

LISTINGS.

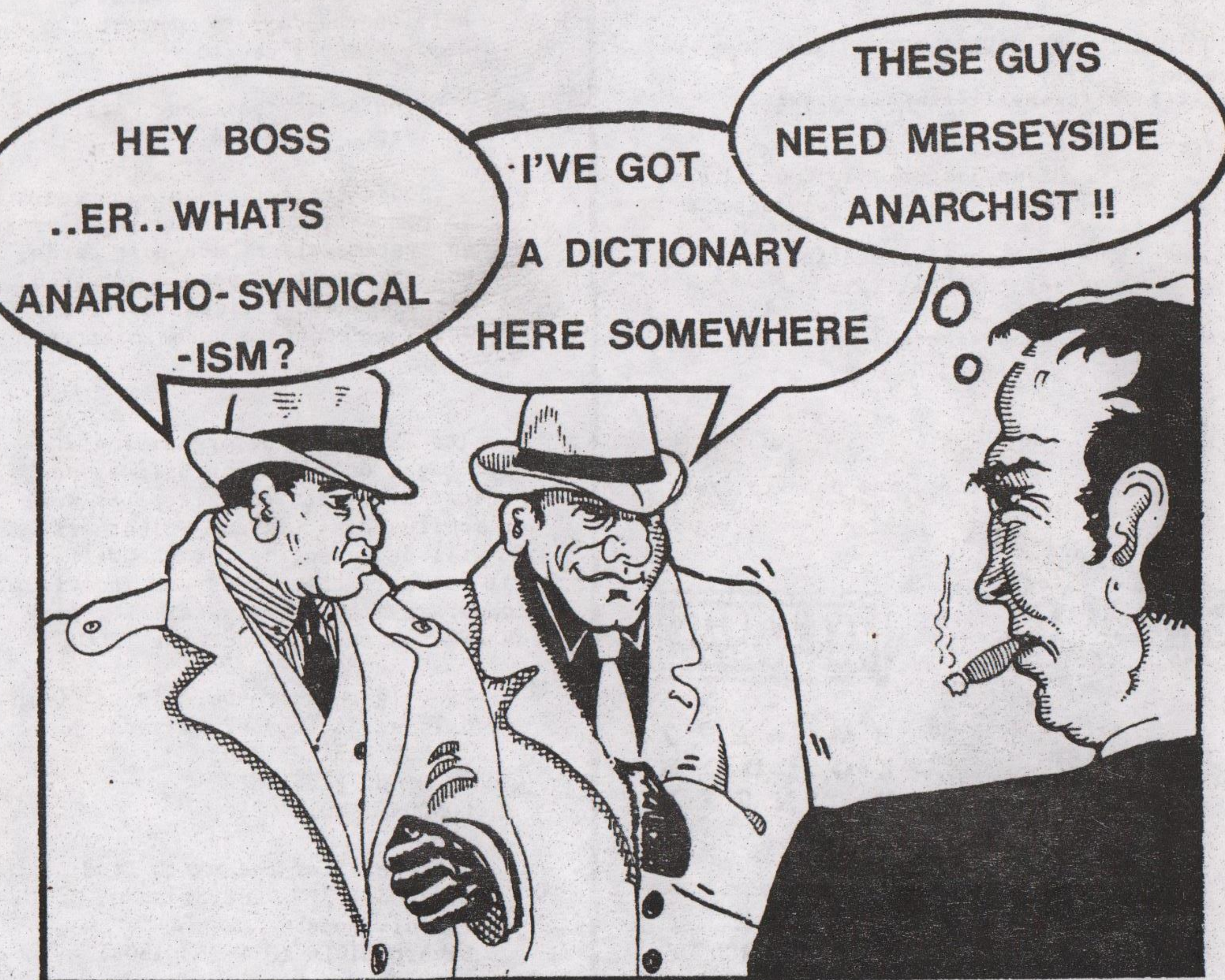
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- Sat 9th Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration Committee Dayschool, details from PO Box 5, SWPDO, Manchester M15 5EZ.
- Sun 10th Connelly Association History Lecture, 6.30, Irish Centre. Tony Coughlan will speak on the aftermath of 1916. Series of talks to mark the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising.
- Sat 16th Regional Anarchist Bookfair, St Werburgh's Community Centre, Horley Road, Bristol. 10am-6pm.
- Sun 17th
- Tues 19th Troops Out Movement public meeting - on human rights abuses in Northern Ireland. Speakers from Campaign Against Plastic Bullets & Casement Accused Campaign. T.U. Centre, Hardman Street, 7.30pm.
- Sat 23rd National Anti-Poll Tax Demo, London. See advert inside.
- Sun 24th Connelly Association History lecture. Doris Daly speaking on 'The women's part 1916'. 6.30pm, Irish Centre.
- Mon 25th DEADLINE FOR APRIL NEWSLETTER

Sat 6th April Class Struggle Anarchist Network, conference at Sheffield, contact PO Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY.

Anarchist Group

Every Monday at 7.45pm

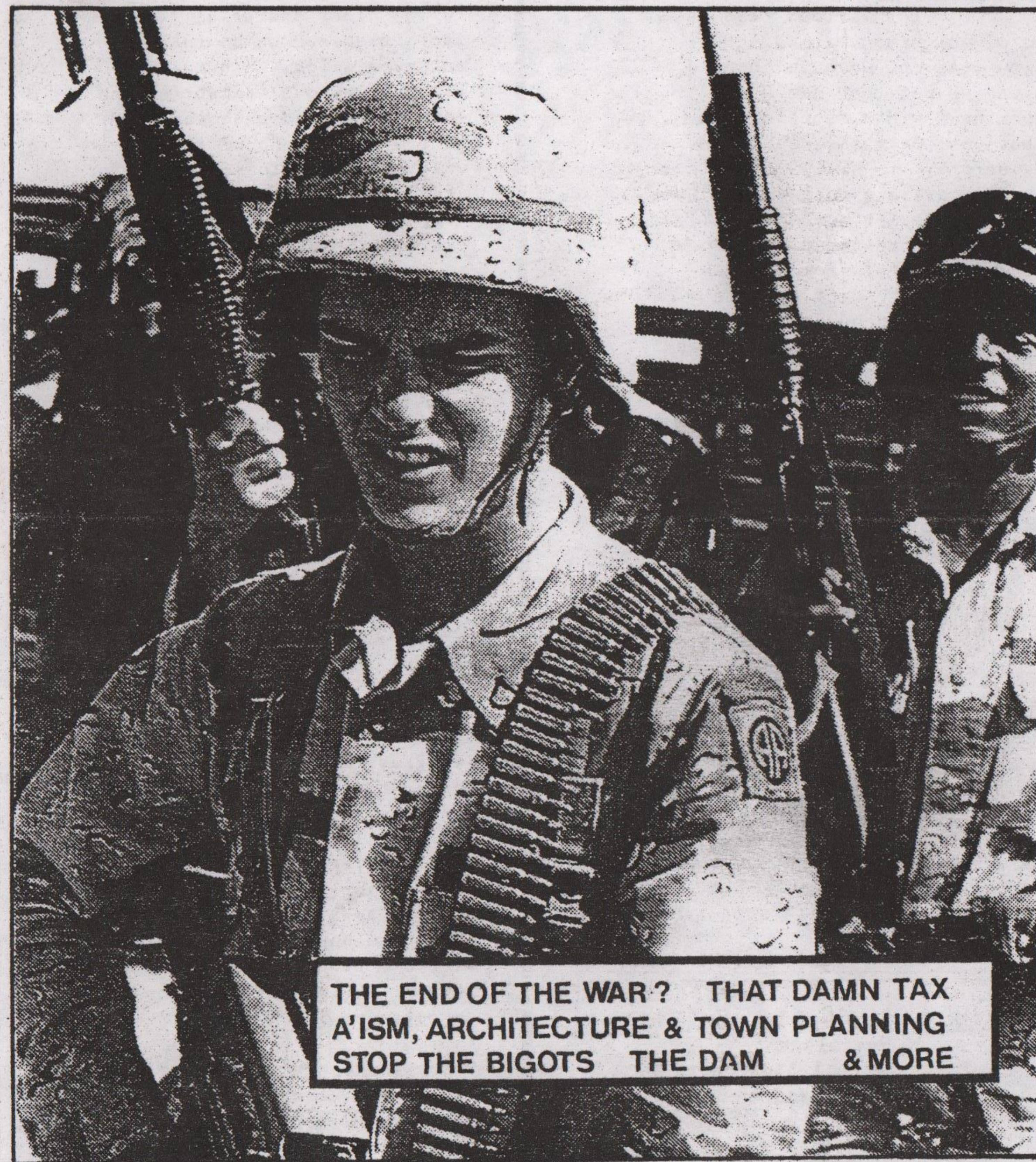


MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST NEWSLETTER

20p

MARCH 91

NUMBER 25



THE END OF THE WAR? THAT DAMN TAX
A'ISM, ARCHITECTURE & TOWN PLANNING
STOP THE BIGOTS THE DAM & MORE

TODAY'S HERO, TOMORROW'S CLAIMANT

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST NEWSLETTER
P.O.BOX 110
LIVERPOOL L69 8DP

Hello again,

for various reasons, some of which you will discover if you read on, we have changed the way we put together M.A., provoking a wider range of contributions for this issue than ever before.

