

What must be abolished ... to secure liberty? First of all, of course, the thing that invades you most, that handicaps or prevents your free activity; the thing that interferes with your liberty and compels you to live differently from what would be your own choice. That thing is government.
Alexander Berkman, 'ABC of Anarchism'

letters

Dear comrades,
Thanks for the last edition of the Yorkshire Anarchist, which is good as usual. I must, however, take issue with this notion of 'post-industrial age'. This is a peculiarly euro-centric vision of the world. A good portion of the planet is pre-industrial, indeed a large part of the world population dies before its first birthday for want of basic food or water. In the third world industry, such as it is, is the traditional smoke-stack variety, heavy industrial dark satanic mills, highly labour intensive. Notions that "The traditional class-war fought on the industrial front...has all but disappeared" is, on a world scale, anything but true. Even in Europe, and in Britain, this is hardly the case, is it? Haven't we just seen mass industrial struggles of health workers, rail-workers, teachers, and many others? Wherever one set of people is forced to sell its labour power to the employers who buy it, the traditional class war will remain. True, sources of mass employment in traditional heavy industry, highly unionised and strike prone, has been decimated. Patterns of employment have changed, along with growth in unemployment, and this has caused a relative decline in strike statistics and union membership. However, more than 50% of all people in work are in unions, and industrial action is still a common feature of working life, even in white collar professions and among groups of workers who previously would never have dreamed of contemplating strike action. In the rest of Europe unions and strikes are still common as has been seen by a whole succession of general strikes in various countries just recently. This is not to say the other process 'the excluded and the included' is not also taking place, separately and at the same time. As workers we are of course also robbed and exploited as consumers, and just basically as people away from work. The class war ancient and modern continues.
Dave Douglass

news

THE 80th ANNIVERSARY of the death of IWW leader Joe Hill will be marked by a concert, exhibitions, poetry and films. The concert will be given by Sheffield Socialist Choir on 17-19 November. Contact 100 Leader Road, Sheffield, 0114-2330 525.
KATE WITHAM, a peace campaigner, has been charged with causing criminal damage of £21,500 to one of the radomes at the US spy base at Menwith Hill.

NOT CONTENT with sticking people in a hole to dig profits for them, RJB Mining is now forcing unemployed miners to pay for the privilege! Any former miner wishing to rejoin the industry must pay £88 for a medical, £65 'operational fee' and £1200 training costs - a total of £1353. No wonder Richard Budge, boss of RJB, can give himself bonuses of £42,531 on top of his £235,000 salary and fees.



dales red rambles

A Series of Guided Walks in the Yorkshire Dales for Socialists, Anarchists, Libertarians, Greens.
Sun 14th October 1995
BISHOPDALE
West Burton to Swinithwaite - 6 miles
Meet outside West Burton village School at 11.00am
Sun 12th November 1995
LOWER WHARFEDALE
Grassington to Yarnbury and Hebden - 7 miles
Meet Grassington Main Square at 10.45 am
Sun 10th December 1995
AIREDALE
Skipton to Flasby - 7 miles.
Meet outside Skipton Castle at 11.00am
On all walks bring walking boots, waterproofs, food & drink
For further info. tel 01756 799002



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anniversary of MOVE massacre

1995 is the tenth anniversary of the murder of eleven people in the police attack on the MOVE house in Osage Avenue, Philadelphia. Formed in 1972, MOVE is a predominantly Black radical utopian movement, with perhaps 100 - 150 members, based mostly in or around Philadelphia. MOVE's position is an uncompromising attack on a system they see as thoroughly corrupt, and which is destroying the planet through the use of modern technology. Although they are essentially pacifists, their openly defiant attitude has regularly attracted the ire of the authorities, re-

sulting in violent confrontations.
In 1977-78 Philadelphia police blockaded one of the group's compounds for nearly a year. During a police assault with high pressure water hoses, a bulldozer and automatic weapons a police officer was killed, almost certainly in the police crossfire. Nine MOVE members were each sentenced to 90-100 years in prison for his murder.
When MOVE members set up house at 6221 Osage Avenue, they immediately began mak- (continued on next page)



By R. Cobb reprinted from Extra (1968).

wa-ter waste!

