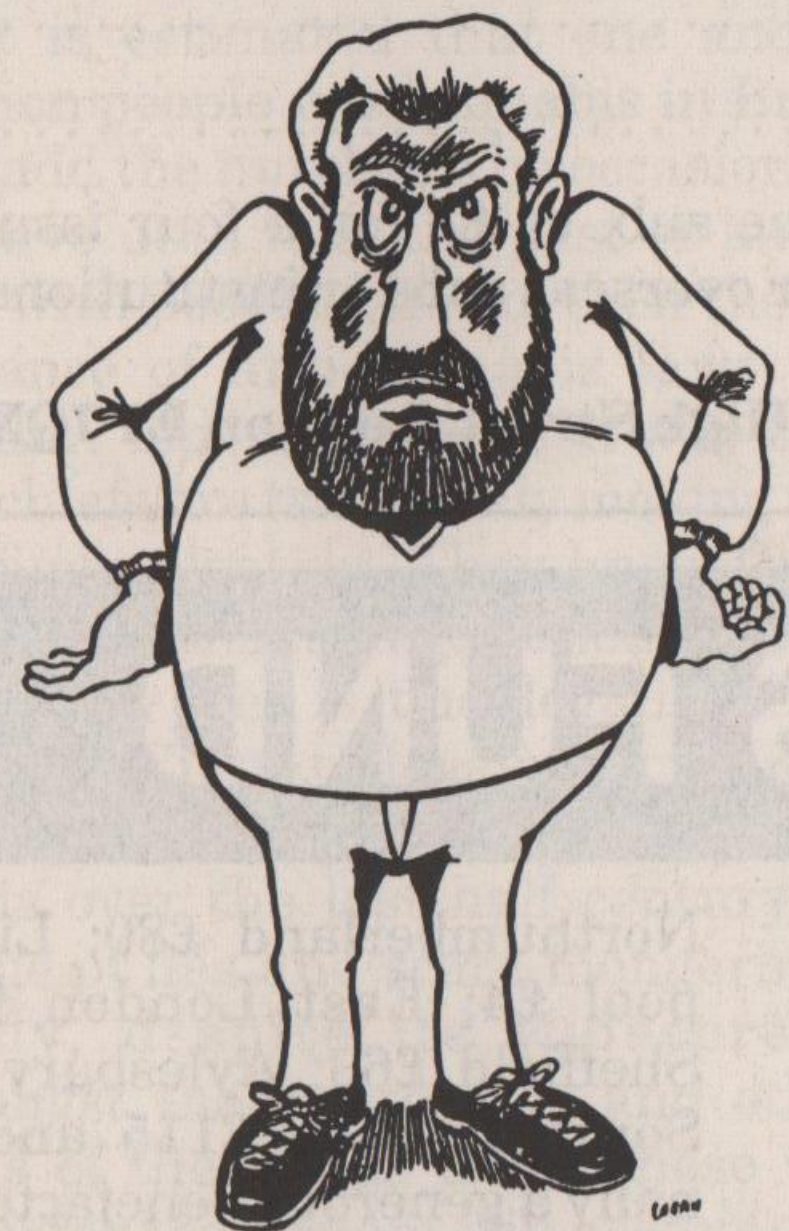


HUMAN NATURE



THE QUESTION OF human nature is a fundamental starting point of any political and social philosophy. The major historic political philosophers such as Hobbes and Rousseau had very definite views on the subject, that shaped the nature of their proposed ideal societies.

Generally speaking, political standpoints which have a 'pessimistic' view of human nature are on the right of capitalism. 'Pessimism' in this context means that human beings (or at least the masses) are seen as morally weak, corruptible, greedy and deserving of leadership. Societies, seen from this approach, should be constructed on a hierarchical basis, with the weak masses being controlled by an enlightened, or otherwise superior, elite or ruling class. Fascism and conservatism share the view that leadership, the strong state to enforce the leadership, and economic inequality, are desirable, being in accordance with the reality of human nature.

Propaganda

It must be admitted that in British society as a whole, and indeed in many others, many working people share a pessimistic approach, by and large. Decades of propaganda have been swallowed whole through the schools and the media, and the need for social inequality and the impossibility of an egalitarian society are generally accepted. Human nature, we are assured, makes a just and equal society an impossible utopian dream.

Anarchist communism as a political doctrine involves an 'optimistic' view of human nature, whilst taking a very critical (some would say cynical) view of the realities of present-day social and political organisations involved within the capitalist system. We obviously reject the pessimism of the right, which we are convinced is nothing more than a justifica-

tion of exploitation of most of humankind. How can such an optimistic approach to human nature be justified on the part of anarchist communists?

Firstly, we look to anthropology to show that human societies have been and are often organised on communistic lines. Here, Harold Barclay's *People Without Government* and Pierre Clastre's *Society Against the State* contain numerous examples of peoples living without classes or the State perfectly happily. Archaeology tells us that the State and economic classes only emerged in a number of places about 5,000 years ago (Iraq, Egypt etc) and that the rest of us coped without the State for a lot longer. The reasons why the State and classes did emerge are controversial issues, but the truth is that humans lived in classless societies for tens of thousands of years. If human nature was selfish, individualistic, greedy, mean etc, such societies could never have existed, never mind surviving for millennia.

Impossible

Now, it is impossible to 'prove' the anarchist communist case that people are basically cooperative and social in their approach to life. After all, there are daily examples of individuals acting in selfish and uncaring ways. Our reply to this is that the development of hierarchy, social classes, the State and capitalism have all taken their toll and have distorted our fundamental human natures. Human beings, unlike all other living creatures, have the capacity to act consciously against their natures (deliberately abstaining from food or sex, for example) and equally are highly flexible in their response to 'abnormal' social conditions which typify everyday life. What is remarkable is that given the fundamentally anti-human nature of capitalist society, so many people still retain any sense of cooperativeness, solidarity and caring approaches to life.

People also need security in their everyday lives within the context of community solidarity and cohesiveness. In inter-war Germany, conditions were so desperate that millions of people opted for the illusory sense of security that fascism offered, rather than bourgeois democracy (for an interesting discussion of this see Erich Fromm's *Fear of Freedom*). Today, the desperate need for security and community induces people to join all sorts of religious cults. The rise of alternative religions in the West is directly attributable to the essentially anti-human qualities of capitalism.

Along with the basic needs of community and security (both economic and psy-

chological) humans must have a significant degree of personal autonomy, or if you like, freedom, if they are to develop according to their natures. Capitalist societies offer the illusion of freedom whilst enslaving millions in factories, shops, offices and the home. The political and legal systems fix the limits of freedom ever more narrowly, distorting and deforming in all sorts of ways the daily lives of working people. Exploitation and domination by capitalism has created an army of confused and lost people, unable to relate with others on a meaningful level.

Conformity

Children are moulded to conform to a sexual division of labour. Boys are cajoled into playing active, aggressive and masculine roles. Their sensitivities must be suppressed — "Big boys don't cry" — and they are conditioned to deny themselves. Girls in contrast are brought up to be passive and dependent, with the ultimate aim of motherhood, to achieve completeness as a person. Socialisation of this sort begins at birth. 'Masculine' and 'feminine' behaviour is not natural, but has to be learned through a long, and often painful, process. No wonder that so many people are fucked up, given that the process is imposed on all, regardless of their sensitivities.

Only anarchist communism allows for the full development of human beings. alone bases its approach upon the base of community, solidarity, personal autonomy and collective security within a non exploitative, classless society. Though human nature is necessarily very complex with the interplay of various desires and needs, only in the anarchist communist society of the future can it be revealed in all its fullness. Creativity, love, belonging and freedom are mutilated qualities in today's world. In the society of the future, they will be set free.



ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

60p
Jan-Mar
1995
Issue 37

PORNOGRAPHY EXPOSED!
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Magazine
of the
Anarchist
Communist
Federation

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Aims and principles

1. The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists.

We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

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

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

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

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

5. As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment. 6. It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without the use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7. Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for

the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow. Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc).

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

8. Genuine liberation can only

come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution.

In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation.

We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method.

We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise ourselves on a federative basis.

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

Editorial

A new year comes and we seem no nearer to revolutionary change.

The war continues in ex-Yugoslavia, and now Russia re-asserts its dominance over the regions it controls with its attack on Chechnya. Yeltsin and his followers intend to show that no region can secede from Russia without the full military might of the regime being unleashed on them. This includes the usual horrors of massive bombardments that claim the lives of both combatants and civilians. Once again the State unleashes its terror. There is no difference between this massacre and that unleashed by the Allied Powers in the Gulf. Very little pressure is being put on the Yeltsin regime by the West in this latest bloodletting. The Western

powers of the United States and Britain and France-Germany hope to do a bit of horse-trading over the Balkans. If Russia is allowed to get away with this attack, the Western powers hope that they can persuade Russia to exert pressure on its ally Serbia to be more pliable in the carving-up of ex-Yugoslavia.

The war in Chechnya is a war between two different sets of gangsters. The Chechen Mafia are behind the regime there. One cannot forget the mass deportations to Central Asia of half a million Chechens under Stalin which ultimately was a major factor in the development of the Chechen gangs. This does not excuse the

Chechen regime, which seeks to establish its own fief in opposition to the Russian State gangsters.

Yeltsin hopes by his actions to placate nationalist elements in both the military and in politics, and to keep the Russian Federation together. This attempt is doomed to failure and the break-up of the vast empire developed under the Tsars and perpetuated under the Bolsheviks looks set to be coming to an end.

Destruction

The wars continue, famine rages in the countries of Africa and Asia, and the environmental havoc leading to desertification and mass destruction of forests and pollution of the atmosphere, land and seas carries on apace. In the West, unemployment increases by leaps and bounds. Whole areas are devastated by lay-offs and redundancies, whilst public transport systems are run down. Cynicism with the whole

political system increases phenomenally, along with a feeling of apathy, a feeling that nothing can change.

And yet, all around the world are small groups of people who think that things can change. Revolutionary movements can come like a thief in the night, and surprise us all. We refuse to be discouraged. We feel that social change can come, has to come, if we are to survive on this planet. We work towards the day when new movements in opposition to this decaying system emerge, as emerge they will. Already, more and more people in this country are seeing that direct action is the way forward, even though the cult of non-violence is often bound up with this. But this will be swept aside with the radicalisation of movements.

This government is almost certainly in its last days, and no future Labour administration will sabotage the growing social discontent for ever.

Labour Pains

THE TORIES HAVE LURCHED from crisis to crisis, from scandal to scandal, like an old prizefighter up against the ropes, staggering under a rain of blows. In this situation the Labour Party, under the leadership of Tony Blair, is well ahead in the opinion polls and looks set to become the next government.

The Tory administration is in tatters and many of its backers in the ruling class are looking for others to help administer the system. They know that the Tories are now deeply unpopular and that their plans to, for example, introduce VAT on fuel, would have faced fierce resistance. They are looking around for a safer bet, a party and leadership that can administer the attacks on the working class that the bosses know are necessary for their own welfare. It is still necessary to keep wages down, to dismantle large sections of the welfare state and to maintain a large pool of unemployed.

Sections of the boss class would prefer a joint Labour-Liberal Democrat government, and in fact this has been touted in the press. Even better, they would prefer a government of National Unity, where sections of the Tory wets could be drawn in.

This is why, for a while, Paddy Ashdown was receiving extensive coverage in the media and was given the big build-up. Now, however, the hopes of the Liberal Democrats are waning, as Labour under Blair is seen to be offering a much more inviting alternative.

Capitalist support

The old Labourites who defected to the SDP: Rodgers, Williams and Jenkins, are now actively supporting the option of Blair as the next Prime Minister. Behind them is the millionaire David Sainsbury, who financed the SDP split and donated £5,000 to the Blair leadership campaign. Other capitalists like Marks and Spencer are also contemplating giving financial assistance to Labour. This is coupled with the withdrawal of Tory funding by other capitalist outfits.