Our article in Issue 24 ("This is the New World Order") provoked some response. We've included a letter from Glasgow DAM, despite the fact that it has just reached us, the day before we go to press. We see this newsletter as a valuable means of debate and education within the anarchist movement, which is why we set our deadlines as late as possible to give you time to write in. Please respect our deadline, it is easier for every one allround. Moan, grunt.

THANKS
The Editors.

AS EVER, THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AUTHOR AND NOT NECESSARILY OF LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST GROUP AS A WHOLE.

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DEADLINE April issue (No26)
Monday 25th March

BASIC ANARCHISM.

Anarchism is revolutionary anti-state socialism. In practical terms, anarchists aim for the destruction of the power of the ruling class and of all relationships based on domination and submission. This means taking over our industries and communities and changing them to meet the needs of all, as well as the ecological needs of the environment. Without this takeover we can struggle within capitalism but never replace it.

Anarchism will be created by millions of people, not a dictatorial elite (we are not marxist-Leninists), and all will have their part to play in shaping it. Power will lie with the organisations thrown up by and for the revolution, not with the political parties who will try to dominate and destroy them.

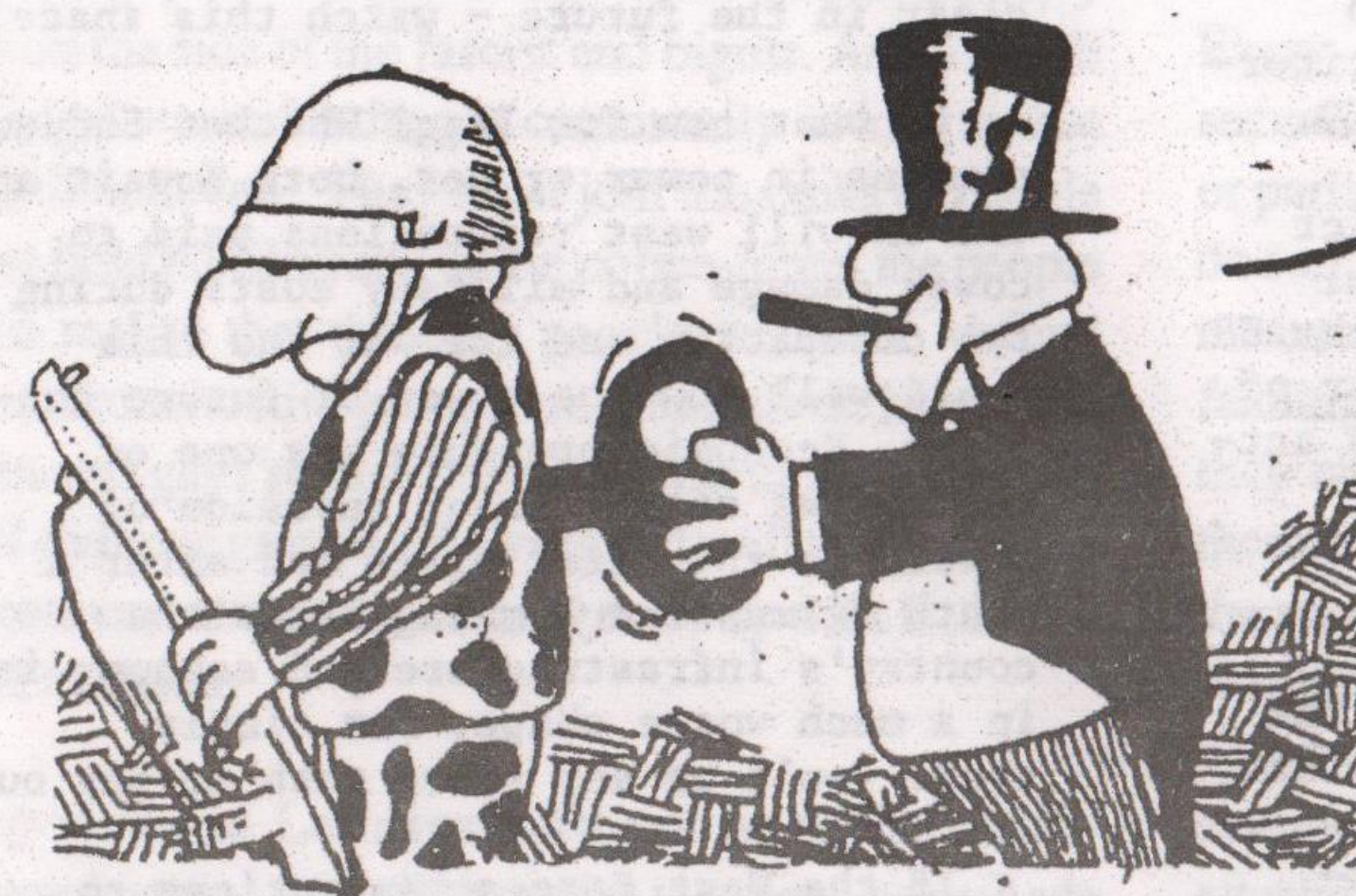
The new society will not be born through abstract ideas, but will come out of the realities of struggle and the need for working class people to unite. Such struggle doesn't just involve resistance to ruling class power (strikes, mass protests and other forms of direct action), but also construction - the building of new, locally based federal organisations (examples of which go from the original soviets of the Russian Revolution to the Miner's Support Groups of the 1984/5 strike), plus the forging of solidarity and the willingness to go further.

There is no truce in the class war. The answer to ruling class power is continual and ever-widening struggle - for social revolution and anarchism.

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST GROUP.

The Gulf

As we go to press the fighting in the Gulf has drawn to a close. This article attempts to look ahead and outline some of the issues which may arise in the Middle East now.



Make no mistake - we've just seen the birth of a new world order. The United States (with their British lap-dog in tow) now have a free hand to impose military solutions favourable to the West in any trouble spot around the world.

The implication given by the coalition forces will be that a new type of warfare has been invented; quick, bloodless and to be used in defence of freedom and democracy everywhere! Though it may sound impressive to say that the world's fourth largest army was defeated in a six week campaign, we have to realise that the odds were always stacked against the Iraqis. On today's battlefield, technology counts for far more than numbers of troops. So although Iraq was indeed one of the strongest military powers in the Middle East its army and defence infrastructure were no match for the highly developed war machines of the West, fine tuned and with all the most recent innovations to come out of the forty years of Cold War preparation.

When faced with the massive force assembled in Saudi Arabia the Iraqis made a conscious decision not to contest the war in the air, hoping to survive a period of bombing before inflicting unacceptable casualties on allied troops

when a ground war began - a risky strategy for the defence of Kuwait but one which looked beyond the immediate conflict and aimed to at least preserve sufficient loyal forces to protect the Iraqi government in a post-war internal crisis - hence the planes flown to Iran and the stationing of the Republican Guard in an area which would allow them either to be used in Kuwait if there was a chance of victory or withdrawn to Iraq in the event of defeat.

We know now that Iraq's conscripts were not able to survive a month of carpet bombing as a fighting force and either gave up or retreated when ground troops moved in - hence the very low Western casualties. Around 100,000 Iraqis (civilians and soldiers) are reported killed but this will without doubt be conveniently ignored by the flag-waving patriots of the West. It won't be as easily forgotten in the Middle East and it is developments in this area that we need to look at next.

Many Arabs will see this war not in terms of restoring the government of Kuwait but as a battle fought by the West to protect its client in the region - Israel. Saddam Hussein is just the latest in a long line of Arab leaders to champion

4 the widespread anti-Israeli emotions in the area and the cause of the Palestinians. By weakening the Iraqi military the West has not only secured its supply of cheap oil but also warded off a possible threat to its Israeli ally. Iraq's use of missiles against Israel was an attempt to draw them into the war, thereby splitting the Western/Arab coalition and uniting much of the Middle East around Saddam. This tactic failed but we can be sure that to guarantee Israeli neutrality the Americans must have given behind the scenes commitments that after the war no significant action would be taken to remove Israel from the Occupied Territories or to make any deals with the PLO.

