and death; the power of the road lobby (large sections of the ruling class — the state, media, road safety lobby, oil/car/construction companies etc). The road lobby causes the motorisation problem, then defines how it is discussed through the “road safety” myth — thus its “solutions” prevail: keep pedestrians and cyclists out of the way, build “safer cars” (safer for drivers, more dangerous for everyone else), and build more roads.

Cyclist Direct Action. “Critical Mass” last Friday of every month. Meet 5.45pm outside NFT, South Bank (Waterloo BR and tube) Organised by CHARM (Cyclists Have a Right to Move).

The Red Hot Anarchistic Communistic Scorch Column

THE PIGS of V Unit (Special Police Group) have been testing out new and nasty cuffs on protesters against Faslane Peace Camp in Scotland. These are chainless, all-in-one metal cuffs which restrict movement and punish by cutting into the wrists. When asked why they were using the cuffs, one of the scum replied that “We are testing them out on you”. The rest of us had better watch out — we’re next.

DEPARTMENT of Transport pondscum spent £250,000 to employ private eyes to harass Twyford Down protesters. This sum could reach £350,000 by the end of the year. They signed a contract with Bray’s Detective Agency in Southampton in 1992. Result: eight jail sentences and 54 summonses.

WHEN THE newly-elected Labour council in Camden came to power earlier this year they immediately set up plans to sack all council staff and re-employ them on new contracts. Already 43 caretakers have been sacked, and now over the next three years Camden plans to open up council departments to “competitive tendering”. Did you really think there was any difference between Labour and Tory scum-bags? Wise up!

THE MINISTRY of Defence spent over £800 million on four diesel subs which they then promptly flogged to Pakistan for £400 million. They also managed to up the bill on Trident subs by an extra £800 million. Of course the protozoan life form Rifkind sent plenty of this business to firms like Tarmac, who finance the Conservatives heavily.

TALKING ABOUT protozoan life-forms, remember all the paeans of praise when top parasite Nixon croaked recently. A quick rehabilitation for a top crook, who bombed Cambodia to smithereens and thus helped Pol Pot come to power; who was an eager lieutenant of witch-hunter McCarthy in the 50s; who authorised burglary and bugging; who vindictively tore up a White House tennis court because Cabinet members wouldn’t back him on Cambodia; who regularly came out with anti-semitic and anti-black remarks; who sent private eyes to Paris to spy on Teddy Kennedy to catch him fornicating — the list is endless. Yet you couldn’t open a newspaper without reading eulogies about him. A good indicator of the morality of the low-life who rule us.

Anarchy in the UK — A look at the British Anarchist Movement

ANARCHISM HAS WEAK roots in Britain, with no strong tradition in the working class. This lack of a base within the class has made it difficult for British Anarchists to achieve their aims and also given British Anarchism its own peculiar character.

Today, most of those in Britain who would call themselves anarchists seem to base their anarchism on a tradition dating back to youthful rebellion in the '60s rather than the tradition of revolution with its roots in the first International Workers' Association of the 19th century.

A strong anti-organisational and anti-theoretical current runs through much of the anarchist movement, which severely hinders effective activity. Lack of theory and class-based analysis means all manner of liberal and leftist ideas can be found under the label of anarchism.

Pacifism is a hardy perennial liable to spring up in times of struggle. The moralistic preaching of those who believe only in non-violent action can often be heard by the careless listener. Obviously, non-violence is often a useful tactic, but it should never be allowed to become a principle. It's going to take a lot more than moral pressure to bring down the ruling class. Those who spout "fluffy" nonsense about the police being "human beings too" and believe that protesters should lie down and form a doormat in front of riot cops can only be a hindrance to the revolutionary movement.

