

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

Hello and welcome to issue 24
of Merseyside Anarchist.



For some time now, some people have complained that our little newsletter looks more like a PUNK FANZINE on the outside than the serious political journal that it obviously is! Well, to mark the coming of President Bush's "new world order", and to show that we do listen to readers' criticisms, we've decided to spruce up our title page. Out goes the old and beloved 'circled A' and in comes the new, slick, computer-generated version you see today. We hope you like it. In addition to this, there will be a few changes to the newsletter collective from next month. We shall wait and see what the effects of this new regime will be!

We've also received a superbly laid out and typeset article in response to the "History Isn't Over" article in issue 23, which we print beginning on page 12. This is the kind of correspondent we need! Nice one.

See you next month
THE NEWSLETTER COLLECTIVE

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 March issue (no 25)
MONDAY FEBRUARY 25th

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.

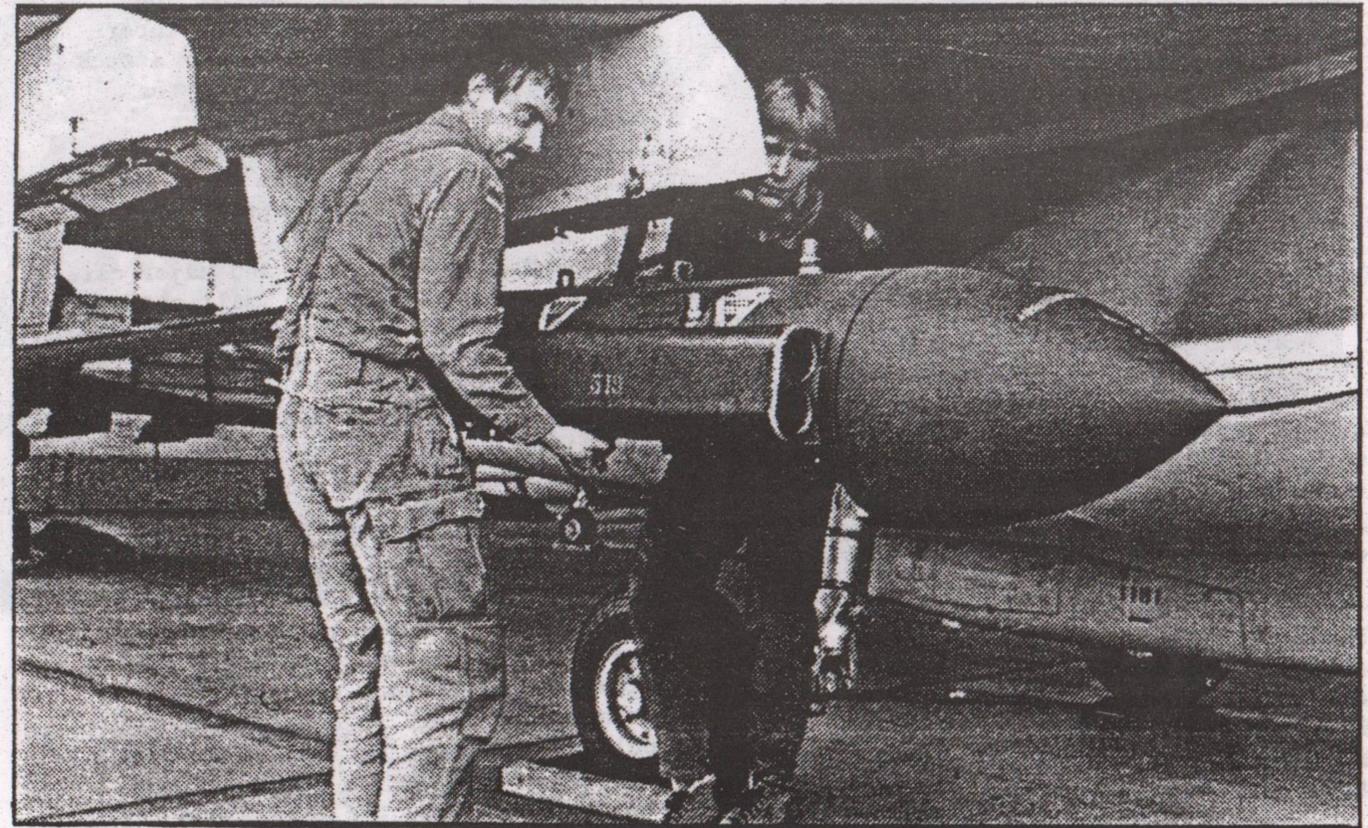
Anarchism will be created by millions of people, not a dictatorial elite (we are not marxist-Leninists), and all will have their part to play in shaping it. Power will lie with the organisations thrown up by and for the revolution, not with the political parties who will try to dominate and destroy them.