As well as ensuring future conflict in the region, this exposes the total hypocrisy of the West. Britain and the US have fought this war under the banner of the United Nations. They claim to be acting in defence of UN resolutions and international law. When these apply in the case of friendly oil-producing states then the West will raise huge armies and send them halfway around the world to bomb a country into submission.

But, as in the case of the Palestinians, a dispossessed people with no resources and therefore little clout on the world stage, the attitude of the world's policeman is very different.

There is a UN resolution demanding that Israel hand back land taken from surrounding Arab countries. It's been standing for over 20 years! Similarly, Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, designed to push Palestinians further from the border and create a buffer zone in the south of that country, has been declared an illegal act of aggression under international law. Where is all the pious American rhetoric in these cases? Why were no armies sent to right these wrongs? Because the US and its allies pick and choose which acts of state violence to condemn only according to their own interests.

The two faces of the West have also been shown in recent dealings with Syria. Only a few years ago Syria was on the US list of countries which sponsored 'terrorism'. In American eyes this put them on a par with "outlaw states" like Libya and Iran. However, to make the UN coalition more acceptable the West needed some Arab countries to fight alongside them. It was therefore mutually beneficial for Syria to be taken back into the international fold.

Overnight Syria was no longer deemed to finance terror and the West got a PR boost from working with their former enemies. Syria on the other hand, got the chance to weaken their main rivals in the region, to have a stake in Iraq should there be a carve-up and may well have obtained US guarantees that there would be no post-war pressure on Syria to withdraw from the land they had seized in Lebanon, as part of an overall peace package. Whether secret US promises to Syria conflict with secret US promises to Israel will only become clear in the future - watch this space!

So what now for Iraq? Whether Saddam remains in power or not, both Kuwait and the UN will want reparations paid to cover damage and military costs during the occupation and the war and this could well sow the seeds of future conflict. Economic pressure was one of the causes of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the first place and after a month of massive bombing raids the country's infrastructure and economy is in a much worse shape. Put simply, there won't be any spare cash to pay out.

If the West forces reparations to be paid we could see a similar situation to that in Germany after the First World War. Following their defeat the Germans were made to accept all the blame for starting the war and as part of the peace settlement were supposed to pay huge damages to the victorious allies. Needless to say, this was widely resented in Germany and the far right were able to play on this, blaming every problem in the country on the unjust peace treaty and reparations - whether they had anything to do with it or not.

In the end it was on a programme of stopping payment of war debts and righting the supposed humiliations of the treaty that Hitler came to power. By using popular resentment at the way the allied powers had acted, the Nazis were able to draw in supporters and take power. In the end the conditions imposed by the victors of the First World War helped produce a far worse regime than the one they had just defeated and led directly to a re-run of the conflict a generation later.

All these factors could yet lead to further conflict in both Iraq and the wider Middle East and may yet rebound on the smug and triumphant Western leaders. New world orders don't always turn out as planned!

Dear M.A.,

Sorry to see the usually excellent Merseyside Anarchist Newsletter has a bad dose of the trots. The article "The New World Order" was written in a traditional Marxist academic style. It doesn't really differ from the way we're taught history and politics at school: history and politics are just a list of rulers, nation states and wars where ordinary people are mere pawns in political

LETTER ON THE WAR.



5 power games, and capitalism is the logical conclusion. Class struggle is conveniently forgotten. You can't talk about the U.S., Britain and Iraq as though they are single entities in themselves. They are made up of different social classes.

Three scenarios are suggested as to the outcome of the war and that a Western defeat would be most desirable. Whoever wins the military war, it will be a defeat for the working class. Do you really think a Western defeat and therefore a victory for Saddam Hussein a military dictator with the blood of a million working class Arabs on his hands, will be a victory for the Iraqi working class? Was the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam a victory for the working class? Was it fuck! Did Nasser's Pan-Arabism in the 50s win anything for the Arab working class? Did it fuck!

The Gulf War is a war between two ruling classes. As anarchists, we do take sides, we side with the working class. You either believe revolutionary change in society will be brought about by the working class or you don't. To stop this war to the benefit of the working class will need a revolutionary change that will only be brought about by the working class itself. The class war is not being fought for us by Saddam's army. Stopping the war to our benefit will also not be done for us by middle class lefties or liberals. We shouldn't be trying to gain credibility with these twats in boring anti-war meetings, by compromising basic anarchist principles of internationalism for some sort of "New Realism" where we tag along behind the Left because we feel too powerless to do anything about it ourselves.

Surely by now you must realise that these people and their wonderful anti-imperialist theories are totally irrelevant to revolutionary change.

We should be looking for ways of bypassing these people. "Hands Off Iraq" posers should be told to put their money where their mouth is and join the Iraqi army.

Yours In Solidarity

Mark, secretary
Glasgow D.A.M.

TOWN PLANNING

Why do we as anarchists need to look into issues of architecture and town planning? Can't we just leave it to the 'experts'? The following article explores the high-rise experience and looks at how we should be aiming to control the conditions in which we live.....

Since the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, all aspects of our environment, from the location and type of housing, greenbelts, transport systems, workplaces, parks and open spaces have all been designed by architects and town planners. Before this, and in much of the Third World now, people made their own towns and cities: they were unplanned.

The ideas of the early town planners have clear connections with anarchist thinking. Professor Peter Hall, Britain's leading author on town planning, in his book "Cities of Tomorrow" illustrates this by saying "early visions of the planning movement stemmed from the anarchist movement which flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth century." There are clear parallels between the work of Ebenezer Howard in 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow' and Kropotkin's 'Fields, Factories and Workshops', both published in 1898. Hall says "the vision of these anarchist pioneers was not merely an alternative built form, but of an alternative society, neither capitalist nor bureaucratic socialist: a society based on voluntary co-operation among men and women, working and living in small self-governing commonwealths." He sees Kropotkin, Proudhon and Bakunin as the "spiritual fathers" of town planning.

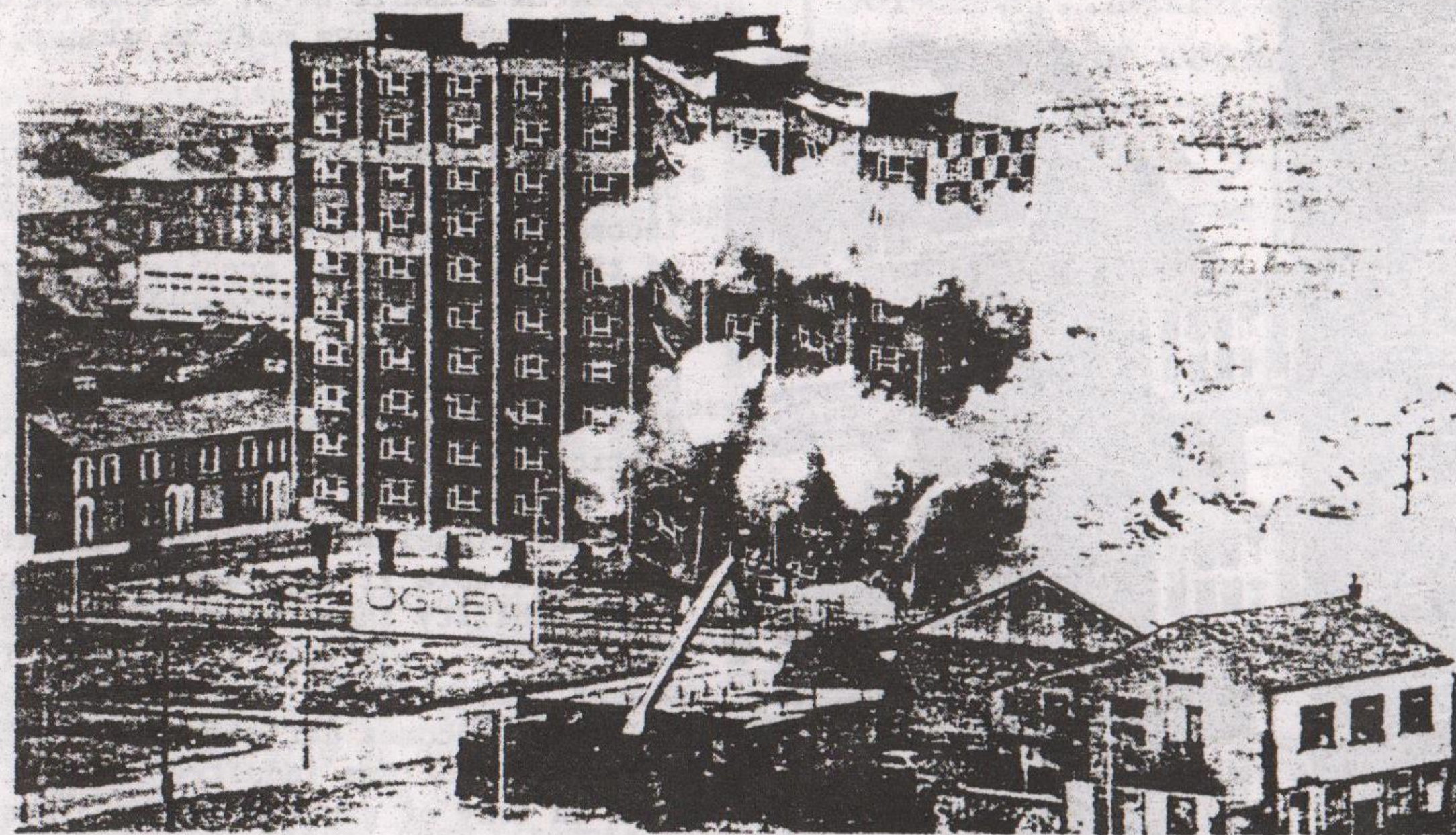
However, town planning now offers office blocks, dual carriageways, and more Barratt's housing while the terraces lie empty, all provided by technocrats divorced from the people who use these buildings.