Hobby

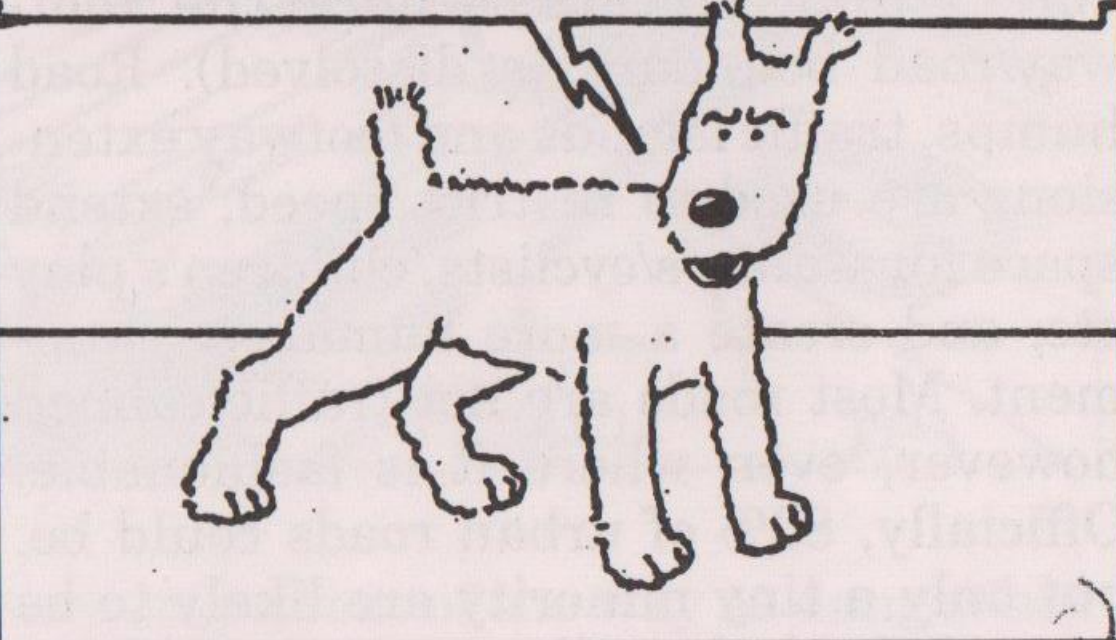
Conversely, militant anti-fascism also has strong anarchist support. Now, whilst beating up fascist boneheads might be a worthwhile hobby, we should never forget just how reactionary popular fronts against fascism can and have been; eg the Popular Front government in Spain destroyed the revolution there long before Franco's fascists could. None of the anti-fascist/racist groups in Britain have moved beyond this leftist ideology.

For other issues of importance to revolutionaries, such as the trade union question and the situation in Ireland, many anarchists seem unwilling to develop a revolutionary critique and are content to tail-end the Leninist left. The historical experience of the workers' councils has also passed many people by.

The phobia of organisation compounds these problems. Most British anarchists don't belong to any formal organisation, local or national. Not belonging to an anarchist organisation hampers people's theoretical development as they have no regular contact with like-minded individuals to discuss current issues with, or to learn from other comrades' past experience.

The lack of organisation also means that when struggles arise ad-hoc networks have to be set up as a reaction to local or world events. Such loose networks do serve a useful purpose but quickly fall apart as struggles end, leaving no long-term benefits. Attempts to

IF WE'RE NOT ASKING FOR THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD, WHAT ARE WE ASKING FOR?



create permanent networks of the various anarchist groups, such as the Class Struggle Anarchist Network, have so far proved unsuccessful. Few people are prepared to make supporting a loose network one of their priorities and instead people direct most of their energy elsewhere.

In terms of activity such as regularly producing papers, attending demonstrations and organising meetings, etc, it is the national organisations which are best at putting the case for anarchism, though some local groups also do very good work. At present there are two national anarchist organisations — aside from the ACF there is the anarcho-syndicalist Solidarity Federation, and there is also the Class

War Federation made up of anarchists, libertarian marxists and others.

Whilst we in the ACF have major political differences with both these organisations, sectarian bickering is a luxury we cannot afford. Another group worthy of mention are the libertarian communists of Subversion. Though they reject both the Marxist and anarchist traditions they are undoubtedly revolutionaries and we continue to work closely with them.