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.

THIS IS THE NEW WORLD ORDER



Once upon a time, Iraq was part of the British Empire. When it eventually gained limited freedom from imperial control it did so only at the cost of being partitioned. Britain drew a line in the sand, created Kuwait and kept it under direct rule, placing a pliant local family (the al-Sabah's) on the newly created throne for appearances sake.

This historical fact isn't important because it may lend credence to Iraqi claims over Kuwait, but because it shows that the present war, as with a great many other conflicts in the Middle East, arises directly from Western interference in the region.

Even Saddam Hussein himself came onto the scene largely as a result of American maneuvering. At the height of the Cold War the US became worried about the

growing strength of the Iraqi Communist Party and, through the CIA, backed a military coup in 1968 involving an ambitious young army officer: Saddam. Instead of letting the Iraqi people chart their own political course, the Americans helped a dictatorship to power and watched thousands die in the bloody repression that followed. The eventual by-product of all this was to transform Saddam from a barrack-room conspirator to head of one of the region's most powerful states. Of course, he was later to prove useful to the West once more by his containment of the Iranian Revolution in an 8 year war which cost over 1 million lives.

But at the end of the day Saddam went too far. This Western-created Frankenstein not only made links with the Soviet Union, but by invading Kuwait committed several cardinal sins.

Not only was a friendly government overthrown and the capitalist 'stability' of the Gulf disturbed, but, worst of all, the West's supply of cheap oil was threatened.

Iraq's invasion, though it triggered stock market scares and edged the West nearer to recession, gave the US an opportunity to begin implementing the "new world order" that George Bush had spoken of at the end of the Cold War. While the Soviet Union was preoccupied with domestic crises and the United Nations (for the first time in its history) wasn't split by superpower rivalry, Bush and his allies were able to use the UN to mount an action very reminiscent of the old world order - war against a third world country to secure imperial interests.

Western governments launched a media offensive to convince the world that they were acting to protect the freedom of small nations and to deter aggression, while US spokesmen conveniently forgot their own invasions of Panama and Grenada and the American funding of the civil war in Nicaragua.

With much arm-twisting behind the scenes the UN passed 12 resolutions against Iraq, while backing sanctions and eventually a January 15th deadline for withdrawal. In fact all this was a smokescreen to give Britain and America time to finalise their war plans.

In recent years US governments have ensured that their foreign military adventures were always swift and decisive. In Vietnam, America at first committed only small numbers of troops in a 'policing' action to shore up their ally against communist insurgents, but as the fighting intensified the US was dragged into a full-scale and (by then) unwinnable war. This slow build-up guaranteed an American defeat not only because of the failure to deliver the necessary early battlefield successes, but by giving the anti-war movement at home time to turn the tide decisively against US involvement.

Bush wasn't about to repeat this mistake and so assembled a huge force in and around Saudi Arabia in the hope of quickly ending Iraqi resistance. The US war plan also aimed to keep Western casualties at a minimum by using air superiority against the Iraqi military before committing any ground troops.

This, and the propaganda lies we've been hearing about the supposed accuracy of these air strikes, show that American officials have learned two other lessons from Vietnam. First that body bags returning in significant numbers soon dampens domestic enthusiasm for war, and second, that the carpet bombing of 'enemy' civilians flashed to TV screens around the world quickly drains off any moral superiority you may have had at the start of the conflict, switches international sympathy to those under attack and gives endless ammunition to the opposition at home.