The real issues which concern the people are housing, transport, employment, aesthetics, and the environment. These are treated as technical problems to be solved by the mobilisation of capital. The working class do not shape the places where they live, work and bring up their children. Of course,

they are consulted but in nearly all cases their views are marginalised and form a small consideration. They are not asked to design their homes, but are told what is unacceptable and presented with middle class conceptions of good taste and design. Town planning is carried out from the top down by agencies with little regard for the communities for whom they plan. Decision making lies with central government as it sets the legislation under which councillors and planners work. Furthermore, capitalism determines what is profitable to construct. Make no mistake, houses and workplaces are only constructed when it is profitable to do so. The number of homeless in this country is increasing and yet house building has fallen consistently over the past 18 months because those in need do not represent a profit for developers.

The same goes for hospitals, factories and offices, the only exception being roads, which can be justified as providing indirect subsidies to capitalist industry.

Ebenezer Howard insisted in 1898 that cities should be the common property of their inhabitants and that any increase in land values should belong to them to be used for their common co-operative purposes. But the whole of the present property industry is geared to profit. Every house owner expects their house to go up in value. Why? If you buy a car and drive it half a mile it loses 10% of its value. This link between profit and property has limited grassroots attempts by the working class to provide for their own needs. Squatting and self-build has met with small scale success but has yet to challenge market forces. Capitalism has also sought to disrupt a sustainable economy, creating inbuilt obsolescence, particularly in factories and offices, thus fulfilling its own need to demolish



structurally sound buildings and build new ones in the pursuit of profit. Buildings should be adaptable and resilient, instead of being torn down every time capitalist aspirations change.

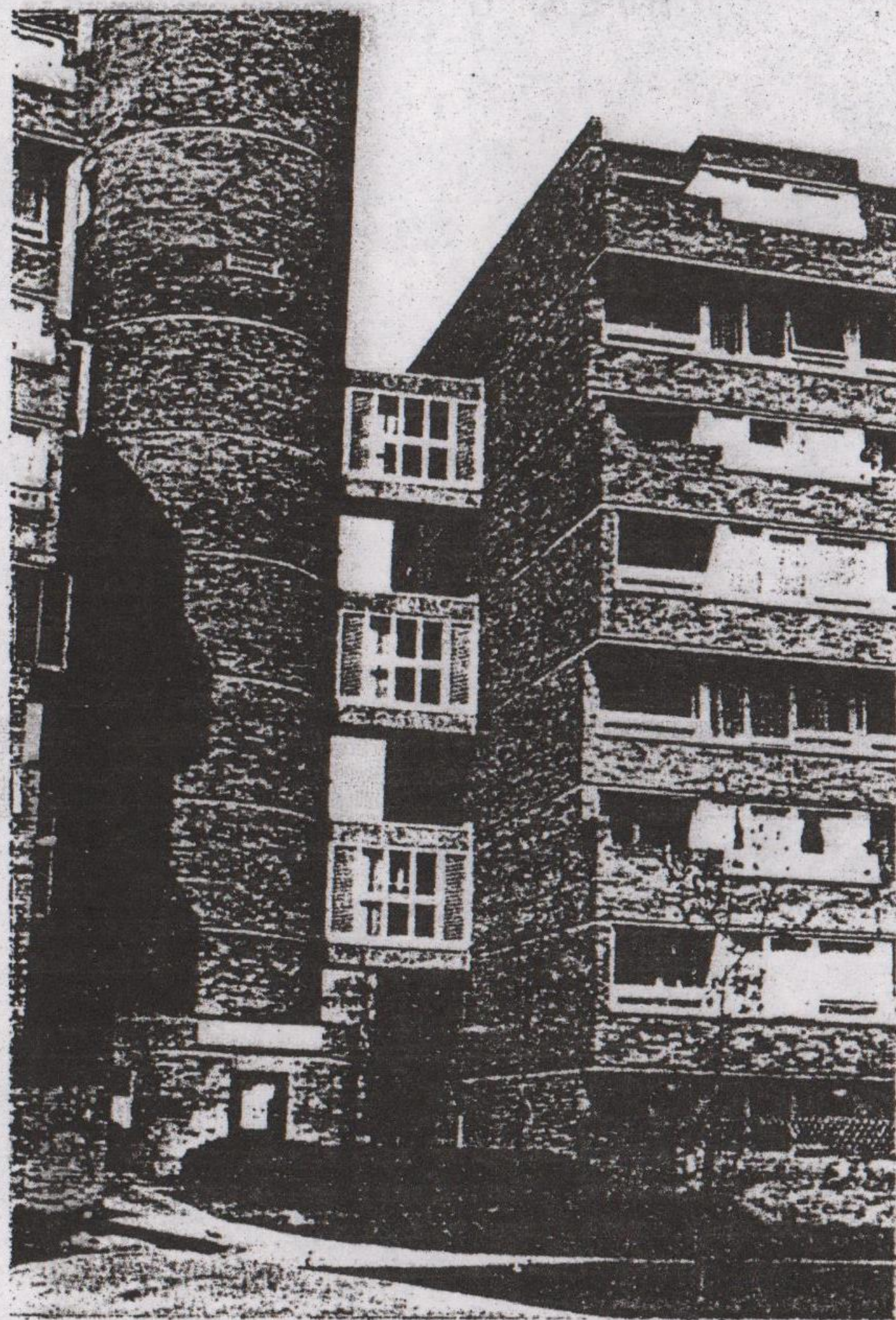
In India the layout of New Delhi, a legacy of imperialism, means that the city cannot support a mass transport system efficiently, whereas Bombay, a linear city whose growth has been determined by its two parallel railway lines, provides easy mobility for its inhabitants.

Planning needs to be changed to be carried out by the people, for the people, with their needs being the paramount consideration. This has happened to a certain degree in the community architecture movement. Community architecture actually enables people to design their own homes and environments. However, it has not gone far enough because the work usually has to be carried out by building contractors and the refurbishments have still to be overseen by professionals. Rod Hackney, who started the movement in Macclesfield, was able to save working class homes from demolition and the people designed and improved their own houses. However, the area has now become trendy and bijou, the old residents have moved out and Mr Hackney has moved on to more profitable schemes with his own company.

Nevertheless, a lot can be learned from the work of community architects. Usual practice has been for the architects to set up an office on the site and actually get to know all the residents there. Also they have used meetings, role play, newsletters and models rather than maps and plans which are difficult for many people to visualise. Also they have used trips with the residents to other areas to find out to find out what other groups have done to stimulate ideas.

The development industry in this country is only interested in producing more "units" not homes. Community architecture was able to look at the individual needs of each occupier and tailor their home to their needs. This meant thinking about people's future needs, i.e., making buildings flexible to allow for children leaving home or having more children. Also it meant the work done was built to last and involved long term savings particularly energy efficiency through insulation.

If community architecture can form the basis of people controlling their own environment with total control given to members of the community, we could be well on the way to anarchism. We all know the consequences of imposed, centrally designed, systemised housing. The featureless inhuman



high rises are now being demolished across the nation. In Belfast, the city council have a commitment to demolish all council-owned high rise blocks by the year 2000. The graffiti has taken too long to be read by the planners, the writing should be on the wall for them. Utopia cannot be imposed, it is up to the working class to not only build their own homes and workplaces as they do now, but to design them as well. The physical design of buildings and in particular groups of buildings can create and foster communities. In the same way tower blocks cause isolation and insecurity places can be designed to ensure that people feel safe, meet each other in passing, and are able to look out for their neighbours.

Women can design environments in which they feel at ease, minority groups can design areas which meet their own cultural needs. This could involve religious building and gardens designed to grow non-native food and plants.