YORKSHIRE, in keeping with the rest of the British Isles, has been bathed in sunshine during a summer that has broken all the records. Whilst the sun has been very welcome, the lack of rain (it was the driest summer since records began) has led to an 'inevitable' water shortage - inevitable in that over the years we have become accustomed to periods of drought leading to requests to cut down on water usage followed by hose-pipe bans and similar measures. There is, after all, a logical link between a lack of rainfall and a reduction in the availability of water! However, what has thrown the

Yorkshire Water has one of the highest leakage rates in the country

ity of people. But what of the stuff itself? What about water and the way we see it? Is it a resource or is it a commodity? In the capitalist society water, like everything else, is a commodity to be bought and sold in order to make profits. If, in the process of making profits, that commodity runs short, so be it - in fact so much the better, because a shortage of a commodity means that its price can be raised which in turn leads to greater profit. We live in a world where vast stores of foodstuffs are destroyed each year, not because all the people in the world have been fed but because prices need to be regulated. We live in a world where

landlords, both private and municipal, would rather have houses boarded up or knocked down than have them taken over by the homeless. We live in a world where pits are sealed for good, not because there is no longer a need for coal or because mining is a filthy and dangerous occupation, but because they do not make money. What kind of madness is this that allows such waste of the essentials of life?
The money-system is by its very nature wasteful. It is a system devised to benefit the few at the expense of the many. It is a system that is not only inefficient but morally indefensible. It is a system that will continue to wantonly squander necessities until we stop seeing the earth's resources as commodities and view them as assets for the benefit of all humankind. When will we stop the accountants and bureaucrats running the world? When will we take back what is ours?
Nick

cat amongst the pigeons this year is the revelation that Yorkshire Water loses 103 million gallons of treated water every day through leakage. A third of all the water that leaves the reservoirs never reaches the taps. Yorkshire Water has one of the highest leakage rates in the country but is by no means alone and the media has had a field-day attacking the water companies for the 'wasted water scandal'. The Labour Party, too, has joined the rumpus calling for tighter regulation and greater investment, whilst for the Tories, environment secretary John Gummer blamed it all on pre-privatisation bureaucracy. The real crux of the matter, however, was given air by a city analyst who explained that water companies had to ensure that they could both satisfy the needs of the consumer and the shareholder at the same time. There is very little point wasting paper discussing the obscene amounts company chairmen and their ilk pay themselves; the obscenity has been recognized by the major-

(continued from front page) -ing preparations for an expected assault, boarding up windows and building bunkers on the roof. Residents in the 95% Black neighbourhood were perplexed and worried by the new arrivals. Some complained about the stray dogs the MOVE members took in, others suggested that their children were ill-clothed and poorly fed (although MOVE denied the accusations about their children, and no complaint of maltreatment was ever officially filed). Particularly irritating for many residents was the use of a bullhorn and loudspeaker system that MOVE used to broadcast messages criticizing the government and attempting to incite their neighbours to support MOVE's attempts to free their imprisoned comrades.

Meetings between MOVE and other residents seemed to do little to diffuse the situation. Complaints to City Hall led to several meetings with the mayor. Although these meetings were apparently unproductive, he promised that, eventually, everything would be taken care of. In fact, the police had been surveilling the house for some time, and a SWAT-trained weapons specialist had begun working on a plan to remove MOVE from the house a year before the actual attack.

At first there were problems getting a warrant to justify an attack. The only clear-cut cases the police had related to misdemeanours, which would not justify the jail sentences the mayor and police wanted. An attempt to provoke a MOVE response in August 1984, using fifteen police wagons, two armoured cars, fire trucks with high-pressure hoses and mounted police, failed and the units withdrew soon after arriving.

The police and mayor played a waiting game. Rumours that

MOVE were stockpiling arms and explosives circulated. Loudspeaker announcements which allegedly showed threats to police and city officials were taped. The police continued work on a plan of attack, which was finally in place on 10th May. The following day a judge agreed to issue search and arrest warrants.