Beyond the securing of a cheap oil supply, we need to understand what the West now hopes to get by going to war. We already know that Bush and Major care little for the "rights of small nations" and less about "restoring the legitimate government of Kuwait" - after all, "legitimate governments" in "small nations" have been created and snuffed out so many times by America and Britain that no-one's even counting anymore!

On the surface it appears that the hands of the military are tied by the UN resolutions which sent them to the desert. None of these goes any further than authorising force to retake Kuwait, but Western ambitions now stretch much further than that. In Bush's eyes it would be dangerous for Saddam even to be alive, let alone in power, at the end of the war and the allied bombing of Iraq should be seen in these terms. Bombing Baghdad won't dislodge an army from Kuwait but it will cause hardship and resentment amongst Iraqi's who, it is hoped in Washington, will depose Saddam. Failing that, the secondary aim is to destroy Iraq's nuclear, chemical and military capability for the foreseeable future - even if the Iraqi leadership is unchanged America and its allies in the region want to leave them unable to take revenge at a later date.

Even the best laid plans can screw up, and this it true more so in war than in most fields of human activity. World War 1 is the classic example of this. When Austria invaded tiny Serbia in 1914 they expected a short sharp campaign, yet within weeks the whole of Europe was under arms. Now that the fighting has started in the Gulf no-one can confidently predict what will happen. All we can do is to point out three of the most likely outcomes. First (and most probable) is a relatively quick



Western victory in Kuwait - the Iraqi's driven over the border, the royal family restored, a treaty signed and maybe some sort of force to keep an eye on the border depending on the situation inside Iraq. This would mean that cheap oil would once again flow from Kuwait to the West (after war damage had been paid for), and that America would be encouraged to use its military might in solving other disputes around the world - taking on completely Britain's old role of global policeman. This would be disastrous for anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles everywhere.

The second (and most desirable) scenario is that of a Western defeat. This could only happen through a failure to quickly break the Iraqi army in Kuwait. Heavy Western losses would build anti-war sentiment at home, increase support in the Middle East for Iraq and prolong the war until the desert summer begins in March, making fighting difficult. A Western defeat would weaken the British and American states. Billions would have been spent on the war with no returns, the West would have to

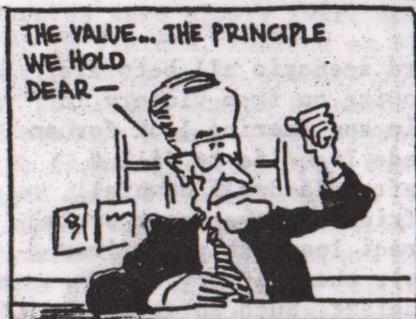
pay a realistic price for its oil, the US appetite for military intervention would be destroyed and (without US backing and in the face of Arab hostility), Israel would be forced to concede to the legitimate demands of the Palestinians.

In the third scenario all bets are off. If, following on from victory in Kuwait, Britain and America look for an excuse to invade Iraq (ie to fill a power vacuum after Saddam's downfall, to install a friendly government or to capture the Iraqi leadership for 'war crimes' trials), then victory could soon turn to defeat. Such an action would split the UN coalition as Arab states such as Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia have already said they won't fight inside Iraq, seeing that as being unwarranted Western interference in Arab affairs. Even if the Saudi's could be persuaded to let Western troops operate from their country in an invasion of Iraq, its not beyond the bounds of possibility that such a conflict could see Iran, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and the PLO lining up against Britain, the USA

and Israel with untold consequences.

In Britain the Gulf war is already affecting working class people. The massive expenditure needed to prepare for and then to fight it is leading directly to cuts and loss of services and jobs. Even before the first bombs were dropped, the government had spent £1 billion and a full scale war will cost in excess of half a billion dollars a day. No state can pay out this kind of money without attacking the living standards of the working class at home

Added to this we've seen further increases in state power: limited con-



scription has been introduced and military police are hunting down deserters, military censors view all film from the Gulf before deciding what's safe to show and no doubt we're being lied to every day about the extent of allied losses and the murder being rained on Iraqi towns and cities. The state has also used the war to step up its racist attacks on Arabs living in Britain. At the time of writing over 70 Iraqi's and Palestinians are being held without charge in British jails awaiting deportation. Some of them are here after fleeing persecution in Iraq but mere facts like these don't carry much weight with the Home Office, who see the war as simply a means of stepping up the weekly deportation rate. Prison camps are being prepared on Salisbury Plain to hold Iraqi's and military restrictions will be in force for miles around.