Another important point is that the present planning system very rarely consults or involves children. Children could, with adult help, be able to design and build their own meeting places, play areas and schools.

Now, a person's standard and choice of accommodation is determined by their income not their needs. Colin Ward, one of the few anarchist architectural authors, makes many valid contributions to this debate: "The important thing about housing is not what it is, but what it does in people's lives. Dweller satisfaction is not necessarily related to the imposition of standards, and people find deficiencies in housing infinitely more tolerable if they are their own responsibility than if they are someone else's." He goes on to say: "The moment that housing, a universal human activity, becomes defined as a problem, a housing problems industry is born, with an army of experts, bureaucrats and researchers whose existence is a guarantee that the problem won't go away."

The only people who know the problems are the people themselves. We know that a system which creates housing shortages, evictions, low spending, bureaucracies, pointless standards and places where no-one wants to live, while the rich live in luxury and blame us for creating our own slums, must be brought to an end. Alice Coleman in her book "Utopia On Trial" puts this neatly when she writes: "the sink estate concept blamed problem people; the child density concept blamed problem children; the efficient management concept blamed problem local authorities." All the time the fact that the flats and houses were not designed with people's needs in mind have been overlooked. Meanwhile, public money is being spent on cleaning, repairing and administering these problem areas. With resident control they could be transformed into decent places to live. The same applies to workplaces, how many workers find the only place to eat is a filthy, noisy canteen or wind-swept tarmac parking bay. If workplaces were organised by anarchists we could raise our own conditions rather than be slaves to shareholders and entrepreneurs.

Anarchists need to be bringing communities and workplaces together so that we all have somewhere to live and work which meets our own needs and the needs of the whole of society. The future must be in our own hands.

2nd REGIONAL Anarchist BOOK FAIR

16-17 MARCH 1991 10AM-6PM
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Up until now much of what you've read in issues of 'Merseyside Anarchist' has been written by me. I say up until now because from now on I want to concentrate on writing for the D.A.M.'s paper, Direct Action.

This has been a tough decision to take. I've seen this newsletter grow from its inky and unreadable first issues into the neat and attractive version of today. More importantly, M.A. has become widely read and respected within the anarchist movement and I always think that its growth mirrored a shift inside British anarchism - away from the drop-out liberal shit which had contaminated the movement since the 60's, and towards a viable, class-based perspective - real anarchism.

So why give it up now, at the height of its success? Well, it's a long story. When I first got involved in politics in the early 1980's there were loads of anarchists around, but very little organisation amongst us. We all instinctively knew there was a lot wrong with the world and so threw ourselves into doing things. Anarchists were very involved in anti-nuclear, environmental and animal rights campaigns, but at the end of the day it was middle-of-the-road reformist organisations like CND, Greenpeace and the BUAV which took the credit for our work on the ground.

As the decade wore on, more and more of us realised that there was no point in anarchists promoting single-issue campaigns which were actually opposed to widespread social change, and so people began to work on specifically anarchist initiatives. This was the time of papers like Attack, Flamethrower, Class War and Counter Info, and this type of propaganda summed up the anarchist movement as it was then - angry, shit-hot on things like support for working class struggles, anti-racism and anti-fascism etc, but not offering any clear way forward, not producing definitive statements of what anarchism actually was, and not getting people involved in a revolutionary anarchist organisation. Basically, as anarchists, we still weren't turning our chips into money - if you see what I mean! There was lots of directionless activity with little to show for it.

TURNING

CHIPS into Money

But we shouldn't be too critical of the movement at that time. Remember that it was composed mainly of young people with little organisational experience, there was no recent anarchist tradition in Britain to learn from and we were at least moving away from the liberal single-issue campaigns of the past. All in all the 80's were a learning process through which activists had to pass. Now it is time to put those lessons into practise.

We've reached a stage where there are plenty of conscious class struggle anarchists around and, by and large, where anarchism has got rid of its hippy fringe and the anti-anarchist views that went with it. The next step for anarchists is to build up an organisation capable of putting our ideas across to the wider working class and of defeating the arguments of the current labour movement leadership and the bankrupt parties of the left.

This will only happen when anarchists put their money where their mouth is, agree with a specific definition of anarchism and join the relevant anarchist organisation. When this occurs, when anarchists start putting their time and energy into something which can tell people what anarchism is for, not just what it's against, when we've got an organisation that can make a difference in the workplace and all the other issues we're involved with, then we'll see anarchism actually moving forward - for the first time in ages we will be in a position to reap the rewards of our political work. There are already a great many people who are sympathetic to our arguments, who have seen for themselves the uselessness of the Labour Party and the existing trade unions. So why do they stick reluctantly with these organisations? Because we have so far failed to provide a viable alternative for them to turn to, failed to create a concrete organisation for sympathisers to join and failed to show that anarchism is anything more than a set of nice ideas. And we'll continue to fail just as long

as we ourselves remain disorganised - which brings me back to the point of this article - why I want to concentrate my activity on the Direct Action Movement and its paper, as opposed to 'Merseyside Anarchist'.

If you know anything about anarchism you'll agree that syndicalism (the forming of anarchist labour unions and their community-based equivalents) makes up the overwhelming mass of anarchist history. Wherever in the world there's been a big anarchist movement, it's always been centered on libertarian workers organisations - because anarchists have always realised that the workplace and the day to day running and provisioning of society is where working class power lies. When you hear anarchists talking about workers control and community control, they're talking about syndicalism - the nuts and bolts of social revolution, the means by which an anarchist society is run. I'm a member of the DAM because it's in the business of building revolutionary unions and thereby creating an anarchist movement with a fighting chance.

Of course, there are some anarchists who don't call themselves syndicalists and people who are somehow trying to re-invent anarchism from scratch - people who think they don't need to know how anarchists have gone about revolution in the past and who dream of pulling a squeaky-clean new anarchism from out of thin air!

Unfortunately this isn't going to happen! Anarchism consists of the ideas and organisational methods that have been developed and refined through struggle, and this is what we have to work with today - no short cuts, no fancy new labels, no miraculous new formulae - if you want a real grass-roots revolution and anarchism, then syndicalism is the means to get you there.

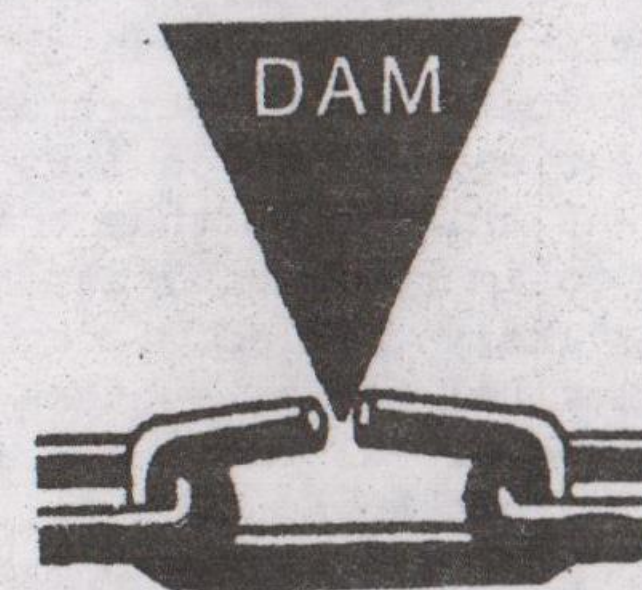
Needless to say, because we haven't had a large anarchist movement in Britain

for some time many of the ideas need updating - even the most recent syndicalist 'classic' was written a good few decades ago. For example we need to take on board the effects of things like new technology on work, of people working from home, and how to make anarchist ideas relevant to people who may never have been in a workplace let alone experienced militant unions and strikes!

But these things will only come about when today's anarchists bring their ideas and experience to bear on traditional anarchist politics. Anarchism isn't about waiting for the party line to be handed down from on high - the movement and the politics develops through debate, participation, organisation and struggle.

We're long past the days of anarchists working just for single-issue causes, of activity for activity's sake, and we've surely learnt that dispirate anarchist initiatives with no hard politics or organisation behind them really get us nowhere. Without doubt, the overriding task for us now is the building of a real anarchist movement that can carry our ideas out.

This is why I want to concentrate on the DAM. I don't want people to stop buying the newsletter - local publications can only help the movement, but more important than that is to have a national paper, well written and produced, that can put across anarchist politics and draw people into an organisation.



So, if you like what you've seen in past issues of this newsletter start reading 'Direct Action' cos that's where you'll find it in the future. Better still - join the DAM!

For Anarchism,
Keith,
Liverpool DAM.

THE DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

The following was written by a member of Liverpool Direct Action Movement as a first draft for a leaflet outlining the position of anarcho-syndicalists towards the present unions. It goes some way towards explaining how the DAM hopes to change the way we organise the fightback in the workplace.....