Again the police moved into position and evacuated nearby houses. Before the operation could begin, negotiations had to be attempted, primarily as a public relations exercise. The police soon claimed that MOVE had withdrawn from negotiations, although this was denied by MOVE negotiators. Not surprisingly the official story filled the local press and apparently with negotiations having failed, the police prepared to attack.

On Monday 13 May 1985 a police helicopter hovering over 6221 Osage Avenue dropped a green canvas bag onto the roof. Forty-five seconds later a bomb exploded. As a fireball engulfed the roof the temperature rose to 4000 degrees centigrade - so hot that houses 30 feet away burst into flames. Of the seven adults and six children in the building, only one adult and one child survived. The fire raged out of control, eventually destroying 60 neighbouring houses

The deaths, particularly of the children, sent shock waves through America, though the mayor stood by his decision. In this he was supported by other mayors, police chiefs, and some local clergy. Local and national press portrayed MOVE as an armed cult that terrorized a conservative community, and who had poured petrol on their own roof prior to the assault. They had,

as the Philadelphia district-attorney put it, 'essentially committed suicide and murdered their own children'.

A subsequent enquiry was critical of both police and mayor, although suggestions that incompetence or bad planning were to blame are difficult to sustain. Not only was the operation planned a year in advance, but prior to the bombing residents not initially evacuated, as well as police in the more forward positions surrounding the house, were withdrawn. At no point were the occupants of 6221 Osage Avenue

warned about the bomb. Significantly, one of the explosives used in the attack was intended for military use only and could not legally be supplied to civilian agencies. It seems likely that the explosive was supplied by the FBI. Federal agents acted as advisors to the police and helped to obtain an anti-tank gun and other specialist equipment used in the attack. This co-operation was not unofficial nor did it happen by chance.

SINCE the 1970s the US Government has been developing a counter-insurgency strategy that has included close co-operation between federal bodies and local police. Various organizations and government bodies are concerned with civil disturbances, and many thousands of personnel

have been trained in counter-insurgency techniques. One government expert testified before Congress that 'pre-emptive strikes' against opponents of the US are necessary, even if there are likely to be 'civilian casualties', and this applies 'whether you are talking about Lebanon or Philadelphia'.

EIGHT YEARS after the attack on MOVE, federal agents attacked and destroyed the headquarters of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, killing 72 people. The attack had been planned several months in advance. While the buildings were still burning the FBI began claiming that the 'cult' had made a suicide pact and started the fire themselves. Before the attack the FBI moved the media two miles away from the site - all information traffic was strictly controlled. Before anyone except law enforcement officials had examined the site, 12 bulldozers levelled the ruins. Neither pretext for the raid - that the group possessed automatic weapons or that children were at risk of abuse - has been substantiated.

Interviewed at the time Ramona Africa, one of the MOVE survivors, said "It's May 13th all over again...I hope it is an example for people...to stop hallucinating about the system they're dealing with and realize that this system is insane." Steve.



The information above was taken from extracts of "Attention MOVE! This is America!" by Margot Harry, published in *Race & Class* #28, 1987 and *FBI vs. the Branch Davidians: assembling an alternative understanding* by Dina Fisher in *Anarchy: a journal of desire armed* #38, 1993

Left: the fire raged out of control for six hours

Anarchist Discussion Forum, Hebden Bridge, 17/06/95
'The Relevance of Syndicalism to Anarchism in Contemporary Society'

Two guest speakers had been invited to offer contrasting views on the subject. First was Brian Bamford who suggested that syndicalism was a part of modernism and that as such it had outlived its usefulness. In his opinion the movement had grown out of the changes in society that had transformed artisans into factory workers, that changed a workforce of skilled individuals into the cogs of mass industrialisation. He believed that anarchists had not been wrong to adopt syndicalism during that period of time (if only as means of retaining relevance to the emerging industrial proletariat) and that it had continued to be useful even as late as the 1980s, but he felt the movement lacked vision - 'it had loads of muscle but was short on brains'. He also felt that syndicalism had had a corrupting influence on anarchist thought and action - it had created ideas of the masses, of the standard, of the regimented,