Taking their cue from the actions of the state, British nazis have switched their attacks from Jewish synagogues and cemeteries to Muslim mosques - a clear confirmation (if any were needed) that whatever overt political line they take, the reality of the far right is to use any situation they can to stir up racial tension and to carry out attacks on minority communities in Britain.

Let us make no mistake - war in the Gulf means cuts, censorship, internment, martial law and increased racism at home. As anarchists struggling against the British state we see no conflict in linking our opposition to the war and its effect on our class here. But while we are calling for Western defeat and withdrawal we must also make it clear that we see Saddam Hussein as no less an evil as colonial rule itself, indeed both are symptoms of the imperialism of the West. We want an Arab solution to this war, we want Western troops out and (unlike CND, the Labour Party and the soft left) we are opposed to sanctions against Iraq, seeing them merely as another form of intervention in Arab affairs. To argue that European and US governments have the right to starve the Iraqi people and to kill them by denying them medicines is equal to saying that the West has the 'right' to impose a solution on the Middle East with bullets and bombs - it's racist, it's imperialist and it needs to be challenged constantly through active anarchist involvement in the anti-war movement.

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KURDISH LIBERATION

The Gulf War has focussed international attention on the Middle East and a by-product of this has been to raise the profile of the struggle between the Palestinians and the state of Israel. However, another equally important conflict in the region gets less coverage: that of the Kurdish people. The following article illustrates how and why the Kurds are oppressed, and why anarchists should support their struggle.

Kurdistan is not an internationally recognised country but encompasses parts of Iraq, Iran and Turkey and smaller sections of Syria and the USSR. The Kurdish people number 30 million, but have little international recognition. The Kurds want to unite their divided peoples and set up a free independent republic. In order to bring this about the Kurdish Peoples Liberation Army was set up in 1984, principally to fight an armed struggle against Turkish imperialists and their NATO and US backers.

Kurds suffer from extreme racism and oppression of their culture by the authorities in all the countries in which they live. In Turkey their language is forbidden, when a child is born to Kurdish parents it is registered as a Turk. Those who defend their Kurdish identity are condemned to the lowest paid jobs or prison. Kurds face intense repression and persecution. Over the last decade more than forty people were tortured to death in the dungeons of Diyarbakur prison because they wouldn't sing the Turkish national anthem or take part in Atatürkist education. During the 1980's Iraqi troops gassed 5,000 Kurds to death in the town of Halabja while over 27,000 were killed by the Iranian army under Khomeini.

Many Kurds have fled and have become camp dwellers held behind barbed wire and treated like prisoners. They are not recognised as political refugees as they have no nation state and no identity. Meanwhile counter-insurgency squads of the Turkish army frequently raid the remaining villages. Psychological terror tactics are used to humiliate the villagers. Inhabitants are rounded up, women and children are lined up on one side and the men on the other. The men are stripped and tortured in front of their families. String is then

tied to the mens sexual organs and the women have to parade round the village leading the men by the string. In March of 1990 a private in the Turkish army was awarded 15 days leave by his commanding officer for killing two Kurdish villagers. Relatives of those killed in this way are met with no inquiries or investigations and those responsible stay in their positions. Turkish state counter-insurgency squads often disguise themselves as guerillas in order to commit atrocities. In January 1990 28 Kurds in Sete near Yukeskova were massacred using this tactic.

In Kurdistan the sole administrator is the military. Kurds have been forced to eat excrement to make them obedient to the state, the army kills Kurds at random, burns the bodies and claims that they were guerillas.

By contrast the Kurds have, in order to publicise their cause, taken foreign hostages. Monsieur More, a French businessman was held for several months in 1984, but was so well treated that a year after his release his wife and son returned, stayed with the Kurds and completed a book called 'Les Kurdes Ajourdinie' which chronicled the Kurdish struggle and was published in France in order to raise the profile of their oppression.