THE DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

Liverpool DAM had decided to produce this leaflet in an attempt to state clearly the anarcho-syndicalist strategy and to clear up a few misconceptions about the beliefs that may exist among other anarchists.

WHY ORGANISE ANARCHIST UNIONS?

Most anarchists would agree that the working-class must learn through struggle if they are to become revolutionaries. They will not become revolutionary without propaganda work, but propaganda work on its own is not enough.

At the moment this process of struggle is held back by the bureaucratic nature of the TUC unions. The State, by threatening to rob union bureaucrats of their salaries by sequestration of union assets, can always force them to cave in to anti-trade union legislation. It is obvious to every-one that this means that trade union power to improve wages and conditions is severely curtailed. Secondary action often vital to the success of strikes is impossible. Striking against anti-working class government policies is also impossible. The NALGO executive council, for instance, refused to co-ordinate a policy of non-implementation of the poll tax, which the delegate conference voted to introduce, on the grounds that it would lead to sequestration.

The era of Thatcherism has shown that the failure of reformist unions does not make their members more left wing or more militant. A great many workers continued to support the Tories while the power of their unions was

being eroded. Unofficial action by workers has not compensated for the refusal of trade unions to initiate official action.

For instance, when the NUS called off the sympathy strikes that had been called to help the P&O strikers because of the threat of sequestration, all the sympathy strikes ended immediately. In the absence of an alternative, the failure of reformist unions demoralises workers and makes them lower their expectations.



This is why the Direct Action Movement supports the establishment of anarcho-syndicalist unions.

HOW ARE ANARCHO SYNDICALIST UNIONS DIFFERENT FROM T.U.C. UNIONS?

The Dispatch Workers Industrial Union (DIWU) is a living example of our organisational principles. The DIWU membership is growing fast, organised in workplaces.

Anarcho-syndicalists are realistic enough to accept that it will be difficult to organise a workplace if we ask prospective members to accept all the aims and principles of the DAM. Rather, the constitution of the DIWU sets out principles of militant action such as a refusal to collaborate with the bosses, a ban on crossing picket lines and control by the rank and file rather than by paid bureaucrats.

ARE ANARCHO SYNDICALIST UNIONS NON-POLITICAL THEN?

Not at all. It is the role of anarchists within these unions to draw attention to the political implications of strikes and to argue our line in general.

These anarchists are working within a union committed to militancy, whose struggles are unrestrained by bureaucrats. This will lead to confrontations more full-blooded than those that can generally be expected in a TUC union. Therefore, their job of politicising workers will be far easier than attempts to politicise workers within a TUC union.

WON'T ANARCHO SYNDICALISTS BE ACCUSED OF SPLITTING THE T.U.C.?

Most anarchists can only be happy that most UK workers are unionised! However, would they really advocate anarchists setting up TUC unions in unorganised workplaces?

The attitude of many non-unionised workers to TUC unions is mistrustful. They believe the union will simply take their dues and disappear. The DIWU has shown that anarchist unions can inspire more enthusiasm. The TGWU couriers branch admitted to the BBC that the DIWU has ten times more members than them, even though the TGWU branch started off with £10 000 worth of funding.

BUT DO YOU WANT TO SPLIT ESTABLISHED TUC UNIONS?

We are not in favour of establishing tiny anarcho-syndicalist unions in already organised industries. This would be a pointless exercise. Our industrial policy is to establish anarcho-syndicalist industrial networks within these unions. These are networks of people committed to anarcho-syndicalist political ideas, as opposed to the rank and file groups of the failed International Socialist (now SWP) dominated National Rank And File Movement, which was active in the 70s and did not see the need for a political perspective.

These groups will argue our politics within the union and build towards the creation of an anarcho-syndicalist union.

"We've got to lay off some workers...which department has got the weakest union?"



This will only take place when those within the Industrial Network judge that it would have constructive results. Exactly how much support as a proportion of the workforce we will need before this is the case will differ from industry to industry.

Therefore, while we do not believe in destructive splitting, that is, attempts to undermine the TUC for the sake of it, we do not regard the existence of TUC unions as sacrosanct. Why should we?

DOES DAM BELIEVE THE UNION IS THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL OF REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY?

WHAT ABOUT THOSE OUTSIDE TRADE UNIONS? DON'T THEY HAVE A ROLE?

DAM members are involved in other struggles than those purely in the workplace. DAM members are active in the anti-poll tax movement, anti-fascism, and the support of prisoners such as Martin Foran. Articles in Direct Action, our newspaper, concern such issues as ecology, racism, sexism and Ireland.

The DAM believes that in a revolutionary situation the take-over of workplaces is vital. We believe that the existence of a union to prepare and organise such a takeover is necessary for its success.

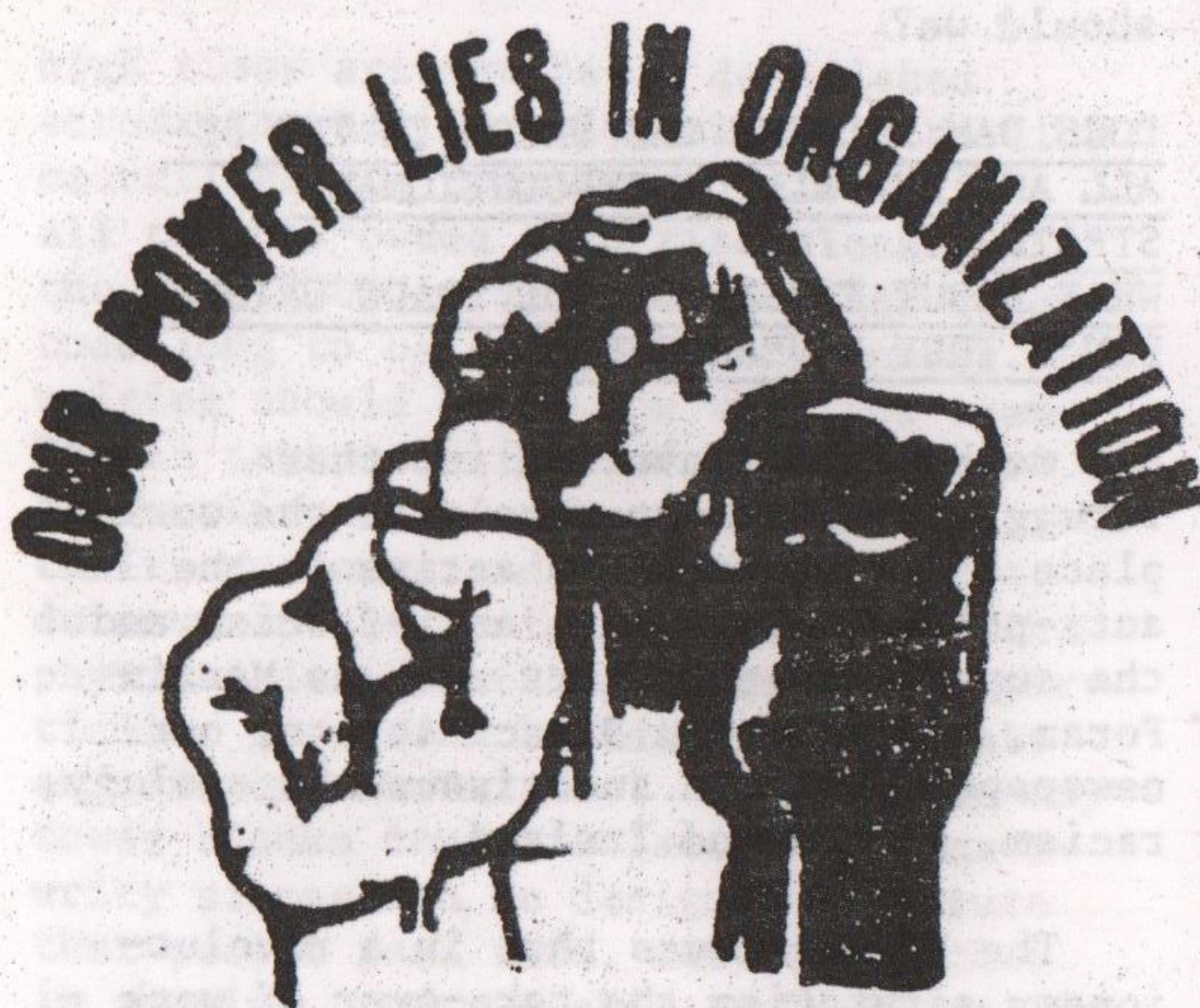
We do not believe that this alone is enough. It must be accompanied by insurrections and revolutionary takeover of communities.