Milieu

On the fringes of the anarchist movement is the ultra-Left "milieu" made up of people who for the most part believe in one of the variants of ultra-left marxism, ie council communism/situationism/autonomism.

Whilst these people don't suffer from the low level of theoretical development endemic in British anarchism, they are even worse at organising for activity, preferring to remain in tiny politically-pure groups. The Brighton-based group Aufheben is attempting to create an alliance of these groups, but so far with little success.

It seems to me that if British anarchism is to grow then anarchists need to take their task more seriously. People should get active in their local group if one exists, or, if not, try to set one up. They should actively develop their theoretical level by reading and discussing about contemporary and historical events. See what the anarchist/libertarian journals have to say on these issues and consider who they agree with most. Serious thought should also be given to joining one of the national organisations. This does not mean abandoning political freedom in favour of stale dogmatism — it's far more likely to mean abandoning idle inactivity in favour of lively ideas and action.

The Friends of Durruti

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.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

TRADITIONALLY, CHRISTMAS BEGINS in Britain in September. We know that the festive season has begun because a new round of Harvey's Bristol Cream sherry advertisements are shown on television. And this year was no exception. Close on the heels of the drinks adverts come those for toys, and when the season is in full swing, we are entertained to the strains of "We Wish You a Merry Xmas" in the promotion of Quality Street chocolates.

This is not the place, obviously, to bemoan the loss of the Christian festival. Insofar as December 25th occurs near the shortest day of the year in terms of daylight, there is plenty of cause to brighten up our lives with some winter festivities. After all, the Christians nicked it from the pagans, who made having a good time a cardinal principle of life. So why shouldn't we Anarchists who are committed to the idea of having one life (ever) have a little pleasure around that time of year too? The problem is that in capitalist Britain the campaign to promote the "feel good factor" is just part of a continual process of propaganda designed to preserve stability, and make lots of money.

Let's take the first bit first. The very certainty that Xmas comes but once a year and has done for about 2,000 years, reinforces the idea that somehow the existing order is the natural order. Church and the State unite to emphasise the unchanging nature of things and with that, the inevitability of class domination.

This is reinforced by emphasising the cosy, warm sense of well-being associated with the nuclear family. The nonsense of the Virgin Birth in which father, mother and baby are united, has been promoted by our rulers in conjunction with the Church for centuries. Though God is the "real" father, it is Joseph who completes the family unit, alongside Mary and Je-



sus. This message has become more urgent in recent years given the virtual collapse of the nuclear family and the rise of voluntary single motherhood.

The idea of the happy family is also pushed every year by the great mother herself, the Queen. This multi-millionaire invades our space every Christmas day, though how many people actually switch off at this point is unknown. Viewing figures are never published. Nevertheless, enough people presumably do watch this annual farce and are comforted by her talk of the great British family. Class divisions and poverty are made to disappear, if only for ten minutes.

Christmas for millions of people is in fact a complete misery. Given the massive promotion through advertisements for gifts of all sorts, the poor are forced into impossible dilemmas. Poor parents, in particular, run up crushing debts in order to try and meet some of the expectations which advertisers stir up in their children. The targeting of children in the pursuit of profit is given legitimacy by the ideological cover previously alluded to. Poor working class families spend the six months following Christmas paying off the inflated prices of presents bought from mail order catalogues. They either go short for half the year, or shift their debts to other areas such as the rent.

Christmas for elderly working class people who have been reduced to destitution, for the unemployed and homeless, is a time of great distress. Charities, collections for programmes like Blue Peter, etc, do nothing to alter this, though they make philanthropy an outlet for guilt...while someone freezes in a ditch. Have a merry Christmas.

Left: Christmas for the homeless.

Jean Vigo — Nought For Conduct!

JEAN VIGO, son of the anarchist Miguel Almereyda (editor of *Le Libertaire*), and of his companion, Emily, herself a militant, was born in poverty in 1905 in Paris. As he grew up, his playground was often the exercise yard of the prison where his father spent many sentences thanks to his revolutionary ideas.