The Kurdish struggle is facing increasingly strong-arm tactics from the Turkish government. In April the maximum penalty for "seperatist activities" was doubled and Turkish courts are imprisoning Kurds without bringing the charge of membership or support of an illegal organisation. A recent trial in Lizre resulted in the imprisonment of 74 Kurds (half of whom were illiterate) despite their testimonies being written by the police and the defendants being



forced to sign them. Turkish papers which have reported the Kurdish struggle have had censorship and banning orders used against them by the Turkish Interior Ministry. This is in response to the intensification of army activity in Kurdistan last June. Some examples of the army actions that didn't make the news were: 4,000 peasants near Hilal forced to leave their village and settle in a different area after being encircled by the military, the rape of a Kurdish girl by soldiers near Siirt and at Peravi the army planted mines around the village to stop people leaving.

The Kurdish Peoples Liberation Army has been fighting back. In July they shot down two Turkish army helicopters and have mounted a series of ambushes, killing over forty soldiers. They have also been urging other Kurds to resist forcible induction into the village protection militia by the Turkish army.

The authorities are oppressing the Kurds for a number of reasons. The Kurds do not pose an electoral or military threat to those governments and their lands are not endowed with great mineral wealth. However, the Kurds semi-tribal, religious and cultural way of life poses a perceived destabilising effect. Also Kurdistan borders four countries and in a strategic and military sense is an area which no nation wishes to lose. Concessions to the Kurds would also encourage other oppressed indigenous peoples to take action within the region. The Kurds

open opposition to state rule and suppression has given the excuse to the military to take out their aggression on the Kurds. The state and those in power want to crush all those who pose a threat to their domination and maintain the Kurds as an underclass, denying even their rights to water their crops by holding them in refugee camps after forcing them from their villages and towns.

Faced with persecution, refugee camps, lack of international support and suppression of their identity, the Kurds have no-one to turn to and no choice but to fight. They have existed in the region for 4,000 years and yet their extinction is the aim of the various governments under which they live. Though their cause cannot be strictly described as Anarchist or Class Struggle, and though the Kurds themselves are not without faults (for example their strict societal roles for women), their struggle should be actively supported by Anarchists and all others who believe in self-determination. We all live in fear of state repression but the Kurds have no rights to an identity or a public platform. We cannot stand back while rapes, murders and psychological violence is practised against the Kurds.

Become a part of Kurdish solidarity and liberation; Join the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, Unit 6, Millers Terrace, London, E8. Membership is £1 for unwaged, £5 waged and £10 for organisations.

SQUATTING

Squatting has always been one way to solve the housing crisis for homeless people. Unoccupied houses, flats or land are occupied by those who need them as an alternative to life on the streets. Squatting challenges the notion of private property, a notion which leaves buildings empty while people sleep on the streets. However, squatting goes beyond being merely a band-aid on a crisis created by land speculation and private ownership, it can also be part of creating real alternatives to capitalist society. Not only is the act of squatting an act of self-determination, a direct action in itself, the communities created by the squatters can often be the catalyst for changing social relations between the participants as people arrange their own lives and distribute power equally. They can also be centres for political activity.

Political motivation is at present more a feature of squatting in Europe than it is in Britain. Most squatting in this country tends to be low-key and carried out for the purely pragmatic reason that the people concerned need somewhere to live. Mass squatting on the scale of whole streets or neighbourhoods is non-existent.

But the European Squatters Conference held in Hamburg in December (and attended by people from ten different countries) demonstrated how widespread squatting is across the continent. The

conference discussed several topics of concern to squatters. However, on the subject of squatting itself, the most interesting presentation was of the neighbourhood squat at Mainzer Strasse in East Berlin. This demonstrated what is possible with a big politically motivated squat. Such squats though, inevitably attract special attention from the police (probably because of their success in challenging capitalist structures) and they may, as at Mainzer Strasse, be subjected to violent evictions.

The Mainzer Strasse squatters were forced out by a police attack on 14th November. Before this, the area had served as a vibrant centre for the left in East Berlin, twelve buildings including gay and lesbian houses, a bookshop and a coffee house were squatted by over 100 people for more than six months.