WHAT IS WORKERS CONTROL ?
IS IT CONTROL OF SOCIETY BY
TRADE UNIONS ?

MOST PEOPLE HATE THEIR JOBS.
COME THE REVOLUTION THEY WONT
WANT TO CONTROL THEIR WORK-
PLACES, THEY'LL WANT THEM
SHUT DOWN.

"Workers control" means the control of production by the working class for the needs of the autonomous communities. Therefore, all the community decides what is produced and how society is to be organised.

It is not a society where individual groups of workers produce whatever will make the most money-Market Socialism. It will be a moneyless, communist society where working hours are reduced to a minimum. Society will work for the benefit of humans as producers and consumers of production. Therefore there will be no 'Worker-controlled' nuclear power stations or advertising agencies, no sharing eight hours a day to produce an endless proliferation of consumer goods.



For more information contact either
 Liverpool DAM, P.O. Box 110, Liverpool
 L69 8DP, or -
 the National Secretary, P.O. Box 29,
 SWPDO, Manchester, M15 5HW.



JOHN PEROTTI is an anarchist prisoner in the USA. He was originally jailed for a \$7 robbery fifteen years ago, but he has since had years added to his sentence as "punishment" for his involvement in prisoners' struggles within the penal system.

In particular he has fought for prisoners to become unionised through the IWW and be paid full wages for the work they do. (The U.S. prison system is an industry in its own right, exploiting the unpaid labour of prisoners.)

He has also fought against the brutal treatment of prisoners by prison guards - treatment which often amounts to torture - and in February 1990 he was involved in a hungerstrike, along with hundreds of other prisoners, in protest at their repressive treatment. The prison guards heard of the hungerstrike just before it was to take place, and on the assumption he was one of its organisers, 10 of them severely beat John and teargassed him in his cell.

He was subsequently transferred to another prison. He is the only prisoner in his cell block, and has now been kept in isolation for a total of 32 months. His food slot is locked shut, he is denied access to a radio and newspapers, his

BLACK CROSS

incoming and outgoing mail is frequently withheld, he is allowed only one visit per month, and is being denied the right to see a lawyer.

The conditions he is being held under amount to sensory deprivation. This January, he went on hungerstrike again, and after 19 days he slashed his wrists in protest at the conditions he is being kept in.

If you wish to write letters of protest to the prison director, or cards or letters of support to John Perotti, the address is:

JOHN PEROTTI 167712

(DIRECTOR)

Lebanon Correctional Facility,
 PO Box 56,
 Lebanon OH 43036,
 U.S.A.

**** THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS DENIED IT HOLDS POLITICAL PRISONERS. HOWEVER? THERE ARE 150 PRISONERS IN AMERICAN PRISONS FOR POLITICALLY MOTIVATED OFFENCES.**

They represent a wide variety of movements and cultures, but many are Black or Native Americans. What they have in common is that they went beyond what the State considers to be the bounds of "legal" protest in the course of their struggles. Once captured, they face particularly brutal prison conditions and long sentences.

THE BLACK CROSS is an organisation for the support of anarchist prisoners around the world, and for prisoners convicted of politically motivated activities.

Prisoners always need and welcome letters of support. However, many people are uncertain what to say in a letter to a prisoner they've never met, so here is a sample letter and a few guidelines.

Joe Anarchist,
 HM Prison Anyville,
 Somecounty.

10 Anystreet,
 Anytown,
 Anyshire,
 England.

Dear Joe Anarchist,

I am writing to express my solidarity and good wishes.

I have heard about your situation from (an article in Black Flag/Merseyside Anarchist/ from a friend/from an ABC leaflet etc.)

I am a member of Anytown (Anarchist group/DAM/ ABC/ Class War/ANG etc.) OR:

(I am not active in any group, but take an interest in prisoners' struggles,) and so I wish to express my moral support during your present imprisonment.

I hope you are keeping well,

A. Supporter

Letters are automatically censored, so be discreet about what political statements you put in. The screws might withhold anything too "extreme".

Even if the prisoner gets your letter, s/he may not be able to write back. Prisoners are often restricted as to the number of letters they can send, and so will have to give priority to family and close friends.

Birthday, christmas and easter cards (or for that matter, summer solstice, spring/autumn equinox cards or whatever) are just as welcome as letters.

If you doubt the value of writing to prisoners, bear in mind this statement from a political dissident:

"A prisoner may come to know about letters indirectly from the sarcastic remarks of her jailers, but it is enough to give her a wonderful feeling that she is not completely forgotten. That someone cares."

If you want to see "Hidden Agenda", you might have to wait now until it comes out on video. It had only a short run in Liverpool, and possibly the same has happened in other towns - perhaps because the subject matter of the film is considered "uncommercial".

Members of the Liverpool T.O.M. group were specially interested in seeing this film after hearing it was about the activities of the British state in Northern Ireland.

However, the film turned out to be very poor. As a "political thriller" it's less than thrilling and it's too far-fetched to be politically credible.

The plot is loosely based on the Stalker affair. An American journalist, in Northern Ireland to investigate human rights abuses, is driven to Dublin by a republican sympathiser to meet an unknown contact who claims to have information relevant to his investigation.

On the way they are both shot dead by the army. The army claim they drove straight through a road-block and tried to run down the soldiers who were in their way. But the forensic evidence sheds doubt on this claim; plus the fact that the American was not known to have republican sympathies and was a respected investigative journalist. So a senior British police officer is sent to investigate. He meets hostility from the Irish police, but he eventually gets to meet the unknown contact, who turns out to be an ex-member of the SAS with a tape that proves the CIA were plotting to overthrow the Labour government in the late 70s. He had sent the American journalist a copy of the tape and the SAS had shot him in order to recover it.

If all this sounds confusing - it is. In addition, the plot is so completely removed from the reality of British state repression of Irish republicans, and is too far-fetched to be credible, or to give any audience an insight into the political situation in the 6 counties.

February, saw the notorious Clause 25 of the Criminal Justice Bill become law. Clause 25 marks the first government attempt to enforce harsher sentences for homosexual acts in more than twenty years.

If life in the nineties hasn't become difficult enough for Gays, with increasing attacks, serious assaults and even murder, by bigots, Fascists and the police. Now the government have given the Police the back up to arrest anyone who they suspect of being gay. Soliciting laws already make it an offence for men to chat each other up on the street. It also outlaws "aiding homosexual acts", like letting two gay friends stay overnight in your house.

The indecency laws are used against men who engage in any form of sexual or affectionate contact outside their own homes.

At present police arrest and convictions of gay men are the highest since the 1950's. Convictions for indecency have doubled since 1985.

Through "special police activity" the Home Office have released figures that the conviction rates for gay men are 10 percent higher for these offences than for sex offences as a whole.

The reality is that, in 1989, ninety men were jailed for consenting homosexual behaviour-some for up to 5 years-and in all 2,311 men were convicted.

Now Clause 25 recommends soliciting, procuring and indecency be treated as "serious" sex crimes-on a par with indecent assault or child abuse-and punished with even harsher sentences.

Many more gay and bisexual men could go to jail for longer and longer periods.

Clause 25 is basically given the legal go ahead, for what has already become a reality for many gay men. The harassment, arrest and assault for being gay by a police-force rotten to the core with bigotry and corruption. Many gay men have even been arrested for trying to report attacks on themselves. Even gay murders have been investigated with nothing but a vague indifference.

STOP THE BIGOTS.