There are favourable

noises in the media as well. The Murdoch-owned papers, especially *The Sun*, are giving hints that they will back Blair. Even the glossy magazine favoured by the upper classes, *Harpers and Queen*, noted that it was now perfectly OK to vote Labour.

Safe horse

Yes, the boss class has nothing to fear from this public-school-educated barrister. All the signals he is giving are designed to demonstrate that he is a safe horse to back. Witness his decision to send his children to grant-assisted schools.

Blair is carrying on the work of Neil Kinnock and John Smith in transforming the Labour Party from a party that represented old-style social-democracy (and always on the right wing of world social-democracy) and a political vehicle for the trade unions, to a party more akin to the Democrats in the USA. There are many pitfalls here, as the Labour Party is still pay-rolled by the union barons, and much of the membership at branch level still believes in the old Labour beliefs and norms. This conflict is opening up rifts between the union bosses, some of whom support the ideas of the 'modernisers'.

Part of the push to change Labour is seen in Blair's seven-page pamphlet *Socialism*. He wishes to demonstrate both that he is no danger to the system and also that the concept of socialism can be seen as one based purely on ethics and that it can be re-employed as a harmless catchphrase, and keep the party faithful happy at the same time. In the pamphlet, he argues that socialism is not connected to the economy, that class is no longer useful as a term, and that any lip-service to defence of the working class

should be replaced by phrases like 'national renewal' and a 'national crusade'. The word 'opportunity', one of the new ploys to market capitalism, should be substituted for 'equality'.

In his talk of 'one nation', Blair follows in the tradition of Thatcher, who tried to eradicate any notion of class, and Major, with his 'classless society'. The boss class has always been keen on hiding the truth about society, that it is divided into an exploiting and dominating class, and a class of those who are exploited and dominated. Blair is doing a good job in carrying on this tradition.



The Labour Party is also showing how safe it is by messages sent out through its Social Justice Commission. This endorsed the so-called reforms that the Conservatives were carrying through in unemployment benefit and social security payments, implying that if Labour came to power it would scrap universal child benefit. The ruling class can sleep sound, knowing that the health service that was 'opened up to the market', resulting in the growth of thousands of immensely well-paid hardmen administrators and the further run-down of services will not be changed under Labour.

On other important issues

Labour is seen as keen on outdoing the Conservatives. Take the Labour stance on law and order for example. Here Labour is attempting to show that it can rule Britain more efficiently than the Conservatives, that it is the real friend of the police, that it can direct the strong state more effectively.

In a policy paper, *Getting to Grips on Youth Crime*, Blair called for custodial sentences for under-16s, and 'secure places' to lock them up. He demanded greater stop and search powers for the police, and to his satisfaction this was included by Home Secretary Michael Howard in the

Criminal Justice Act. During the leadership campaign he said that there was "no bigger problem in the country than crime and lawlessness" — forgetting all about unemployment and the root cause of all social problems, capitalism itself.

Further outlining Labour policy on law and order, Blair stated in a speech that he would be "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime". This would mean more repressive police actions, what Blair calls "robust enforcement methods"; more people sent to prison for longer. He recommends greater State surveillance, especially cameras in every shopping centre.

He is an enthusiast of 'anti-truancy schemes', and training and work programmes for the young unemployed. This is a continuation of the Tory fake schemes that hide unemployment, and take people off the unemployment register to pay them a pittance.

The key note in the speech however, was the call for 'strong community policing'. This was developed by the State as an idea after the 1981 Brixton riots. It involved the pushing of neighbourhood watch schemes that would foster cooperation between the police and the 'public'. This was coupled with the use of greater force by the police. Alongside this, his trusty lieutenants Prescott and Cook make a speciality of hounding the Conservatives because they are not tough enough on prisoners and prisons are not secure enough.

Blair knows that he needs the support of the State if Labour is to come to power again. He knows that if he is elected it will be in a situation of continuing mass unemployment and increasing poverty. He will need increasing police powers as he attempts to carry on the work already put into operation by the Conservatives, the attacks on living standards, wages, and benefits against which many may decide to act.

But don't get us wrong. Blair and his cronies represent a shift in Labour policies towards US-Democrat-style politics. But the old style Labour Party was no friend of the working class. It pioneered anti-immigrant and anti-working class policies, pay freezes and austerity programmes, and under Callaghan started implementing monetarist policies before Thatcher was elected. It has consistently used the police and Army to crush strikes. It is there to defuse working class struggle.

Blair is also attempting to outdo the Tories in his attacks on single parents. He said that it was "good common sense" that children had a "stable family environment with their parents". He thus publicly slapped the faces of thousands of single parents. He pledged to make sure that children would be taught 'good parenting' in school. So the classic, heterosexual nu-

clear family unit is to be pushed. The Tories have already targeted single parents as one of their scapegoats. Labour looks set to continue this witchhunt.

Foot in it

Despite this, the Left continues to call for a vote for Labour. Take the Socialist Workers' Party for example. First of all it backed Prescott in the leadership contest, then decided it was Prescott who saved John Smith by supporting his plans to weaken links with the unions.

Leading SWP member Paul Foot, writing in the *New Statesman* last July said, "A powerful campaign based on restoring to the people the wealth swiped from them by the greedy minority, and taking back into public hands the decisions now made by free-loaders on the utility boards could restore to Labour the self-respect and confidence so necessary for electoral victory". Labour is unable to do this and Foot is unable to see that. Even if it were possible, it is not the place of so-called revolutionaries to advocate such a course. Foot and his fellow party members, and like-minded outfits like Militant, Socialist Organiser and countless other Trot outfits as well as the remnants of the Stalinist parties, continue to foster illusions in Labour, continue to believe that nationalisation, that is, State ownership, equals ownership by the working class. Those who work in the nationalised industries know whether or not this statement is true.

The Left, no matter how revolutionary its rhetoric, and no matter how much it de-

nounces Labour 'betrayals' remains firmly tied to the politics of Labourism. The Socialist Workers Party could be described as the external wing of Labour, with its unswerving call for a vote for Labour, coupled with its calls to make the TUC and the union leaders fight. Despite dissatisfaction in the ranks, among those who see that a vote for Labour is ludicrous, the SWP will continue to defend Labourism.

The likelihood of grassroots Labour members breaking with Labourism because they are sickened by the turn of the Party remains very slim. They are drenched in cynicism and disillusion or have adapted to the changes. The Labour Left, still represented by people like Benn and Peter Hain, will remain in the Party and will stop any split with Labourism by continuing to foster the illusion a) that Labour genuinely represents the interests of working people despite everything and b) that the Party can be turned to 'socialist' policies. They are terrified that the attempts by the modernisers to win the next election might misfire and that they might lose the support of thousands upon thousands of working class voters.

As Hain said in the Stalinist daily, *Morning Star* (28 September 1993): "We cannot afford to have a political underclass totally alienated from the political system."

We anarchist communists for our part work towards the destruction of the Labour Party, which acts as a brake to independent working class struggle. But a turn from Labour if it took place without the development of a strong and confident mass move-

Friends and Neighbours

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

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

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

ment in the workplaces, on the streets and estates, would be of little value. Groups like the British National Party would fill this vacuum unless there were a credible revolutionary alternative. We have the immense task of assisting in the creation of this alternative. Our numbers are small at present, but we will not be discouraged. Unflinching, dogged and tireless work is necessary in the years ahead in developing our practice and theory. We hope that you, dear reader, will come forward to help us in the fight.

We've got hold of a few copies of our out-of-print pamphlet *The Myth of Labour's Socialism*, which analyses Labourism and gives an account of Labour's anti-working class practices in office. It's 60p plus postage — but hurry, because there are only three copies!

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

Our last batch of 14,000 stickers has sold out, with the exception of the ecology stickers, bundles of which can be obtained from the London address, if you enclose a donation. We will be printing a new series of stickers shortly. Watch this space!



Poverty in Britain increases

RECENT REPORTS BY different groups and newspapers show a dramatic increase in poverty in Britain in the last 15 years from 1979-1994.

The poor now represent one in four of the population in Europe and 25% in the UK according to the European Commission's definition of poverty, which estimates poverty from an income after deduction of housing costs of less than half the national average. The Low Pay Unit's analysis of households below the average income for the period 1979-1991 estimates an increase from five million poor in 1979 to 13.5 million now. The gap between rich and poor has widened massively in 15 years, with the poorest tenth of the population — three million people — having a drop of 17% in their living standards. For the average pay packet this is a drop of about £30 per week in income.

Infant mortality rates also show a widening gap between rich and poor, the lowest figure being 3.9% in Northallerton District, compared to a high of 12.9% in East Birmingham. Another big indicator of poverty is the rise in TB (tuberculosis) the killer disease which had been in decline since the '50s. In the last three years cases have risen

from 5,500 to 6,000. Tower Hamlets is the worst affected area in Britain, and cases there have risen by 40% in five years, with 50 in every 100,000 now infected — ten times the national average!

Tower Hamlets also has more households with more than 1.5 people per room than any other London borough. In addition, 50% of households there have an income of less than £6,500 and a third less than £4,500 per year. From a workforce of an estimated 25 million, nearly half are estimated to be in low-paid jobs.

The British ruling class has gone on the offensive against the working class since the defeats of the '70s. This has been partly achieved by changes in the tax system which have benefited the rich and taxed the poor more. Benefits have been slashed in relation to inflation.

Things are unlikely to get better with high unemployment likely to remain a permanent feature of capitalism. With real figures of at least four million unemployed, wages are kept low and the boss class has a permanent

pool of labour which it can use as a threat to those in work who dare to ask for better wages and conditions.

We need to build unity between those in work and those unemployed, indeed between all sections of the working class. The attacks on living

standards have to be resisted so that we can inevitably go on the offensive to smash this corrupt and rotting system and build a new society where everyone gets what they need and not just a few who satisfy their endless greed at the expense of the majority.



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 new, revised edition of our very popular pamphlet. Describes the basic ideas of anarchist communism in easy-to-read form. 60p & SAE.

***Making Progress*.** Out of print.

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

***Role of the Revolutionary Organisation*.** Anarchist communists reject the Leninist model of a 'vanguard' party as counter-revolutionary. What then is the role of a revolutionary organisation? This pamphlet sets out to explain. All libertarian revolutionaries should read this fundamental text. 60p & SAE.

***Basic Bakunin*,** A revised edition of our very popular pamphlet. 60p & SAE.

COMING SOON! *Manifesto for the Millenium* and a pamphlet on ecology.

The Myth of Labour's Socialism is now out of print.



STATE SURVEILLANCE

HAVE YOU EVER thought there's someone watching you. Just because you're paranoid it doesn't mean they're not out to get you. We live in a society which is increasing the ways and means it keeps tabs on us in every aspect of our lives.

The growth of information technology enables employees, schools, social security, police, local and central government and every other euphemism for the bosses to keep a vast range of 'facts' about ordinary people. 'Facts' which cannot be checked because of the obstruction of the bureaucracy which obtains them even in the unlikely event of your becoming aware of the record's existence. "Knowledge is power" the old saying goes and even Lord Acton, someone from a position of privilege in society, admitted power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

The latest 'breakthrough' in this accumulation of intrusion is the surveillance camera. In recent years, the world in which we live has come under the all-seeing eye. The centres of large towns abound with strategically-placed monitors peering down on us. Shop cameras are so universal as to be passed unnoticed in an instant. Railway platforms are surveyed by the latest in high-tec.

All this supposedly for the comfort and safety of the public. It is time to ask who benefits from this craze for surveillance.

Who guards the guards?

At every point we are told that the camera protects us, the ordinary citizens.

The thrifty shopkeeper's livelihood is guarded against 'thieves'. The lone woman on the platform is protected from her would-be assailant. The smooth flow of traffic in cities is ensured and accidents avoided. The careless motorist is deterred from speeding.

The real question is what has caused the problems we are to be protected from



and who is doing the 'protecting'. They are of course one and the same, a small minority, not of lawbreakers but lawmakers, who govern and own our society. Having cast the majority, whose work has made them rich, into the mire of daily grind or the absolute poverty of unemployment, the Real Scroungers offer false

protections against the ills they have made, to increase their control over the mass of ordinary people lest they try to reclaim their own.