Prior to the police attack, a city-wide squatters plenary, including representatives from over 130 squats in East Berlin, was trying to negotiate with the city council. In a city with tens of thousands of homeless, 25,000 flats vacant in East Berlin alone and soaring rents, squatting has become the number one solution for finding shelter.

No evictions were expected till after the local elections on Dec 2nd. But on November 12th police made a surprise on

three long term squats and met little resistance.

Once word of the attack spread, a demonstration erupted, and traffic barricades were erected. Police drove through Mainzer Strasse firing CS gas and water blasts into the squats and regular tenants buildings alike as a provocation. Once the police retreated over 1,000 supporters poured into the area and prepared defences.

Some politicians, neighbours and others supporting the squatters tried to negotiate a solution with the governing coalition, while the Social Democrats the police and West Berlin's mayor began a campaign to criminalise the squatters.

In the early morning of Nov 14th over 4,000 police and anti-terrorist units sealed off the neighbourhood and fired more CS gas, rubber bullets, shock grenades and live ammunition. Squatters held out for three hours, but in the end over 400 were arrested, 2 shot and injured by stray bullets and one woman remains in hospital from police beatings. Mainzer Strasse was sealed off by police while construction crews demolished the houses.

The Alternative List left the governing coalition they had made with the Social Democrats in protest. Some believe that the SD's are looking for the law and order ticket in the upcoming elections and also that they see any example of self-determination as a threat to the new "Greater Germany". The opposition has to be pacified or crushed especially in the designated capital.

The police are also known to be following guidelines set by the TREVI Commission ('Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism, Violence International').

which functions as the West European counterinsurgency planning committee and whose guidelines state that all squats in Western Europe must be empty by 1992 - the year of European unification.

Another example of the possibilities - and problems - of squatting is the squat opened last November in Rue Ozanam, Lyon, France. The house is in a street due for demolition and 're-development', despite all the houses being in a habitable condition. The squatters wanted to challenge the developers and the town council which had sold the land to them, and also to create space to live communally and to develop their own community projects.

In the first few weeks they were faced by thugs (paid by the developers) trying to break into the house, and repeated illegal attempts by the gas, electricity and water companies to disconnect the services. These were all successfully resisted (in one case workers were prevented from demolishing the block of houses when the keys from their bulldozer mysteriously vanished!). The squatters have managed to have an eviction order stopped until March.

They have now set up an info centre, a photo laboratory and music practise room, plus a veggie restaurant and a squatters support group.

The future of the squat is uncertain, as nobody knows what will happen in March when the stay of execution runs out on the eviction order. But the squatters of Lyon are determined ^{to resist} the yuppification of their town. In their words "We will continue to fight a housing policy which evicts the poor from the inner city and builds for the rich".



THE TRUTH ABOUT

MARXISM

For too long now, the anarchist movement has been critical of "marxists" in a very simple-minded way. As a result, many anarchist papers carry articles that slag off "marxists" but gloss over important facts along the way. This happened in the second half of an otherwise excellent article called "History Isn't Over" (Merseyside Anarchist, Dec. 1990), where the author says that recent events in Eastern Europe make it clear that that marxism doesn't work, and that it never could because it doesn't aim to get rid of the state.

Well, its obvious that *something* isn't working in Eastern Europe, but is that something "marxism"?

For starters, lets make it clear that although Marx wrote hundreds of pages about his theories of class struggle, he didn't write very much at all about actually using them to help bring about a revolution.

THE BIRTH OF LENINISM

Lenin was one of the first to attempt to fill this gap, and he came up with the idea of the party as a "vanguard" of professional revolutionaries together with the most militant workers. Its important to realise that the vanguard party is justified by Lenin's *own* belief (stated in "What Is To Be Done?") that the working class by themselves can never be revolutionaries, because they can only develop a "trade union consciousness" that is at best reformist.

During an uprising, the vanguard party takes over the state - on a purely temporary basis, just for the "transitional period" until the revolution is won. Then, says the theory, the state will wither away and the vanguard party will dissolve itself into the communist utopia it has created.