In 1917 Almereyda, now director of the paper *Le Bonnet Rouge* which campaigned against the World War, was arrested on the orders of President Clemenceau and banged up at Fresnes prison. Several days later he was discovered strangled by a shoelace. He was 37 years old. By then he had moved away from anarchism to a belief that all the socialist groups should be united in one organisation. He had also been tainted by allegations of receiving bribes. As the writer and activist Victor Serge noted: "The graph of his destiny had started

from the Paris underworld, had mounted to a climax of revolutionary pugnacity,

and was now tailing off in corruption, among the money-bags".

Jean, the "son of the traitor" passed his childhood in colleges at Nîmes and Millau. The memory of his father, and the long years of boarding school, developed an anger against the system and a wild imagination shot through with irony, expressions of a rage to live. It was in the cinema that he realised this imagination.

His first film of 1929 *A propos de Nice* was very much a social film, contrasting the rich parasites of the Promenade des Anglais and the poor neighbourhoods of old Nice, and with a strong anti-militarist and anti-clerical flavour. At around this time he joined the Association des Ecrivains et des Artistes Revolutionnaires (Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists). His next film *Zéro de Conduite* (Nought for Conduct) gave plenty of room for his savage and anti-authoritarian sense of humour. In this portrayal of



a boarding school and the revolt of the school students with which the film ends, Vigo spares no-one — neither the school functionaries nor the officials, the parents or the children. For the first time on screen children are shown breaking all conventions. Not for them the “innocence” and “purity” of childhood, but unfettered rebellion. This film, with lyrical scenes of revolt, drew the anger of bourgeois society. The film was banned soon after it appeared in August 1933. The “Organised Fathers of The Family” started a massive campaign to ban it, and Vigo was called “anti-French”.

Vigo's next film, *L'Atalante*, developed the other side of his outlook. On one hand the spirit of revolt, the lack of illusions in present society, as well as a certain pessimism, and now to be more fully exposed, Vigo's appreciation of the passing beauties of life and the fleeting joys and happiness in it. In this film, about the motley collection of people living and working on a barge on the Seine, Vigo retains his harsh portrayal of life in present-day society. People are portrayed as behaving mechanically, as in the marriage scene, and the actions of the employers. In one scene, a mob of well-fed bourgeois lynch a starving thief. Here Vigo draws on his acquaintance with the social drawings of pre-World War anarchist illustrators like Steinlen, Grandjouan and Gassier. But this mechanisation of personalities is limited to the scenes on land — the scenes representing society. On board the barge is a microcosm of purity, of happiness and of fraternity. On the barge each works for all and all work for one.

Vigo's development of an optimistic social theme and vision of a future society were to be cut short by his premature death on 5 October 1934 at the age of 29. He died of under-nourishment and overwork, which left him open to a fatal attack of septicaemia. This son of anarchists carried his parents' work on in his own way and he too was to fall victim to a cruel and repressive society.

Vigo's two main films have been recently restored to their former length and have been doing a circuit of the “art house” cinemas. They have been affected by the passage of time and sometimes viewing them is difficult — the feeling of datedness is strong. Nevertheless, it is worth seeing for the best moments. *Zero de Conduite* is being shown at the London Film-makers Coop, 8pm Friday October 21st at 42 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 as part of the 10 Days of Anarchy event. On the bill with it is *If*, directed by the late Lindsay Anderson, and heavily influenced by it. (Interestingly, the script-writer of *If*, David Sherwin, admitted that his great hero was Nestor Makhno, the Ukrainian Anarchist revolutionary.)

DEAR FRIENDS,

Please find enclosed a response to one of your articles which was excellent!