Voyeurs of ourselves

These points may seem trite and obvious to readers of this article but camera surveillance as a new block in the wall that separates the ruling class from its negation is another cunning step on a long road. The cops make out that they benefit the working class person if they are robbed on the street. That, of course, is not the real reason for the police force, which is to protect ruling class property and against strikes and insurrections. When there is confrontation between the police and the working class, as in riots, evictions, harassment on the street, you can see clearly who your opponent is.

The camera observes and records. It marks the next step beyond the soft cops, the social workers and Labour Party (nice Mr Blair will kiss capitalism better). It engenders passivity among those under its own gaze. Why fight back against racists and fascists

on the street, they'll be captured on camera. Why stop someone being mugged, the video tape is in its heaven and like God it will bring the iniquitous to judgement in the hereafter. The camera divides us from one another. We can't fight back against State repression because we'll be captured on film. As individuals gazing into our reflections on the screen we have no response. A TV has been placed in the streets which we can watch, but we cannot change the channel let alone make the programmes.

Jeremy Beadle

The missing link is organisation. Every new technological discovery from the wheel to the internet can be used for the perpetuation and maintenance of hierarchical rule and oppression, or to facilitate a community of equals enjoying the fruits of life. It is not the thing itself we fight against, but its use. In the hands of an organised working class fighting for its liberation it will not be us powerlessly watching them watch us, but our former bosses trembling as they watch us watching them watch us make the social revolution that destroys them.

The Friends of Durruti

New pamphlet!

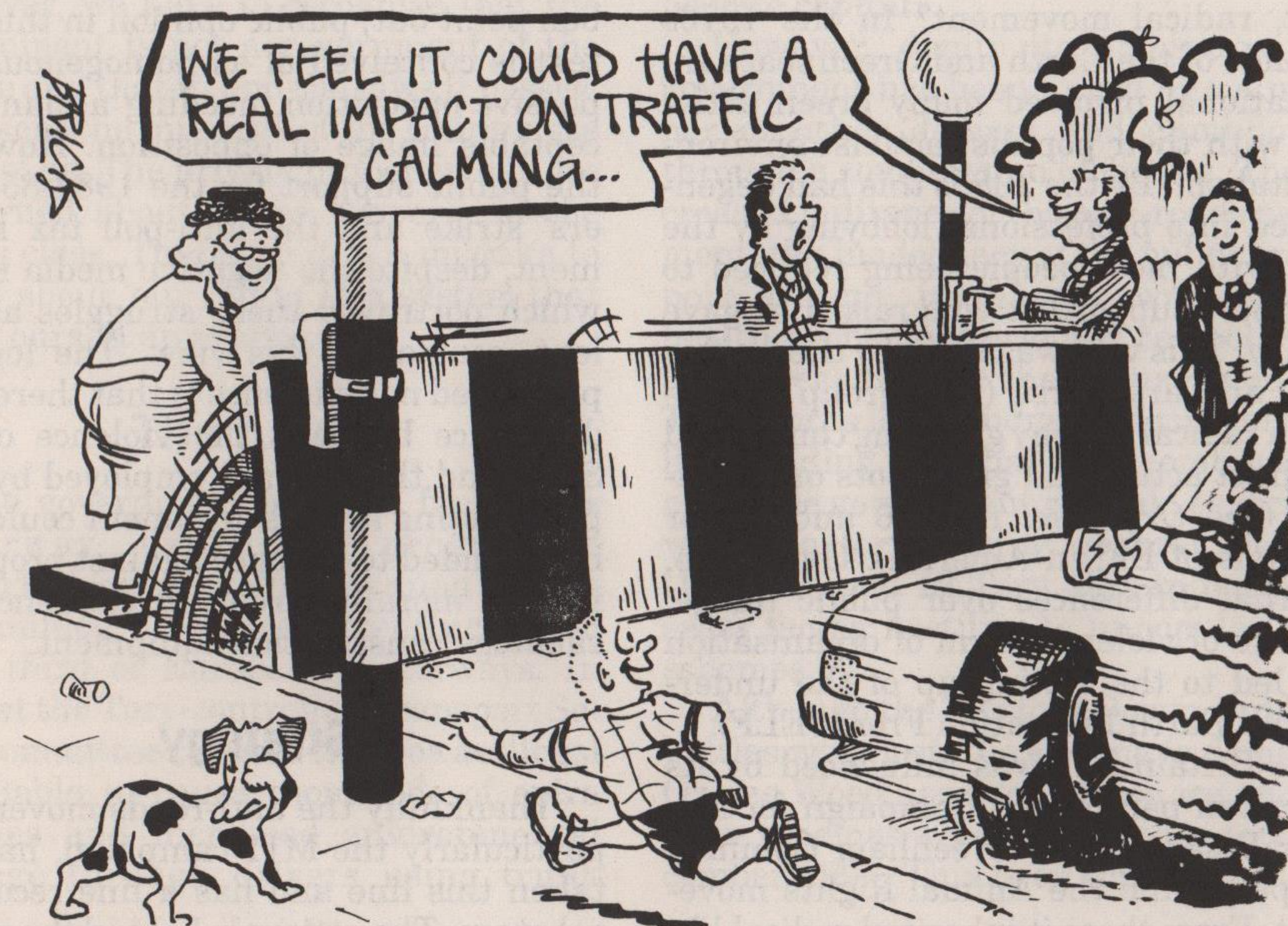
LONDON ACF have produced a pamphlet on the Friends of Durruti, a much misunderstood group that attempted to defend and extend the Spanish Revolution of 1936. In their criticisms of the leadership of the anarcho-sindicalist unions they represented an important moment in anarchist history. Included are 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 are available from ACF (London), c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 at 75p including postage.

A ROAD TOO FAR

We conclude our series on traffic by looking at green cars, public transport, the anti-roads movement and transport in a future society.



Green cars

THERE IS NO SUCH THING as a clean car. Vehicles based on an internal combustion engine inevitably emit pollutants. This puts the achievement of lead-free petrol in perspective, as does the length of time it took to secure such a limited, non-car-threatening objective.

Traffic fumes are a major contributor to the greenhouse gases which produce global warming. Cars and light vans produce 18% of global carbon dioxide emissions (with more produced by their manufacture), nitrous oxide (which contributes to surface and tropospheric ozone) and carbon monoxide. A proportion of nitrogen oxides turn to nitric acid and fall as acid rain. They react with other chemicals in sunlight to form petrochemical smogs containing ozone which destroys millions of dollars of crops in America and elsewhere. The nitrogen oxides in smog irritate the mucous membranes in the nose, with serious adverse effects on health, particularly for people with respiratory problems. Benzene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are implicated in causing cancer.

Catalytic converters are supposed to reduce emissions of these dangerous pollutants. However, converters don't work when cold and therefore have no effect on the start of the journey when most pollut-

vehicles it needs an expensive fuel which usually produces carbon dioxide in its generation. Alternative sources of electricity are expensive. Super 'technical fixes' such as hydrogen fuel cells and cold fusion are very expensive and distant prospects. If and when they are introduced they will displace existing car technologies to the de-developed world, as has happened with tobacco.

Even if a genuine green car is developed, it doesn't tackle the many other adverse effects of cars, such as the waste of space and resources, the danger element and the effects on street life and community.

Public transport

CARS CANNOT BE UNIVERSAL. Even putting aside the large-scale social effects of isolation, ill-health, environmental damage and injury and death, there is insufficient space for the roads and parking that widespread car ownership would entail. We already have extensive problems with cars, despite 35% of the population not even having a car for reasons of age, disability or lack of money.

The erosion of public transport in Britain (and elsewhere) is a basic consequence of mass car use. In the 1960s and 1970s, one-third of the 17,000 miles of railtrack were axed and 40% of the stations were closed. Mass car use sabotages



public transport through the allocation of funding, competition for space and loss of ideological support. The passenger revenue from buses in 1988 was £2.58 billion and that from trains was £2.19 billion. Of that, only 20% was government subsidy. Government subsidies for public transport have been cut back more and more, resulting in fewer staff and less spent on new equipment. This has serious implications for safety. For example, BR has rejected the ATP automatic signalling system that was promised after the Clapham rail disaster.

Other effects include older stock (less efficient, more dangerous), fewer routes, and higher fares. All of these factors (together with the heavy road bias of the Department of Transport) conspire to cause fewer passengers for a progressively worse service, thereby justifying further cuts in government subsidies and higher fares, causing a vicious downward spiral. Privatisation will mean more of the same. The Budget announced a £300 million pound cut in the rail subsidy for 1995 with a further £235 million cut in 1996. Hundreds of workers are losing their jobs and many more are threatened with privatisation, profitability will be the sole consideration, despite government assurances to the contrary, and up to half the rail network could disappear.

Cars compete with buses for space and slow them down. They are far more wasteful of space than buses, tubes and trains. One bus or coach carries on average the passenger equivalent of 22 cars, taking up a seventh of the space. Of people going to work in central London by road, between 50-100% more go by car than by bus: 130,000 cars rather than 3000 buses. Mass car use has impeded the possibility of an adequate public transport system. Consequently, there is a lack of imagination about what such a system could be. Ideas for improvements

could include: locating more stops near homes, making the system cleaner, more regular and safer and providing greater access for people with disabilities and children.

Anti-roads movement

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS of the current, radical movement? In the 1970s Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace International involved many green activists with their populist-activist environmentalism. By the 1980s this had degenerated into professional lobbying by the few, with most people being reduced to members/supporters who raised or gave money. This void was filled by the setting up of an Earth First! (EF!) group in Britain: a radical ecology grouping committed to direct action and grassroots organisation (see *Organise!* nos. 26 and 28 for analysis of EF! in America). Over here, internal differences over public image, the use of violence, form of organisation etc, led to the setting up of the underground Earth Liberation Front (ELF).

In Britain EF! was influenced by its American parent, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament/Greenham Common campaign and the Animal Rights movement. From these it inherited radical liberalism and militant moralism as well as the tactics of collective direct action, lobbying/publicity stunts and non-violent civil disobedience.

The movement has adopted non-violence as a principle (rather than as a tactic). The justification is that it gives a good media image, thus winning over public opinion and creating a moral stance in contrast to the materialist im-

morality of the roadbuilders. The media is not neutral, however, but is part of the State, largely owned by millionaire (or billionaire) capitalists such as Murdoch, the late unlamented Maxwell, Conrad Black etc. It defines the terms of political debate (eg security forces, terrorists, peace-keeping forces, deserving poor, scroungers etc) and peddles the line of the State. When it takes another line, this usually reflects divisions within the ruling class over strategy eg Murdoch's recent conversion to Blair's Labour Party after years of Labour bashing. As Aufheben point out, public opinion in this context is conceived of as homogenous and passive opposition, needing a bland, acceptable image of opposition. However, the public support for the 1984-85 miners' strike and the anti-poll tax movement, despite the negative media image which portrayed these struggles as violent, contradict this view. The logic of principled non-violence is that there is no difference between the violence of the State and the violence employed by people resisting it. This argument could also be extended to violence against property, ie it is morally wrong to cut fences or sabotage construction equipment.

Strategy

Thankfully the anti-roads movement, particularly the M11 campaign, has not taken this line and has a fine record of sabotage. The rationale behind the movement's strategy and tactics is that their resistance is expensive to the roadbuilders and that this extra cost will create a new political climate where the Government refuses to underwrite the roadbuilders. Interestingly, the latest development (at the time of writing) is that Tarmac Construction is trying to recover the extra costs arising from the Twyford Down (M3) resistance from the Department of Transport, who in turn are suing 76 of the protesters for 31.9 million damage. This 'raise the cost' strategy failed to stop Cruise missiles at Greenham Common, but on a global level it was pivotal in the downfall of the USSR, with America using the arms race as a means of bankrupting the Soviet regime.