Syndicalism - revolutionary trade unionism. Devoted to the overthrow of capitalism and the state, its primary weapon is the General Strike. It sees anarchist activity based around producer groups, which would form the basis of a future federal non-state society. A significant force in the first half of the century, particularly in Spain, where syndicalist unions are still active.

ideas he felt were incompatible with the libertarian essence of anarchism. Whilst Brian conceded that the general strike still does have some relevance (though limited) he concluded that syndicalism would not bring about an anarchist society. He felt that it was no longer relevant in a postmodern world and that along with Marxism and Fordism it 'should be consigned to the Modernist junkyard'.

Derek Pattison, the second speaker, argued that anarchism itself was a product of modernism and claimed that anarchists had involved themselves in the field of syndicalism because not to have done so would have made anarchism irrelevant in a changing world. The syndicalist unions also allowed anarchists a place to organize outside the parliamentary parties. He felt that there needed to be some structured mechanism 'to build a new world in the shell of the old', syndicalism provided this. He argued that anarchism

is materialist in essence and is therefore a part of modernism, and felt that anarcho-syndicalism was the best tactic for overthrowing capitalism and its executive arm, the state. Collective action was the most productive way of bringing about change. Syndicalism was, he believed, extremely relevant in SE Asia and Eastern Europe and we should be linking with those people as well as with workers and the unemployed in this country to bring about revolutionary change.

The discussion that followed these two papers was passionate and at times heated. Initially, debate was hampered by misconception - the non-syndicalists believing that syndicalists spent all their time at the factory gate and the latter imagining the former to be 'anti-organization'. Having got over these prejudices, both wings were able to debate properly the merits of syndicalist strategy. There was common ground on a number of points, but one issue that could not be reconciled was the nature of work. Many of the

Northern Anarchist Network Conference, Sheffield, 17/06/95

As a follow up to an initial NAN meeting held in Manchester some months previously, Sheffield Anarchist Group hosted a weekend long conference over the 7th and 8th of June. Designed partly as a social event, partly as an educational one and partly as a catalyst for further co-operation between different groups and individuals in the area, the overall consensus was that it had been a success, spoilt only by a poor turnout given prior enthusiasm. That said, individuals from Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow and Leicester did attend and contribute, as well as people from national bodies such as Class War, the Solidarity Federation and Subversion.

Workshops on single-issue politics, the Green Movement, Workplace and Community Struggles, the Internet, Prisoner Solidarity and Ireland (with special thanks to the Workers Solidarity Movement) provided the main focus to the weekend as well as a general discussion on the way forward for anarchism in general and the federation in particular. Cheap vegan food was provided. The Sheffield Anarchist bookstall sold a wide range of literature and on the Saturday night we put on an anarcho-pub quiz.

The outcome of the conference was an agreement that the federation should be committed to class-struggle anarchist politics and the next get-together would be held in Leeds sometime in September. Thanks to all those who made it worthwhile - looking forward to meeting up again!
Steve, Sheffield Anarchist Group

syndicalists present argued that all work and all jobs should be defended, others declared that anarchism should be about the destruction of 'useless' work.

It was an interesting debate and I left with a clearer picture of what role syndicalists saw for themselves at the end of the twentieth century. Although I believe it would be foolish for the whole anarchist movement to sink its energies into industrial unionism, it is reassuring to know that the principles and practices of anarcho-syndicalism are alive and well on the shop-floor as well as the community.

Nick



Modernity is rooted in the changes that began in the mid-sixteenth century, when the old traditional systems of authority - based on the rules of village life, the church or royalty - began to be replaced with the new authorities of objective science, universal morality and law.

For a report of current syndicalist activity, see the Solidarity Federation pamphlet *Anarcho-Syndicalism in Puerto Real: from shipyard resistance to direct democracy & community control* available from Norwich Solidarity Centre, c/o PO BOX 73, Norwich, NR3 1QD price £1.00 incl. postage.