I wholeheartedly agree with the views expressed in issue 34 in the article NATFHE sabotage. It is a disgrace that a trade union is seeking to collaborate in a deterioration of working practices which will lead to a decline in the real quality of further education. They are accomplices to this capitalist government. In covering up the real figures about unemployment the government is persuading young adults to go into FE. They are given fairy tale career guidance eg “take a course and then you will get a job and live happily ever after”. It is not publicised that graduates have the highest rate of unemployment and it is forgotten that many young people no longer want to study. They just want a proper job. Being working class, the young adults are not likely to complain about the real quality of their courses. The reality being that class sizes are being increased — doubled where room space permits. Walls are being demolished to create larger rooms. The actual hours students are able to have contact with lecturers is being reduced. Students are given “self-directed study time”, which means go to the library or go home. The real reason has nothing to do with education, it means the lecturer can teach more groups of larger sizes. If you are on a course you may get to the end of the year without the lecturer knowing your name. The government has pulled a clever three card trick: 1) Conning the youngsters that they are doing something for a career. The government hopes they won't realise that there are no jobs for them at the end of their study. It also reduces the likelihood of subversive activity to undermine the system. 2) It keeps the already-fiddled unemployment figures down and is good for propaganda, eg: “more and more young people are entering FE”. 3) By cutting costs in FE redundancies and increasing staff hours, it saves money. College managements sired with the Thatcher mentality are implementing state policies whilst receiving fat salaries paid for by higher enrolment fees. They regard their staff as “the enemy” and have no regard for the students other than making sure their numbers increase. American-style semester systems, alien to Britain, are being introduced, along with meaningless mission statements and even more meaningless slogans such as “progress to succeed” or “committed to quality”. They are adapting the marketing methods of double-glazing salespeople in their desperation to achieve targets. The real victims are the young people. There are no jobs at the end, grants are slashed when they are half way through

the course. Most have part-time, low-paid jobs to help them through the course. Some are even encouraged to continue studying and to take further courses which lead to greater debts. The prospects for a job are no better. No doubt the state has calculated that it is cheaper to push young adults into FE than pay out social security. They see FE as a pre-dole creche, custodial training and educational conscription. Many thanks and best wishes,

G.H. (Canterbury)

DEAR ACF,

I refer to your article “The Mythology of Nationalism” in the April/June issue of *Organise!*. I found it interesting to be reminded of the various invasions of Ireland in the past, by the Fírlbolg, Picts, Cruthins, Celts, etc. I also agree that nationalism is pro-capitalist. However, a few points made towards the end of the article I strongly disagreed with. Firstly, despite the fact that Ireland has been invaded by many different tribes, this is completely irrelevant to the war in the six counties. All of Europe has had various tribes wandering around raping and pillaging in the distant past, but this does not mean that they have soldiers on the streets today. The one invasion that is relevant is the British invasion. That is because the British state still occupies the six counties in the north of Ireland. The six counties, like Hong Kong and the Falklands, is still a colony of Britain. It is claimed in the article that the war in the six counties is not a colonial war. It could not be anything else but that. On one side you have the nationalists fighting to end the occupation of their country by a foreign power. On the other side you have foreign rulers controlling violent oppression by an army, and an armed and politically-motivated police force operating alongside death squads who eliminate those who oppose them. What could more typically be a colonial war than that? It is extremely important for anarchists in Britain to recognise the existence of British imperialism and to fight against it. The British state is able to do things that most capitalist states would not be able to do in their wildest dreams. Club Britain is one of the most powerful states in the world. It is in the G7 and the security council of the UN. Not only does it directly occupy its own colonies, but it is able to intervene militarily along with the other imperialist powers in “independent” countries throughout the world. The British state, when helping the USA, was able to bomb Libya with impunity. It took part in the Gulf War and killed 200,000 civilians and conscripts who had already surrendered. It, with the UN security council, still operates an embargo, even denying medical aid which is killing the poor of Iraq in their thousands. It