A further argument used against violent tactics is that they would give the police and excuse to wade in, but recent struggles (poll tax, Criminal Justice Bill etc) show that the police do not need an excuse to use violence. They are violent when they want to be. The question of whether or not to use violence should therefore not be one of principle but one of tactics. The entire State apparatus with its army, courts, prisons etc is based on violence. Capitalist exploitation is a violent attack on our freedom and well-being. It seems highly unlikely that we can overcome their power without any use of violence. However, it is equally wrong to have violence as a principle of action. As Emma Goldman said, "The more the violence, the less the revolution." Therefore, the decision of whether

or not to use violence should depend on what tactics will best achieve our ends, whilst attempting to minimise violence.

Legitimacy

The other strand of principled, nonviolent, civil disobedience is accepting the legitimacy of the State. The flip-side of the 'democratic rights' of protesters that many in the anti-roads movement talk about is the 'duties' of citizens to obey the laws of the 'democratically-elected' government and to respect private property. However, we have to recognise that the government is not a government of the people and that it, and the laws it passes, represent the interests of the ruling class against us. The private property they are concerned about is the property of the ruling class. Therefore it is a mistake to speak about 'our rights' in a system that is not ours in any sense.

The future

The government plans to finance its motorway expansion programme through electronic tolling (aiming to raise £700 million). Tolls are currently charged on a third of European motorways. In August the Tory-controlled Transport Select Committee rejected the idea as illegal and liable to cause thousands of extra injuries and increased environmental damage through drivers using trunk

roads more to avoid payment. Although this is a short-term defeat it foreshadows far advanced plans of the State and the electronics/motor industry. An example of this is the Prometheus project (Programme for European Traffic with Highest Efficiency and Unprecedented Safety) which involves the majority of European car manufacturers. Technology is already far developed for tolling, electronic monitoring and control of vehicle speeds as a way of reducing traffic jams, increasing traffic flows and of course increasing revenue and profits for the State and private capital.

However, despite its ambitions, the government has been forced into a number of other defeats and climedowns through a combination of factors. The increased militancy of the anti-roads movement, the inadequacy of the public transport system, increased awareness of health problems caused by car pollution and pressure on the Department of Transport's large budget at a time of public spending cuts have all combined to make the government rethink, especially with the forthcoming general election (1996-97) and 12 Tory MPs in marginal seats facing hostility to unpopular road schemes.

Although the Twyford Down and M11 battles were lost, the scheme to demolish Oxleas Wood has been put on ice and six more schemes were postponed in late December 1994. This is on top of the cut of

one third in the national road-building programme announced last summer. If rail privatisation goes ahead it will mean massive cuts in the rail network of up to a half, extensive redundancies (which have already started) and higher fares.

Links

This is a battle that can be won, particularly because it is unpopular and the government is in the run-up to a general election. It is vital that anti-road campaigners, transport workers and those threatened by road schemes build links. Revolutionaries should be working to build and support this process. Ultimately, a community-based, accessible and green public transport system can only be built as part of a revolutionary transformation. Its components will include popular planning involving all the communities affected, minimising the need for transport through increased local self-reliance, a service that is free and accessible to all, minimal pollution and disturbance to the environment and community and compatibility with a thriving street life of walkers and cyclists.

NOTE: We are indebted to Aufheben no. 3 for their excellent analysis of the anti-roads movement.

Aufheben (£2.00 & p+p) c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

Moral Panics and Children

MORAL PANICS ARE not new, but in 1990s Britain they seem to be continuous and all-persuasive, including single mothers, working class yob culture, crack-pushing Yardies, Aids, video nasties, flesh eating bugs and computer porn. The range of moral panics is now so wide that large numbers of people are implicated. For example, child abuse implicates the family and everything a man does can be interpreted as 'abuse'. Furthermore, there is the 'discovery' of hitherto suppressed experiences of child abuse.

Moral panics tend to happen when society has not been able to adapt to dramatic changes such as the Industrial Revolution or the modernising trends of the 1960s. The old system of values is crumbling and cannot explain new developments, so many people feel anxiety and loss of control. For the ruling class, moral panics are the result of a loss of moral authority and control, despite having played a major role in fostering them. Attempts to defend values at such times are doomed because there is no consensus. The Tories' Back to Basics failed due to lack of agreement on what 'family val-

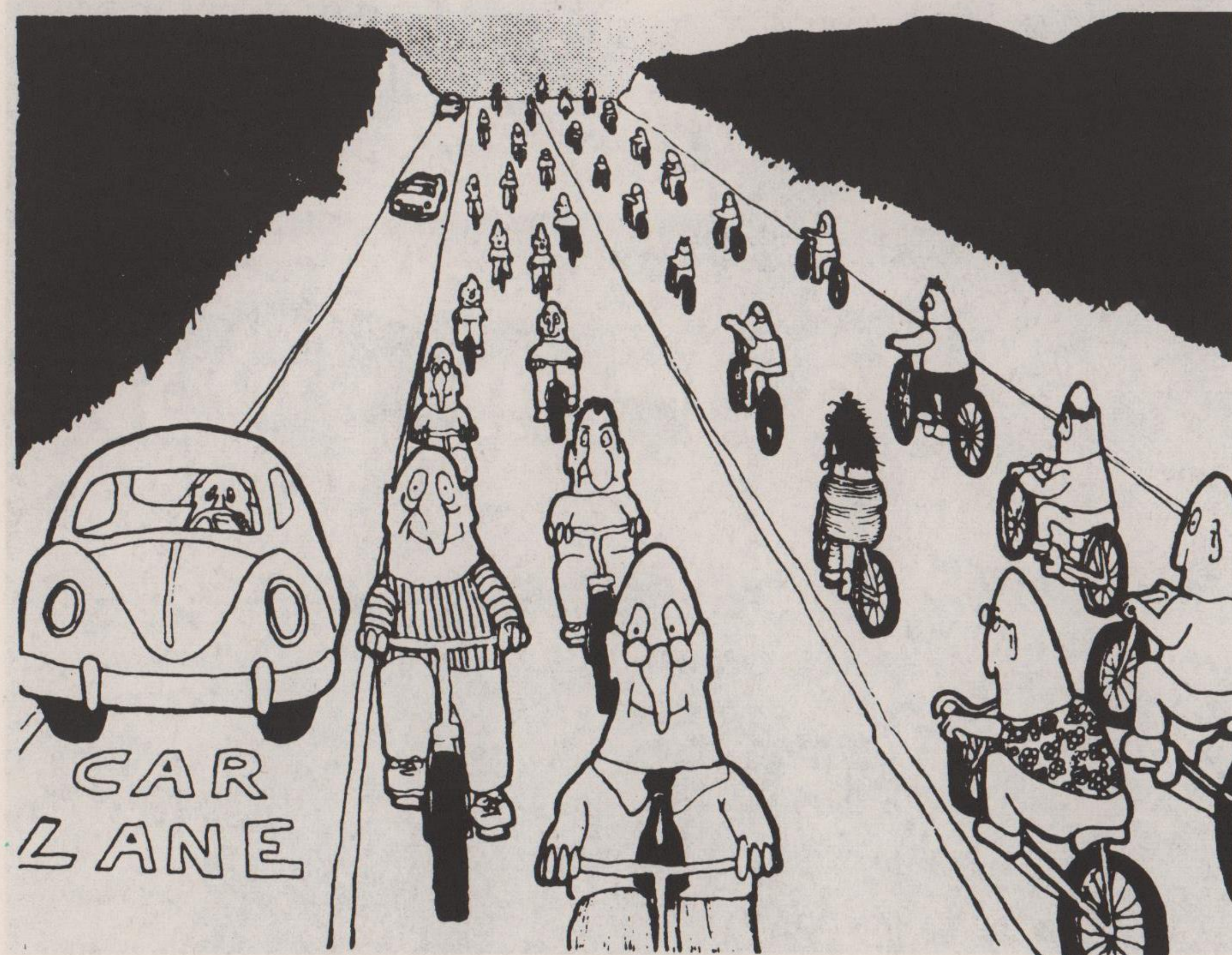
ues' are. At present, no institution has the authority to define values and what is 'right' and 'wrong'. For example, the Church of England cannot agree on whether women and gay men can become priests. For the working class, there has been de-industrialisation, long-term unemployment, loss of homes and break-up of working class estates and neighbourhoods through yuppiefication. With the erosion of these communal ties, life has become far more atomised for many people. In this context, national anxieties combine with feelings of insecurity to make people susceptible to moral panics where everything can be seen as threatening and people frequently construe the worst possible outcome.

Children

There are currently a number of moral panics about children, particularly around the 'public child'. These include truancy, theft, joyriding, abduction, assault and killing other children or even adults. Underlying these moral panics is one about childhood itself, because the old definition has been dismantled by both public awareness of children's exploita-

tion (widespread child abuse, both emotional and physical, and child poverty) on the one hand, and moves towards respecting children (Children's Act 1991, children's rights) on the other. In part the panic over childhood is a reaction against the empowering strategies of combatting child abuse, with opponents maintaining that 'parental rights' are undermined and that such strategies encourage self-centredness and fail to distinguish between the 'normal' and 'abnormal' exercise of parental authority. The crisis around children is also partly a projection of adult anxieties about capitalism in recession. Middle class bigotry also plays an important (though disguised) role: the subhuman culture of the poor is threatening to overthrow fundamental human decency (ie middle class values). Thus the end of childhood is blamed on the moral chaos of the poor and the moral irresponsibility of the mass media by such as *The Observer's* Melanie Phillips.

Childhood as we know it in Western industrialised countries is a recent social construction. In the Middle Ages, once children had reached seven they were regarded as adults, and in the Industrial Revolution child labour was widely used





in the mines and factories. Western children are kept dependent on adults for far longer than is considered necessary in other societies. This dependence has been lengthened and intensified by Conservative government policies in housing, education, health care and taxation, which increase parental responsibility and rights over their children. It is now harder for

a young person to leave home and exist independently from their family. Parents' increasing control over (for instance) children's sex education is potentially in direct conflict with their protection from sexual exploitation.

Childhood

Research into media stories and adverts about child abuse show that childhood is the issue at stake.

"Kevin's 8, but for him childhood's over, Kevin's been raped."

(*National Children's Home advert*)

Childhood is defined not by age but by a set of qualities and experiences which are incompatible with being assaulted. It is an institution which exists independently of and sometimes in spite of children. 'Innocence' is a defining factor, an ideology used by adults to deny children knowledge and power, which increases their vulnerability to abuse. This 'innocence' or rather ignorance, is a vehicle for the adult double standard. A child is ignorant if s/he doesn't know what

exclusion of children from adult society. Due to being 'locked away', when children do break out they appear more threatening to adults as their lack of experience makes them more fearful of others, less socially adept and more at risk from the environment. Children react to such a malign environment by deliberately drawing attention to themselves: screaming, scribbling on pavements, smashing milk bottles, banging on

doors and generally getting in the way of adults. Vandalism is often a response to alienating environments such as high rise blocks, areas of rough wasteland are important to children. They cater for their need to alter and interact with the environment in a setting where they have a high degree of ownership and independence. As these areas are eliminated by capitalism's insatiable drive for more profit from every source (any land not yielding profit must be waste), children's messy and disruptive play becomes anti-social because of where it has been forced to move to, eg children's excavation of a bank next to a foot-cycle path leads to bricks and rubbish on it. Children's lack of mobility (arising from car domination) means that they have smaller territories and therefore tend to become more defensive/aggressive as they become nearer home.

Early teens is the 'gang' age, when they like to hang out on the street, chatting to their friends, flirting, showing off, seeing and being seen. Hanging around inside indoor shopping centres is a favourite activity. They go for warmth in winter, to meet friends, to watch and play complicated games of hide and seek with the ever-present security guards who are there to enforce the law of consumption (if you're not shopping, get out!). Their youthful energy is a constant irritation to the air-conditioned sterility of this consumer heaven.