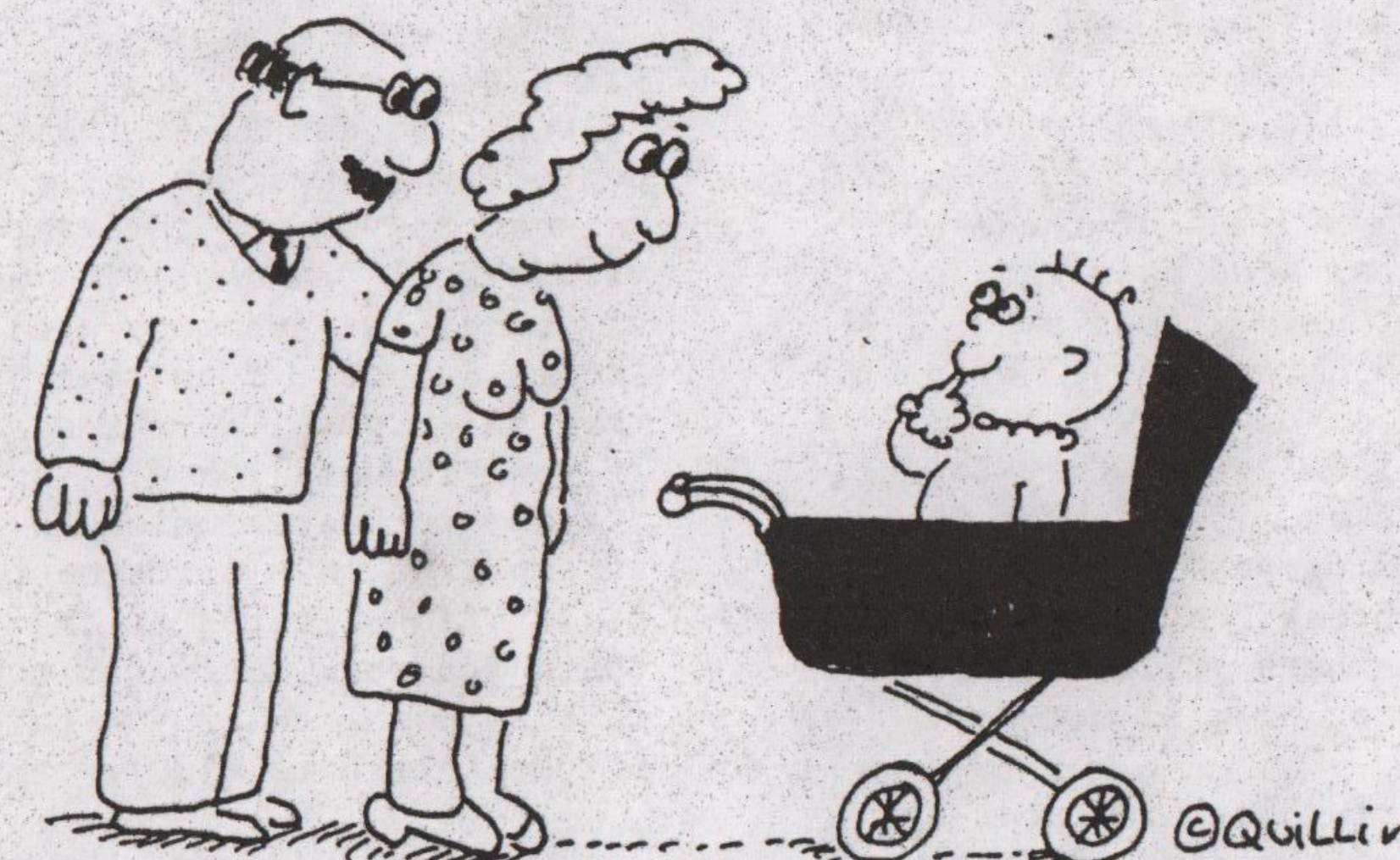
A truth must be faced, as it has been by many black people. That the police-force are not out there to protect gay-men from the bigots and the fascists, they are on the side of the fascist and bigots. And life will only get worse for the gay community as long as that is still believed. They must join the ranks of people who hold no illusions in the police-force, the people who realise that the only people who will defend them from hostile groups are themselves. Many lesbian and gays realise this already and are setting up self-defence groups, knowing full well that as long as bigots can attack them, and get away with it, then it will continue.

Gay men and Lesbians must not be forced underground again, after all the gains that have been made over the years. It would be a disaster to end up in a situation reminiscent of the old days, When to be gay

would mean harassment and eventual isolation from heterosexual friends and the rest of society.

Every socialist must oppose attacks on people's sexuality. That doesn't mean appealing to the police or parliament, or any other authority of the system to do something about it, for they are the problem. This means arguing against ignorance and bigotry and defending lesbian and gay-men in their right to live as they choose without harassment: and not allowing them to be used as scapegoats, as black people are for the problems caused by this system. We must build a working-class movement opposed to all forms of discrimination, a movement of liberation based in the communities and workplaces. Who will oppose all attacks on our class, by bigots and bigoted ruling class laws. It's time to make our own rules in the class and sexual struggle instead of playing by the rules of the ruling class.

it takes two heterosexuals



to make a homosexual

POLL TAX

Almost one year on in England and Wales, two in Scotland, and up to 14 million people are still refusing to be robbed in broad daylight by paying the Poll Tax. Scottish non-payment levels are UP on last year. In Northern Ireland they dare not even try it...Meanwhile, with Thatcher gone, the Tories are trying to find a way to kill the Poll Tax without burying themselves.....



In Liverpool, 124,000 out of the 327,000 on the register have still paid NOTHING. Only £35 million of the expected £119 million has been paid and, all told, 55 per cent have either paid nothing or are in arrears. (41% of people in Liverpool are on or below the so-called 'poverty line'). The City Council meet on March 6th and 13th to set the bills for the coming year and the bills seem certain to break the £500 barrier-increasing the numbers still further of those who cannot or will not pay.

In the face of this, Liverpool has begun, well behind the rest of Merseyside and the country, to try to clear up the backlog by starting the court cases. A token 130 people were summonsed before Christmas, rising to an estimated 80,000 summonses in recent weeks.

Starting on February 13th, some 9,000 people per week are being dealt with in two courts each Wednesday and Thursday. Hundreds have been turning up for their cases (400 on the first day) and hundreds of adjournments have been forced as the officials try to cope.

REMEMBER...

...If you get a summons, TURN UP AT COURT. The more people who turn up, the harder it is for the magistrates to rubber stamp us. People from the Anti-Poll Tax Federation will be there to give advice on how to string out your case. In the end, all the courts can do is issue a liability order which says simply that you owe the council money. They've still got to get you to pay!

While the council can issue dire warnings to non-payers there are few penalties they can impose as yet. Bailiffs CANNOT kick in your front door UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. So don't let them in and contact your nearest Anti-Poll Tax Union as soon as you are threatened with a visit. Poll Tax cannot be deducted from any benefits (pensions etc) other than Income Support. Even then, they can only take 5% (e.g. £1.85 for a single person) If your in work you will need the support of your workmates/union to fight any attempts at wage arrestment with industrial action. That's if they can find out where you work. At worst they can only take so much, £4 if you earn £80 pw, £8 if you take home £100).

Whatever happens, the council cannot just "take" your money, there is a long and drawn out procedure to be followed. It is in everyone's interest to delay and obstruct that procedure wherever possible.

JOBS AND SERVICES

Hundreds of council jobs are now also on the line as Liverpool tries desperately to balance its books, and make the workers pay for its cash crisis. More will follow, a result mainly of government cutbacks and the new Uniform Business Rate (the government now control over 85% of the council's money). As poll tax bills soar we are being asked to pay more, for less.

The best way to preserve jobs and services is the total defeat of the Poll Tax. But passive non-payment is not enough. Legal "loopholes" are bound to be closed, just as legal "rights" are being abolished. Apart from more militant actions - occupations of council meetings etc - we need to build anti-poll tax organisation in every street and every workplace. Bailiffs must face not isolated individuals, but whole communities. Strikes against wage arrestments must be supported and built for. Lobbying the council, although a tactic, failed months ago. We cannot have our hands tied in an attempt to "reinstate" 29 local councillors.

SOLIDARITY and DIRECT ACTION are needed to win.

March 6th - Council Budget meeting
Planned strike by Council workers against job cuts.

March 13th Full council meeting to set the Poll Tax.

New posters from:

BAILIFFS...



**MAKE MY DAY!
NO POLL TAX HERE**

**ATTACK
INTERNATIONAL**

**BM 6577
LONDON
WC1N 3XX**

£2.50 for 100
(includes p & p)

ORGANISE FOR MARCH 23rd

All Anti-Poll Tax Unions and anarchist groups should now be preparing for the national demonstration on Saturday March 23rd in London. This is the anniversary, near enough, of the "Battle of Trafalgar" when police attacked 200,000 demonstrators and made 350 arrests (100 more in later raids across the country). Last year separate marches were organised in Scotland on the same day. This year everyone's coming to London!

Bearing in mind the possibility of another police attack, the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign will be coordinating a legal back-up and monitoring system. This is to ensure that every marcher gets the maximum possible practical support and that every police action is subject to scrutiny.

The TSDC is calling for all APTU's and Federations to:

- i) Choose their own stewards to help on the day- to protect the demo, not police it.
- ii) Organise at least one First Aid adviser.
- iii) Choose legal liaison volunteers to communicate with the legal back-up system, distribute bust cards, get the names of people arrested, witnesses and police numbers and write a report to send in afterwards.

The TSDC will be organising a full Legal Coordination Office, and a bank of available solicitors as well as mobile Legal Liaison Volunteers. It will be essential for the welfare of all marchers that APTUs and individuals cooperate with this system. For more details on this contact the TSDC:

Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign
c/o Haldane Society of Lawyers
Rm 205 Panther House
38 Mount Pleasant
LONDON WC1X 0PA.

Coach tickets for the march from:
Liverpool APT Federation
75 July Road
Liverpool L6 (051-263 1809)
£5 unwaged, £10 waged.