is able to send the SAS to train Pol Pot and arm him with mines in Cambodia, and supply the Indonesian state with warplanes so they could slaughter the people of East Timor. Its army operates throughout the world, suppressing whole nations of people in the name of the national interest, which means higher profits for the British ruling class. Apart from military intervention, Britain along with fellow imperialists: USA, Japan, China, Russia, France and Germany is able to exploit economically the rest of the world, using various institutions such as the World Bank and IMF and trading treaties such as GATT. The British ruling class is able to assert its own will on countries throughout the world. The media and politicians are always claiming that it is in the interests of the British working class to support global domination and the role of “world policeman”. We must expose that lie. We must be clear that Britain has no right to impose its will on other countries, and that it is not in the interests of the British workers to support the oppression of other workers. As far as the six counties go, anarchists should be fighting for the uniting of Catholic and Protestant workers. We should be arguing for the end to the partition of Ireland because it divides the working class of Ireland and we should be fighting for an Anarchist Republic. But most importantly whenever Northern Ireland is brought up we should make it clear that the reason for the problems of the North is because of British Imperialism, and the only solution can start with their withdrawal.

yours for anarchism
A.B. (London N17)

EDS. REPLY: History moves very fast, and we feel the British State is ready to jettison the six counties (see our article elsewhere) rather than maintain its costly military occupation. Of course we are in favour of British military withdrawal, we always have been, but we feel that calling for an end to partition must be unambiguous. Reunification with the South, still completely incorporated within world capitalism, would not in itself be an advance. Yes, unity between Catholic and Protestant workers, a very difficult task, must be fought for, and must be on the basis of opposition to all capitalist states, even if they drape themselves in green and summon up the mystical Republic.

Red, black and blue — anarchy and sexual liberation.

2-6pm Sunday 23rd October
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Public meeting convened by Lesbian and Gay Freedom Movement.

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 December features and reviews, and 10th December for letters and news.

Coming in the next issue: a debate on pornography; Cuba — last great white hope of the leftists; Labour — an analysis of the Blair-Prescott leadership and how the “revolutionary” left still support this capitalist party. 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. If you know of any bookshop or newsagent in your area which will take *Organise!*, why not make sure they get some?

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! Remember, in December many people buy presents. Why not give a friend or relative a sub to *Organise!*

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.

Anarchist Communist Federation

THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. We have members and groups throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Please write to the national address if you want to be put in contact.

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

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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.

Press Fund

WE ARE MAINTAINING *Organise!* at 20 pages since the last issue, as decided at our last National Conference, to provide analysis of events on a more comprehensive level. But to continue this we need your help!

Conference also decided to move towards a bi-monthly appearance of *Organise!* To help all this come about we launched a Press Appeal for £2000 in the last issue. Remember, you can help *Organise!* grow in number of pages and in frequency of appear-

ance. This is vital at a time when there is increasing interest in revolutionary anarchist ideas. Any donation, no matter how small will be gratefully received. Please send POs, IMOs, cheques, stamps etc to the London address. You can even send us a standing order to our account.

Write to the London address for more details. Thanks to all who have contributed so far. £75 London WC1; £100 East London; £80 Sheffield; £20 Northumberland; £2 Bognor Regis; £4 Chatham.

Organise! Back Issues

BACK ISSUES of *Organise!* (from issues 19-35) are still available from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virus*. They cost 20p each plus SAE:

- Issue 25: SOLD OUT!
- Issue 26: Women and Revolution; Direct Action
- Issue 27: LA Riots; Yugoslavia; Malcolm X
- Issue 28: Recession; Detective Fiction
- Issue 29: Debate on the Unions; Italian workers organise
- 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; Bad Attitude; Battle of Wanstead
- Issue 34: Zapata; Artillery Mansions; Nationalism
- Issue 35: Rwanda; Italy; Carmageddon; Poetry and Revolution.

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

Red Rambles

— A programme of free guided walks for Greens, Socialists, Libertarians and Anarchists.

Sunday 6th November: Swithland and environs, Leicestershire. Meet 11am at Griffins Head Pub, Swithland (sw of Quorndon, exit junction 23 M1 and A6 from Loughborough).

Sunday 4th December: Blackbrook and environs, Belper. Meet 11am at Long Walls Lane on Belper to Ashbourne. Phone 0773 827513 for info.

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.