The current youth cultural panics are computer games (children becoming adult too young/ negative effects on play), raves and nightclubs (drugs, sex and alcohol) and pornographic/violent videos. Youth cultures are a mixture of self-expression, defiance and refusal of the dominant ruling class culture. They inevitably end up being ideologically recuperated either through trivialising them and naturalising their 'otherness' or by transforming them into meaningless exotica. After recuperation, new sets of conventions are established which create

new commodities and industries, or rejuvenate old ones.

Crisis

As we have seen, a crisis in the social institution of childhood is at the root of the current moral panics around children. Fundamental to the old definition of childhood is the idea that children are either little angels or little devils. This denial of children's humanity is similar to that of other oppressed groups (eg women are either madonnas or whores). Angel and devil are two sides of the same coin. If adults insist that the proper child has no sexuality, aggression or cruelty then 'evil' is the only way way of understanding these behaviours from children, as we have seen in the case of the killers of Jamie Bulger. Furthermore, the trial judge maintained that there was a direct link between the violent video the two boys had seen (*Childsplay*) and the murder they had committed. This is despite 30 years of research showing that the link between violence and violent/pornographic material is inconclusive.

Lock them away!

The moral panic response to such anti-social behaviour (real or perceived) is renewed calls and action to 'lock them away' and demands that parents be prosecuted. (This has already happened over truancy.) There are plans to introduce child jails with spartan regimes for 12-14 year olds with a minimum of three offences.

This is another return to a discredited solution which, far from curing the problem, will lead to reoffending and will be plagued by bullying and self-harm. After all, the prison was aptly described as "the university of crime" by Kropotkin. The reaction to joy riding is entirely disproportionate to the crime. Under the recently passed law of 'Aggravated Vehicle Taking' it is punishable by two years in jail or five if death is caused, yet of the 526 recorded incidents by 1993, only three resulted in loss of life. Girl gangs are also not a new or a worse problem as they existed in the 1970s. Young women offenders are dealt with more harshly by the police and courts than men because they are breaking the social taboos governing women's behaviour. Unlike the better off, many working class parents cannot afford nannies or nurseries. They (mainly women) are criticised for not being available to their children 24 hours a day. 'Helpful hints' on how to combat child abuse include the suggestion that women should not go out at all. Mothers of incest survivors are even blamed for not being there for reasons of illness/death or for abdicating childcare to their husbands. One lawyer defending an alleged child abuser maintained that the mother should take responsibility because: "This woman repeatedly went out to the grocery store leaving this child with her father."

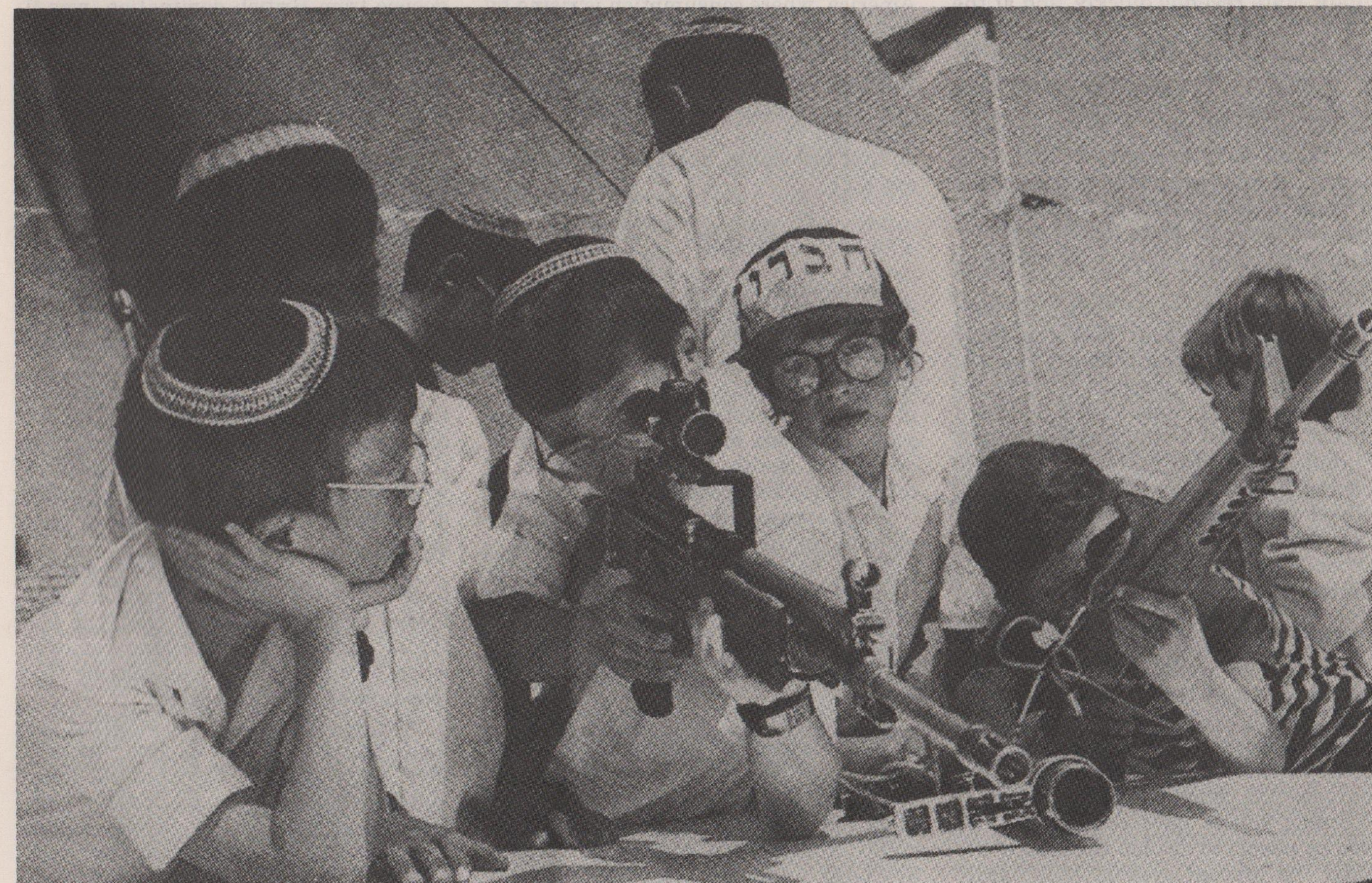
The moral panics around the public child and childhood is a self-fulfilling prophecy. A society which represses children and fails to cater for their needs

produces 'anti-social' behaviour in children, leading to calls for further repressive measures and the bolstering of the very institutions which are to blame in the first place: the nuclear family as the prime training ground for sexism and authoritarianism and the seat of most child abuse.

Conclusion

The epidemic of moral panics is a reflection of a society in crisis, with the contradiction of most people living increasingly-atomised lives in a mass society. This is the result of 20 years of recession, the defeat of many working class struggles and the consequent dismantling of much of the previous working class powerbase through de-industrialisation.

Moral panics must be opposed because they distort reality, increase atomisation and support and encourage repressive responses and false solutions. These responses and solutions are individual rather than collective and increase the powers of the state. The job of revolutionaries is to promote and support collective responses to social problems such as anti-abuse strategies that empower children, child-directed play provision, struggles against development of waste ground, new roads etc. These struggles are both an end in themselves and a means to an end — the building of power, confidence and collectivity towards the only way of achieving real community: the social revolution.



That's the Spirit?

INTOXICANTS AND STIMULANTS have been around since the birth of the human race. Whether it's tea, coffee, coca leaf, magic mushrooms, peyote cactus or yage vine, people have used different plants and distillations of plants to combat tiredness, help them work, make them jolly and convivial, combat depression, or use them as an aid to 'spiritual' experiences.

Beer and wine have been around since the dawn of civilisation. In fact, there is now speculation that the earliest towns in Mesopotamia came about precisely because people wished to cultivate grape vines, moving away from their hunting and gathering existence. Stronger alcoholic drinks probably originated early on too. But did you know that the systematic and regular production of strong booze came about at a time when the centralised State came into existence?

State revenues

In England, the first official distilling of whisky and gin took place under Henry VII (strangely enough, regular production of whisky began in Scotland at least ten years later). In Russia, vodka appeared at the same time as firearms. In all these countries there was a need to obtain State revenue quickly, and at the same time make sure that the State controlled production of strong alcohol. Spirits fitted the bill perfectly. Generally made from grain, which is a basic and most common product of agrarian societies, it was easy to transport and long-lasting. As well as raising much-needed revenue, spirits were used to control the poor and to create large numbers of permanently pissed paupers who were easily-manipulated.

In his book *History of Vodka*, William Pokhlebnin talks about how the early Tsars created and controlled a lumpen proletariat "whose energies could be directed into any channel for the price of a 'bucket' of vodka" — the smallest bucket contained 12 litres! State taverns were ordered by the Tsars to serve drunks: refusal was illegal! Pokhlebnin notes in his book that a drive against alcohol in the Soviet Union was necessary as vodka was ruining thousands of lives, aggravating domestic violence and leading to drunken brawling, accidents and murder. But it was a case of winning over people by argument, not by banning, which proved to be completely useless. He remarks: "The supposedly proletarian State resorted to the idealistic fantasies of the bourgeois US legislators of the 1920s."

Strong spirits have continued to be used by people to deaden the pain of life under the present system. It is hardly

surprising that alcohol remains an accepted drug, whilst cannabis is still generally banned throughout the world. No comparisons are made between the numbers of people killed by alcohol through drunken driving, cirrhosis, nephritis, heart disease, strokes and cancer and the minimal bad effects cannabis has on people. Similarly, another drug, tobacco,

which kills hundreds of thousands around the world every year, is condoned. Hardly surprising either that the tobacco and drink barons regularly finance or influence political parties around the world.

History of Vodka, William Pokhlebnin. Verso, £17.95 (get your library to obtain it for you).

Gasping for a fag?

DESPITE THE FACT that millions in the west have given up indulging in tobacco in the last few decades, the tobacco industry still remains one of the most profitable, with sales of over \$40 billion worldwide (1978 figures).

Cigarettes are cheap to make, they are habit-forming and recession-proof. Whilst sales have been affected in the west, they still make huge profits for the tobacco companies. And the tobacco companies are making up for falling sales in the west by aggressively peddling tobacco in eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, where consumption is rising by at least 3% a year. The tobacco multinationals have no intention of letting go of their vast profits, despite the vast damage that tobacco does to people's health (lung cancer and other forms of cancer, chronic bronchitis, heart failure, strokes, etc, etc).

Health

Governments are — supposedly — meant to take an active interest in the 'nation's health'. In the west, the development of ministries of health has been a common phenomenon in this century, mirrored in eastern Europe and the south. They are meant to intervene over matters of health. Yet on the subject of tobacco they have consistently hung back.

As statistical and medical evidence mounted in the '50s that tobacco was particularly harmful to health, governments signally failed to act. This was most acute in Britain, where 75% of men smoked and lung cancer began to reach epic proportions, with the highest incidence in the world.

Between 1956 and 1959 less than £5,000 was spent on anti-smoking propaganda, whilst the tobacco companies spent £27 million on advertising. Iain MacLeod, minister of health in Churchill's conservative government (1952-54) later admitted: "Smokers, mainly

cigarette smokers, contribute some £1,000 million yearly to the exchequer and no one knows better than the government that they simply cannot afford to lose that much." This has remained the attitude up to the present day with Virginia Bottomley.

Pronounced

In the United States this has been even more pronounced. Early American capitalism was founded on tobacco. The American revolution, which guaranteed the independence of the American bourgeoisie from British domination, was financed by tobacco, when it was used as collateral for loans received from France. It still remains one of the most important cash crops, employing tens of thousands, mainly in the south-east.

When Kennedy came to power in 1962, the last thing he wanted to do was upset the influential southern politicians — including Lyndon Johnson, his running partner. They dominated the Congress committees, and he would have to accommodate them if he were to govern effectively. He failed to act on scientific findings about tobacco.

Despite the formation of a Presidential Commission under medical pressure, any investigations were hamstrung from the start. Dr Terry, the surgeon-general, when forming the Commission, sent a list of scientists to the tobacco industry to be vetted.

In the end, eleven scientists were selected, five of whom were smokers. Following this, one scientist from the National Cancer Institute was removed when he spoke publicly suggesting that tobacco was a health hazard.

The tobacco barons had received evidence on how harmful tobacco was from their own scientists. They hid this information, whilst developing 'low tar' cigarettes to prepare for any adverse publicity about it. They introduced filter cigarettes, although they had originally been

designed to attract female smokers who were seen to want cigarettes whose ends didn't get soggy!

When a film was made for British TV about the Marlboro cigarette ads in 1976, the tobacco giant Philip Morris took an injunction out against it being shown in America. These ads had made a speciality of showing handsome, virile cowboys puffing on a Marlboro, the aim being to connect cigarette smoking in the mind of the public with good looks and 'masculinity'. The film showed that all the cowboys who had taken part in the ads had died of tobacco-related diseases, except one — who is now dead of lung cancer.

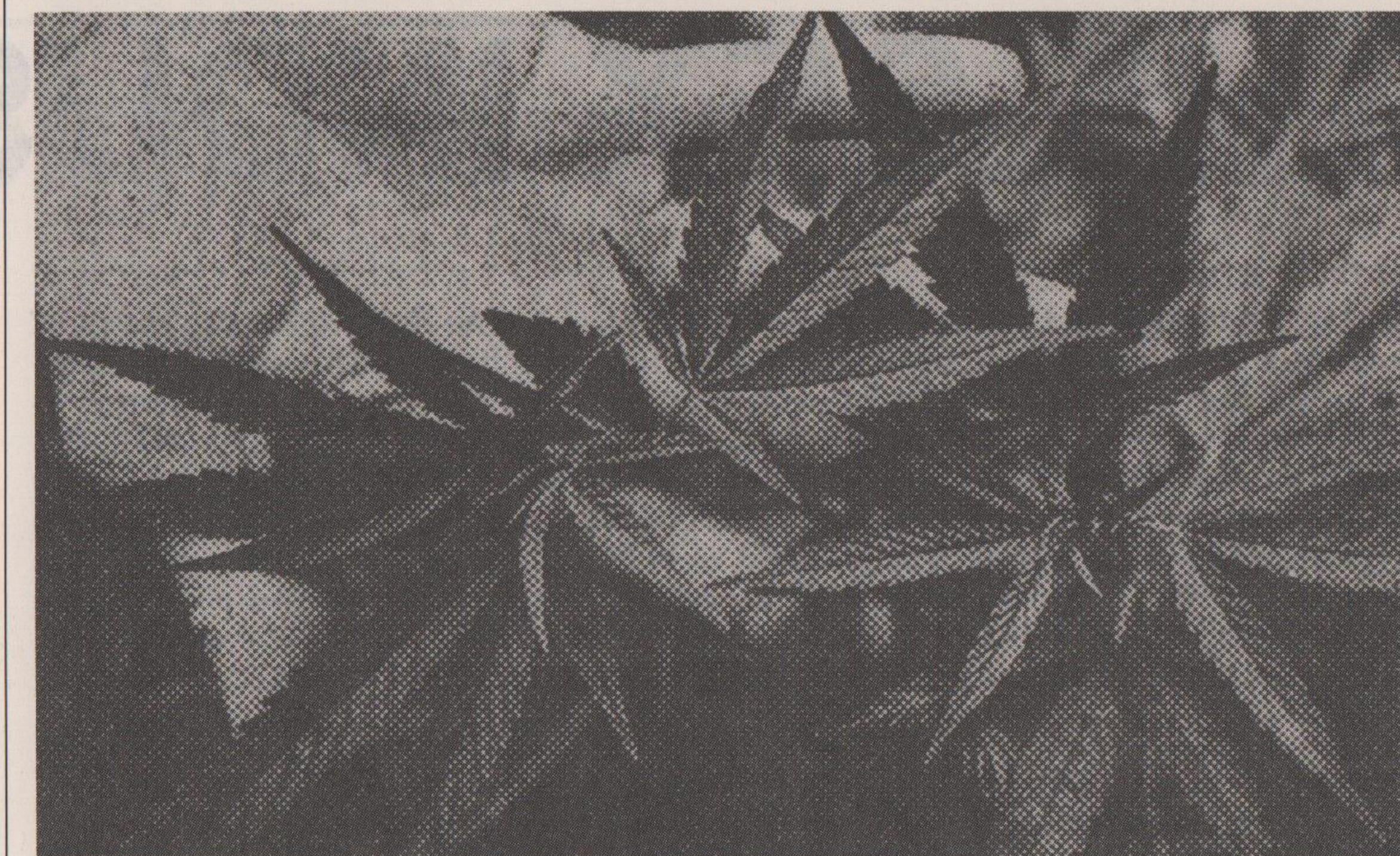
Blatant

Jesse Helms is the Republican senator for North Carolina. He now has considerable power in the Republican Party and has begun to make blatantly racist announcements about black people. He is a champion of all the fundamentalist causes — anti-abortion, anti-homosexual, pro-nuclear family, anti-drugs, anti-liberalism, anti-'communism', anti-welfare, anti-permissiveness. He was an architect of Reagan's presidential victory, mobilising all the forces of the New Right and the Moral Majority. He owes his own election as senator to his support for tobacco and tobacco's support for him, with a solid vote from the tobacco farmer. When Joe Califano, President Carter's lieutenant, began to make anti-smoking announcements on a consistent and regular basis, Helms mobilised the tobacco machine against him, forcing him to resign, getting himself re-elected and ousting the second senator for North Carolina, a Democrat. He followed this through by making sure Carter lost North Carolina and the presidency in the 1980 presidential election, helping to put Reagan and tobacco in the White House.

In 1976, Reagan had looked set to ride off into the sunset of his political career. Helms revived this, getting pledges from Reagan that he would not act against tobacco. In a letter to a big tobacco farmer who supported Helms he wrote: "I can guarantee that my own Cabinet members will be far too busy with substantive matters to waste their time proselytising against the dangers of cigarette smoking."

Tobacco is a political issue. The tobacco industry regularly exerts influence to get pro-tobacco candidates elected in the Western world (it's no surprise that Thatcher got a lucrative job after she lost her job as PM promoting the interests of a tobacco giant). It targets Africa, Asia and Latin America to export ill-health. It sponsors sports and arts, competitions and clothes bearing brand names and holidays, all with the aim of persuading people that tobacco is healthy, when the truth is that it causes horrific and immensely painful illness, accounting for hundreds of thousands of deaths every year.

The Wicked Weed?



ALONGSIDE DANGEROUS DRUGS like tobacco and alcohol, how does cannabis compare? Well, for a start, it's illegal! In Britain in 1991, 42,209 people were prosecuted for possession of cannabis, whilst in 1992 in France 30,000 were prosecuted, resulting in several thousand sent to prison and thousands of others on suspended sentences.

The State is able to use the excuse of cannabis possession as a means of control and pressure. And of course it always comes in handy when unemployment is rising and the system is crumbling to whip up yet another moral panic. In Britain, the Home Secretary Michael Howard has increased fines for possession from £500 to £2500. In France, the ministers Quiles and Broussard have just started a witch hunt against drugs. The cretin Quiles stated that "hashish or resin 40% pure are more dangerous than cocaine that has been cut". Not only is this statement ridiculous, but it proves how incompetent he is — hashish and resin are the same thing! In fact, in Britain, cannabis offences make up 90% of all drugs offences.

Research

One researcher into tobacco made the sensible statement that any organic substances administered through smoking them would be carcinogenic. This would include herbal tobacco and cannabis. Research has discovered that marijuana contains three times more tars and five times more carbon monoxide than tobacco. Tars and carbon monoxide have been shown to be major reasons — alongside nicotine itself — as to why tobacco is so dangerous to health. Marijuana can also increase the heart rate drastically, which could set off heart attacks in people with cardiac problems. Set against this is

the fact that regular users usually consume much less marijuana than an average tobacco smoker, and many prefer to eat it rather than smoke it.

For a long time it has been known that marijuana actually significantly helped people suffering from some illnesses. It is used by thousands of people suffering from multiple sclerosis, glaucoma and cancer, and others with chronic pain. In 1990 an Aids sufferer in the United States was arrested for possessing two cannabis plants. Ten narcotics agents broke down the door of his trailer and held a gun to his wife's head. Subsequently he became the second person in American history to obtain the drug legally, although this right was taken away the following year.

In fact in the last century, from 1842 to 1900, cannabis was used in half of all medicine sold in the United States. The writer Robert Burton recommended it for depression in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* written in England in 1621. So why then has cannabis become such a demon drug? The fact is that cannabis is a product of the hemp plant, used not only to make rope and seed for caged birds, but also as cloth, a substitute for paper and even as an alternative to oil. It was a cartel of the paper industry, the newly-emerging synthetic fibres industry and the oil companies, that backed Harry Anslinger, chief of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in his crusade against marijuana. What had been one of the world's main agricultural crops up until the late 19th century was annihilated.

In the anti-cannabis crusade, accusations were made that it led to violence, when all findings point to it calming and pacifying. Indeed many see it as a safer and non-toxic alternative to tranquillisers. So it comes as no surprise that many of the 4,000 'Families Against Marijuana'

Continued on page 18

PORNOGRAPHY AND THE SEX INDUSTRY

The ACF has opened up the pages of *Organise!* to the debate on the issue of pornography and the sex industry. As we have no 'line' on this issue we have included articles from different points of view. The first two anti-pornography articles were written by an ACF member and the interview with the Feminists Against Censorship could be loosely described as pro-pornography from a feminist perspective. The interview has been edited in order to keep it to a manageable length but this did not change in any way the arguments presented. We look forward to other contributions on this topic in future issues of *Organise!*

The Sex Industry

THE SEX INDUSTRY, today, is one of capitalism's major areas of economic growth. More and more people, particularly women and increasingly children, are being drawn into it as poverty bites harder. But what is the sex industry? And why is it growing?

The sex industry takes many forms — pornography, prostitution, strip joints, sex tourism and so on. Pornography is the propaganda wing of the sex industry (this is the subject of a separate article). It defines and disseminates sexual exploitation. For example, prostitutes say that punters will often bring pornographic magazines with them to show what they want to do. This is part of the sex industry's ideology that all women are essentially whores.

Often one thing leads to another. Women doing strip shows or posing for magazines may well find themselves making videos or working as prostitutes.

Throughout civilized history prostitutes have acted as a valve for releasing social pressure, and have consequently always suffered appalling abuse. More recently has seen the growth of sex tourism. As the industry has developed new perversions and greater financial rewards, so the need for more desperate people who are prepared to meet these demands has grown. So, now men buy their sex in the third world, where life is a little cheaper.

Our sexuality is deeply personal. While sexual acts with others are a basic act of communism, as we freely give ourselves in a mutual exchange of pleasure. Yet the sex industry seeks to commodify this and sell it to us, distorting and debasing it in the process. This is a fundamental attack on mutuality, turning our bodies into saleable merchandise.

The sex industry is highly patriarchal.

It promotes sex as a power relationship — the male as the fucker, the female as the fucked. Lesbians are merely 'wannabe men', providing titillation for real men. While homosexual men must play the male/female role with the he-man (the taker) and the she-man (the taken).

Obviously mutual sex by its very nature is an unsaleable commodity, so the sex industry seeks to destroy it and make sex into an act of individual pleasure through power. This manifests itself as the increasing identification of sexual freedom and pleasure with perversion and fetishisation.

While the sexual liberals extol the vir-

tues of this supposed revolution, true sexual freedom is being curtailed all around us by 'our moral guardians' — the church and the state. Homosexuality is increasingly criminalised, any form of nudity or partial nudity is likely to get you arrested, our gender roles become ever more restrictive, and obscenity laws are used to suppress dissent.

Liberals defend the sex industry on the basis that people freely chose their own sexual preference. This is clearly rubbish. Those who buy their sex as a commodity may well be making decisions to use their economic power over others. Yet there is no such choice for the sex workers. The argument that they freely choose what they do is a lie, it is part of the myth of patriarchal relationships — that women want it, they can't get enough and that the male is merely doing them a service. Are we really supposed to believe that women (and some men) make a conscious decision that they would like to be raped by strange men for a few quid, for the foreseeable future? It is a disgraceful lie which ignores the coercion of pimps and businessmen, and the more-than-not drugs and alcohol dependency which sex workers developed from trying to nullify their senses.

It is a vicious circle — less sensitivity requires more drugs, which requires more money ie more prostitution, which



requires more drugs and so on. It also ignores the reality of the vast numbers of women and children worldwide who are sold into sex slavery. The sex industry is not victimless. It ruins millions of lives

and it destroys true sexual freedom for us all. We support the self-organisation of sex workers, both those within the industry and those who have escaped it. We support its victims and those trying to

rebuild shattered lives, and those who have fought back. We do not condemn sex workers, we condemn those who profit, exploit and rape them. We support sexual liberation and condemn sexual reaction.

Pornography, Sex and Social Control

PORNOGRAPHY IS THE propaganda wing of the sex industry. It defines the commodification of sex and promotes its saleability. It also promotes the patriarchal social relationship of male superiority over females, mainly through power and force.

Pornography's basic tenet is that 'all women are whores'. This implies that all female actions are geared towards sex and that men are the abused party as they try to fulfill the female's sexual needs. The 'logical' extension of this is that there is no such thing as rape, because when women say NO they really mean YES.

Within capitalism sex must be a saleable commodity, and as a basic human instinct it can also be used as a means of social control.

To sell sex, pornography must constantly change its product. To do this it promotes fetishisation and perversion, which have become almost endless in number. For example, French maids, stockings, high heels and so on. The objectification of women is a constant throughout all of this.

It is also racist in that it sees black/Asian/oriental women as specific fetishes. It promotes them as more primitive and sexually debased. It is also the promoter of international sex slavery and sex tourism where women and children can be bought and sold for loose change.

By commodifying sex, pornography reinforces the hierarchical power relationship between the buyer and the bought, through gender, through class and often race. This serves to reinforce the social position of individuals in society.

Social control, however, extends much further. Pornography promotes the freedom of individuals (to exploit others of 'inferior' class, gender or race), in private. By setting the agenda, pornography can control social behaviour, whilst the sex industry sells them the product. It is a powerful weapon, as isolated individuals or couples strive to be 'normal'. Without a voice of opposition, pornography passes itself off as the voice of normality. And once again we are told to lock ourselves away in our own homes, so while individuals are getting their kicks out of pornographic videos, they are failing to form relationships within their community, be they sexual or otherwise. It is obviously

also much easier to buy a prostitute than form mutual relationships as we become increasingly socially inept.

This is also in keeping with the agenda of our 'moral guardians'. For example, the recent parliamentary debate on the homosexual age of consent, MPs arguing for a reduction to 16 years of age stated that what individuals do in the privacy of their own homes was their own business (the age was actually lowered from 21 to 18). Of course, as parliament has proved on numerous occasions recently, what homosexuals do in public is certainly not their own business. Once again we see liberated sexuality (in this instance homosexuality) being criminalised, while gender oppression is freely promoted by pornographers.

The pornographers' agenda has reached deep into society. In Hollywood movies women are always 'taken' by the male in the now obligatory sex scenes, which are thrown in as routine. Pop music heroes today are exclusively talentless 'pretty' boys and girls, with a pout and a panache for miming to songs of teenage sexual angst. This also provides the majority of copy for teenage magazines. Women's magazines have three subjects, sex, climbing the career ladder, more sex. Popular fiction of the Jilly Cooper type is obsessed with upper class sexual antics. Newspapers are filled from cover to cover with who's bonking who, sex ads, practically naked surgically altered women and handy hints to improve your technique. Television channels in their desperation for ratings throw in explicit sex scenes and masses of sexual discussion shows.

You may think that society is becoming more open about sex. But while we are being fed this facile nonsense, capital's continuing onslaught against us

slips by without note. No questioning of genocide in East Timor, no acknowledgment of benefit cuts, or losses to worker's rights, or elderly people dying of hypothermia. In fact, nothing at all. We are fed a diet of sex and blissful ignorance.

It even serves to destroy our sexuality. What should be a voyage of discovery is for many teenagers a living nightmare. The onset of puberty is for children increasingly means a mad dash to lose their virginity, which is nothing more than a stupid, meaningless definition anyway. Allied to this are the increases in teenage pregnancies and the potential health risks (eg cervical cancer). And then having done this the sexual attitudes of society serve to make them, particularly females, feel dirty and cheap.

The sexual icons of the pornographers/mass media show us that we are not desirable. Again this is aimed primarily at women. And lo-and-behold waiting in the wings are the vivisectioners (cosmetic surgeons) and the multi-billion dollar cosmetics/beauty industry to hook us to their worthless products.

But has the pornographer's agenda helped sexual liberation at all? On the contrary it has served to maintain low self esteem amongst women. It profits from women feeling worthless, inferior and inadequate. It has actively promoted the mindless macho posturing of many men, and has served to promote and maintain the patriarchal power relationship within capitalism. It promotes the marginalisation and oppression of homosexuals, bisexuals and lesbians. Our sexuality should be celebrated as an expression of ourselves in free commune with others. Pornography is an enemy of that freedom. It must be destroyed.



Interview with Avedon Carol of Feminists Against Censorship

Q: Why Feminists Against Censorship?

A: Despite the fact that feminists had been through the censorship battles against political material, against black culture, and against feminist materials and after seeing how little the state could be trusted, we had always been anti-censorship. But there was suddenly this anti-pornography movement claiming to speak for us and getting all the media attention, and everyone thought that's what feminists actually wanted. No one bothered to ask the women in this country who had been feminists since the late '60s, the Ruskin Hall conference, so those women decided to put a group together to remind people we were still here.

Q: Yes. I heard you say there that there was a problem with a legalistic approach because laws could always be used by the state or by men against feminists. What do you think of other activities there have been, such as pickets outside sex shops?

A: Well, we think it's a waste of feminist time. What's so terrible about pornography in the first place? Pornography is just pictures of people having sex. That's not where the problem is. There's sexism throughout the media. Why have they gone for pornography? Pornography's actually less violent and in many respects less sexist than a lot of other media. There are a lot of assumptions about violence and about women that never make it into pornography. Just as an example, most people, at some point in their lives, hear some man say something like, "If I find my wife's been with another guy, I'll kill her." You never see that type of ideology in pornography. Nobody does that type of thing. The idea that you'll kill a woman just because she has sex with someone else is the furthest thing from what goes on in pornography. Because in pornography sex is a good thing.

Q: So you're saying pornography is a diversion?

A: Pornography is a total distraction, it's a very dangerous distraction from real issues. We always used to talk about things like reproductive issues and how women's role as the primary caretaker distorts children's attitudes and keeps us out of the work force, keeps us pinned down, keeps us from having any economic power and keeps us making less money. And now we're not talking about the whole way the woman staying home with

the kids has been institutionalised and kept women from having real power. And talking about pornography is just such a red herring. Because all pornography is about is: some people like to have sex. How does that stop women from getting into the work force and making money?

Q: I suppose the riposte to saying that pornography is a distraction, is to say that campaigning against the censorship of pornography is also a diversion.

A: No, it's not. Because unless we can address sexual issues, we cannot address feminist issues. One thing that's always been very important to the feminist movement is the fact that part of the stereotype of women is that we are sort of apart from sex, that it's something that belongs to men that men have to get from us. If we can't get rid of that, we can't get rid of a lot of the problems we have. And if you look at, for example, the studies of actual violent sex offenders, you discover that they have been people who have been taught negative images about pornography and about masturbation and sexuality which they project onto us. That is a principle source of things like rape and domestic violence. So we need to promote a much more positive view of sex and of women as real subjects in sex rather than just as objects. The moral right isn't going to let us do that. They're going to use their anti-pornography laws to stop us from doing it. So we not only don't see the point of wasting time campaigning against pornography, we consider it as giving fuel to the moral right. It's worked, too. You didn't hear much from Mary Whitehouse until the anti-porn 'feminists' came along, and then suddenly we have the Criminal Justice Bill with all that new power for the police to come into your home and take all of your media without a warrant.

Q: Presumably, they see your campaign as a threat against their power.

A: Yes. And it's very interesting that when we talk about domestic violence, the police tend to say they don't have the money and manpower to deal with this type of issue. They can't afford training people on the issue and things like that; but at the same time, we're seeing all this energy put into pornography, which for some reason they think is really important. And the Obscene Publications Squad has trebled its size and quadrupled its budget in the last few years. So they have money to launch these enor-

mous campaigns against things they don't like. The classic example of time-wasting by the police: the West Midlands Police, who are of course famous for their popular behaviour, sent 65 cops to hang around a sauna for two years to see if any gay men were having sex there. What is this about? They're policing our sexuality, which nobody really wants, but they haven't got time to go after real crime and real violence. They have money to hang around in saunas chasing queers, to break into your house looking for lewd pictures or something. In spite of the image the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association promotes, most people do not want the cops to be wasting their time and taxes on this sort of thing.

Q: Going back to what you were saying earlier about sex-offenders, in November '92 there was a Channel 4 Dispatches Programme...

A: Ah yes, the famous Channel 4 Dispatches, the total misrepresentation of research on pornography. I really liked the part about when we ask boys where they learn their sex information, the ones who say 'pornography', believe in rape myths. They didn't tell you if the other boys had seen pornography, or whether the boys who said 'pornography' had seen anything else. They didn't tell you whether the boys were just saying the first thing that popped into their heads, or what kind of pornography they had been seeing. *Playboy*? That's probably what 12-year-old boys mean when they say 'pornography', and *Playboy* doesn't say anything about rape. *Playboy* is as opposed to rape editorially as any feminist is, so where do they get these rape myths? They didn't get it from pornography. They got it from their right-wing, conservative parents who didn't let them go to sex education classes, and who taught them that sex is dirty and women who like sex are tramps.

Q: One of the women on that programme had been shown pornography as a prelude to sexual acts and abuse.

A: Well sometimes people just talk about sexual acts, without any porn. If we're talking about sexual abuse, before there was porn men just used to force it on women and children. They would use the English language, but nobody ever tried to ban the spoken word on the grounds that it was used to coerce people into unwanted sex. A photograph of a sex act

is a means of communication in those terms. You could be saying, "What do you think of this, I'd like to do it", and if your partner says, "It doesn't do anything for me, I'd rather not," that could be the end of it. What kind of a person you are determines what happens next. But, if you're the sort of person who says, "I want to do this, and you're going to have to do it," aren't you the same kind of husband who can't stand his wife talking to her friends, the kind of husband who knocks his wife around the house when she doesn't cook like Mom did and keep the house the way he likes? Abusive husbands don't stop at sex. Some of them are the other direction as far as sex: "What are you, some kind of tramp? You're always trying to have sex!" They do that too. But more women have been knocked around the house for other reasons, like not keeping house right, talking to other men.

Q: So the power relation was already wrong in that family?

A: The relationship was bad. This was a guy who was an abuser, who already has those repulsive sexist attitudes that make him think, "Oh yes, it's okay for me to treat my wife like she's an appliance who has to do things just so." And that's what we have to deal with: the attitudes that a lot of people still have about what a female partner is supposed to do in a relationship. But that of course will be dealing with sexism, which apparently the anti-pornography lot don't want to talk about any more.

Q: Catharine McKinnon has put forward the idea of using the law against material that is degrading to women or encourages attacks on them.

A: And now we're again back to arguing about the research. The research says it doesn't. But 'degrading' — this is a term that a lot of anti-pornography women use — Catherine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin use it a lot — and we're still trying to figure out what it means. As far as I can tell, where Dworkin and MacKinnon are concerned, any woman who takes off her clothes and/or has sex in front of a camera is being degraded. There are no circumstances a woman in her right mind, with free choice, would willingly do this. Therefore, it is impossible for a woman to actually consent to appear in pornography. Andrea Dworkin also believes that intercourse itself is degrading and oppressive to women. In fact it is the source and centre of all sexism. So any picture of a woman having sex is basically degrading to women. The Campaign Against Pornography and Censorship — which was founded by Catherine Itzin, who that programme was really about — they believe in something called 'erotica'. They're against pornography, but for erotica. Erotica would be pornography that didn't offend them, that isn't degrading. But again, we haven't been able to figure out what that is, that erotica stuff. They seem, when it gets down to

cases, to think that all pornography, however defined, is degrading.

Q: My understanding is that the distinction is drawn around power fantasies.

A: No, because that distinction doesn't really come into play when you read what they talk about. Sucking cock is apparently always degrading. It's this kind of deconstruction that any image a man might look at and get aroused by — and of course it's always men, because women don't actually get aroused by anything — that any image that a man gets aroused by is *de facto* violent and therefore pornography. And that's an issue for us as well, because the definition of pornography in the dictionary is quite clear that it is any material that is intended to sexually arouse and anybody who goes into a porn shop knows that it is just about sex. That's what it's for. Even the stuff with a story, it's all going on in the context of the porn field, so it's not about people's other lives — it doesn't really say anything about their other lives — it's about their sex lives. But according to people like Dworkin, MacKinnon and Itzin and that crowd it's not about that. Pornography is a special word which means something else completely. It just happens to also be about sexually arousing material, but it's stuff that's degrading, violent and so on, right? But then you have to ask, well, things that are degrading, violent and somehow are bad, why single out the fact they are sexual? Why is it that we're not also going after other degrading and violent material? You can see people killed on television, and you have religious people saying horribly degrading and sexist things all the time. But you can't show people making love. That's the society we live in and that's the society that hates women.

Q: Linda Lovelace has spoken about being damaged by porn.

A: She was damaged by Chuck Traynor who was this really abusive partner she had. He was a real creep. And he did force her to do a lot of things, including act in pornography. But if you actually read her book, *Ordeal*, she talks about how being in the porn film is almost the best part of the relationship because even though he beat her up to be in it and she hadn't wanted to be in it, that was the one place she had a feeling of camaraderie with other people, because he'd allowed her to be in the company of other people, where she could talk to them from time to time. But she had to get away from this creep, and she didn't know how, because she knew she was in this part of society that people regard as scum. This woman felt she had no credibility because she's a porn star. She's nothing. She's dirt. Scum of the earth. Of course, she felt harmed and degraded. If it was considered a respectable profession, she would probably have done it without being forced. It would have just been a job. Of course there are people who are not cut out to be

hookers and there are people who aren't cut out to be porn stars, but there are also people who aren't cut out to be office clerks, secretaries, factory workers, and frankly I don't know a lot of people who are inspired to go and do things like factory work. It's the kind of job you do when you can't get another job. I know women who've gone into prostitution to get out of office work. So it really depends a lot on how you perceive the job. For some women it would be a lot more degrading to have to do work in a factory than to be a porn star, which is why so many women try to be page three girls and glamour models and whatever. A lot of people make the mistake of looking at Linda Lovelace and assuming that there's a direct relationship between abusive partners and porn.

Q: I'll just end with a couple of allegations I've heard made against FAC.

A: Oh please, I love our allegations.

Q: One of which is that you're a sex industry front.

A: Ah yes, I love that one. We had a leaflet from the Cambridge Anarchists, they call themselves. They aren't anarchists, I don't know whether they're from Cambridge. It said the porn industry is our largest media industry, bigger than the film, recording and video industries combined and it has a front organisation called Feminists Against Censorship. In fact we were THE front organisation, as I recall. Of course, none of this is true. First of all, it's a hallucination that the porn industry is bigger than all other media. This is figures from Mars. But aside from that, we're headline feminists. When we got together we were old-fashioned women's liberationists from the late '60s and early '70s, mostly well-known feminist activists, people from Silver Moon, International Socialists, GLF, the anarcho-feminists, women who were at Ruskin Hall for the first feminist Conference in this country, the original Red Rag collective, the *Feminist Review* collective, Elizabeth Wilson and so on. These are the women who showed up and were dismissed as being in the pay of pornographers. We're not stupid. We're not people who don't know anything about feminism. We're people who in some cases risked our potential careers in order to promote feminism. And we're being told we cannot disagree with these anti-porn women unless we're in the pay of the pornographers. We can't think for ourselves. Is that patronising? Is that sexist? Yes of course it is. It's ludicrous to say that a woman would not have doubts about giving the state that kind of power to control what we can say about sex unless she was in the pay of pornographers. We didn't know any pornographers. The only reason we know any pornographers is that after we'd been around for a few years, a couple of women who worked in the porn industry heard about

Continued overleaf

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organisations set up in the USA are funded by the pharmaceutical companies, as well as — would you believe it? — the tobacco and alcohol industries.

It is estimated that one and a half million people use cannabis in Britain. If you add the number who occasionally use it, have used it in the past or knowingly mix with people who do, then the scale of defiance of anti-cannabis laws is spectacular. This is one reason why some police chiefs are tentatively moving towards decriminalisation. They know the law is becoming increasingly unenforceable.

So why then is it not legalised? Several reasons. First, to legalise it would mean admitting that the charges against cannabis over the last half century were a tissue of lies and scare-mongering. Secondly, despite its widespread use amongst the aristocracy and other sections of the ruling class, those who administer the system still associate its use with non-conformism and rebellion and the 'permissive' '60s. Their hatred of it is the same as their other irrational fears and prejudices, their racism, sexism and homophobia. Thirdly, as we have already pointed out, it can always be used to start another moral panic, and to mount large-



scale repressive operations, whether in the impoverished inner cities of America, Britain, or France or in Latin America.

The criminalisation of cannabis is a relatively minor item on the agenda of the ruling class. If necessary, the time may come when the ruling class does indeed legalise it, and turn it into an official product that could be another source of

revenue for the State. Obviously, as anarchist communists we would welcome the repeal of any repressive laws that saved many from harassment, fines and prison. But neither do we fall into the trap of thinking that smoking dope is somehow a revolutionary act, as some people believed in the '60s and '70s and some people still do.

FEMINISTS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

Continued from page 17

us and realised they'd finally ran into a feminist group that didn't treat them like scum, so they joined. But they didn't invent us, they didn't make our policy. It's nice that, unlike the rest of us, they don't have to hide their connection with FAC from their employers, but they certainly aren't getting anything from their bosses over it, either, for them or for FAC. They're just getting paid what anyone in the publishing industry is paid on any magazine. And certainly no one is giving me any money!

The other side thinks we're all collecting huge pay-cheques from *Penthouse* or something, but none of us gets paid for this. Mostly we're out-of-pocket.

AVEDON CAROL is the author of *Nudes, Prudes and Attitudes: Pornography and Censorship*, from New Clarion Press.

REVIEWS

THE BATTLE FOR HYDE PARK: RUFFIANS, RADICALS & RAVERS 1855-1994. Published by Practical History. Donation/SAE.

ONE LINE THE ruling class likes to put over particularly when its armed thugs get a good kicking at the hands of pissed-off proletarians, is that violence is alien to British political life. Patently, nothing could be further from the truth. State violence has, as in all capitalist societies, been a permanent feature in Britain. Likewise, working class violence has always been bubbling under the surface, threatening to expose the facade of social peace. Hyde Park, London, has often been the site of the more spectacular eruptions of working class violence. The above publication outlines some of these.

Giving a brief history of the park, the anonymous authors set the scene for absorbing and often amusing accounts of the conflicts that have taken place there. What is interesting, though not surprising, is that often the ostensible motivations behind the demonstrations, which in 1855, 1866-67 and 1932 were somewhat less than revolutionary, were superseded by events and battles which often developed a semi-insurrectionary character and consciousness. Readers will also find the press reports echo down the years

and yesterday's 'ruffians' had the same role in media demonisation as today's 'hardcore' of 200 trouble makers'.

Particularly interesting are the reports of the 1855 'disturbances' by one K. Marx. Nice to think that he occasionally made it out of the British Library reading room.

All in all, this publication is a welcome contribution to our 'hidden' history. Available from: *Practical History*, 121 Railton Road, London SE24.

SCOTTISH ANARCHIST *SCOTTISH ANARCHIST* IS the journal of the Scottish Federation of Anarchists (SFA), which formed last year and involves members of the ACF. The SFA places itself firmly in the tradition of class struggle anarchism and *Scottish Anarchist* reflects this.

Contained within its 28 pages are articles on the ongoing struggles around the Broughton Street self-managed centre in Edinburgh, closed circuit TV/state surveillance in Glasgow and an angry look back at the Timex strike in Dundee and its sabotage by the unions. There is also interesting historical articles on anarchism in Spain and in Scotland itself. Add to this several more well-researched articles covering a wide variety of topics and you have what will hopefully serve as a useful tool for agitation and medium for the discussion of revolutionary ideas in Scotland and beyond. We wish the project well.

Single copies cost a pound but donations are obviously greatly appreciated.

A donation will also procure some of the excellent three-colour agitational stickers produced by the Glasgow Anarchists. Write to: *Scottish Anarchist*, c/o Glasgow Anarchist Group, PO Box 1008, Glasgow G42 8AA, Scotland.

Kate Sharpley Library

THE KATE SHARPLEY Library, named in honour of a first-world war anarchist and anti-war activist, has been in existence for the past eight years and now has storage space in Northamptonshire.

The library is funded by private donations and bequests from comrades and includes works in over 20 languages, covering the history of the anarchist movement over the last century. The collection is probably now the largest in England.

The library is run by a working group, which is in the process of creating a complete database of the entire collection. The group is keen to continue expanding the collection and asks that all anarchist groups and publications worldwide add the library to their mailing lists. The library is also keen for comrades to donate suitable material, and can arrange collection.

For more details, send an SAE to KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX.

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 clearer anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debate on areas not normally covered by agitational journals.

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

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

Deadlines for next issue are 4th March for features and reviews, and 10th March for letters and news.

We had to hold over our article on Cuba for this issue, but rest assured, it will appear in the next one, as well as features on sport, and artists and anarchism. 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 and workmates. By selling *Organise!* you can help our ideas to reach more and more people.

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Organise! will continue to 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.

PRICE RISE

YEP, *ORGANISE!* HAS increased 20% as part of an anarchist communist plot to raise the rate of inflation and bring down Civilisation As We Know It!

Seriously though folks, the price of printing, stationery, computer discs, postage etc, etc, has increased a lot over the last few years. We've kept *Organise!* at the same price for several years. Where else can you buy a magazine with so many pages and such quality writing at such a low cost that makes it a must for every revolutionary? We hope you'll continue to buy *Organise!* and help increase its circulation.

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

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

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PRESS FUND

YOU'VE DONE IT! What a magnificent response from ACF members, supporters and *Organise!* readers! In issue 35 we launched a Press Appeal for £2000 to help *Organise!* grow in number of pages and in frequency of appearance. Not only did you meet the target by this issue, you've gone way above it!

Money received so far comes to £281. This month we received London WC1 £75;

Organise! Back issues

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

- Issues 25, 30, 32 and 36 are 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 31: Somalia; Travellers; Natural Laws
- Issue 33: Criminal Justice; Bad Attitude; Battle of Wanstead
- 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.

Northumberland £80; Liverpool £4; East London £75; Sheffield £60; Aylesbury £2; South London £115 and finally a generous benefactor in London, £2,000! That means we've received £2,692. An excellent and enthralling response.

But we can't get complacent. This is still a small sum set against the cost of getting new computer equipment for layout and to start to bring about the changes that we hope to achieve in *Organise!* Remember, no matter how small, any sum towards our Press Fund is very much appreciated, be it 10p, £5 or a million quid. Please keep the money coming in. Show us you appreciate the work we're doing and rush cheques, POs, IMOs to us as soon as possible! You can even send us a standing order to our account. All donations to 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.

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.