So much for the theory. As we all know, it didn't happen quite like that in Russia after 1917.

The problem is that once in power

the Leninist vanguard party simply *stays* there. In trying to defend the fledgling workers' state it has created, it digs itself in so deeply that it is no more likely to simply wither away than any other government.

At the heart of the problem is a process called *substitution*, where workers control and collective decision making are replaced by the authority of a self-appointed elite - the vanguard party.

Of course, this starts to happen long before any revolution. In fact, it begins with Lenin's basic assumption that we're too thick to think and decide for ourselves. This assumption shapes the actions of the vanguard party in every struggle, and if an uprising is successful makes it almost certain that it will react to the inevitable onslaught from the rest of the capitalist world (sanctions, embargos, trade blockades, guerilla attacks and even outright war) by further substituting itself and its organisation for the mass activity and control of working class people.

In doing this it gradually destroys all the reforms that have been made, until it eventually shows its true colours when it sees no other option than to wipe out the inevitable dissent (Kronstadt) bloodily.

WILL THE REAL KARL MARX PLEASE STAND UP...

But that's LENINISM, not "marxism". And its certainly not the only way to put Marx's ideas into practice. Stalinism, Trotskyism and Maoism are all variations on the Leninist theme, and like Leninism they also describe themselves as "marxist". More recently, groups as diverse as the Red Army Faction, the Situationists and the Vietcong have also called themselves "marxist".

The confusion this causes is made worse when many "marxist" groups insist that theirs is the only true marxism - or at least, that theirs is both the biggest and the best.

This confusion exists for two main

DON'T YOU KNOW THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BY THE WORKING CLASSES THEMSELVES ?

NO, BUT IF YOU HUH A FEW BARS I'LL TRY AND FAKE IT.



reasons. First, because Marx's writings aren't always consistent: there are both libertarian and authoritarian strands in them. Second, Marx's writings aren't a set of practical ideas, like a recipe or an instruction sheet. They're a set of analyses of the nature and workings of capitalism. This makes them a bit abstract, and so all these different groups are able to claim that theirs is the only correct interpretation.

WHAT ANARCHISTS BELIEVE

But now lets look at what we, as class-struggle anarchists, believe. We agree that there *is* a class struggle, and that it is crucial in shaping our society. We would like to see a post-revolutionary society without social classes and without the state. And we think that this can only be brought about by the mass action of working class people. Well, ALL of these ideas are present in Marx, along with many others that are part of class-struggle anarchist thought.

For example, alienation: the idea that many workers are exploited in such crappy conditions that over time they become enmeshed in capitalism's way of life. The brutal rhythm of production-for-profit dulls their thoughts and controls their lives. They come to see themselves and their world as out of control and unchangeable. To such people collective action is a bad joke, and the possibility of real change only makes them angry, since it reminds them of all the

ordinary desires they've had to suppress just to survive.

This is an extreme picture to make a point: few real people are screwed up by capitalism in such a simple way. But alienation is used to explain our society by class-struggle anarchists just as much as it is by "marxists", although the idea came from Marx.

Other Marxist ideas that have been absorbed by class-struggle anarchists concern the "commodity society", and the way that capitalism bombards us with useless things in its never-ending attempts to both keep up profits and justify its own existence.

At this point we could say that class-struggle anarchists are at least as Marxist as any of the so-called "marxist" groups and parties. But lets go one step further (and risk pissing off absolutely everybody, "marxists" and anarchists alike) and say that *in their practice class-struggle anarchists are usually MORE-Marxist than any of the self-proclaimed "marxist" parties*, like the SWP or RCP.

This is because Marx always emphasised that capitalism is a *social system*. He saw how relationships between people are shaped by complex interactions between them and the conditions they live and work in. He understood that those conditions even play a vital part in shaping the kind of people we are.

So-called Marxists like the SWP *say* that they believe and understand all this, of course. Yet whenever they actually do anything they insist on treating people as if they're (a) all the same, and (b) a bit thick (of course, this is a direct result of their Leninism, which tells them that actually we *are* all the same, and a bit thick too!) Class struggle anarchists don't often make such patronising assumptions. To the extent that they recognise the social nature of politics, class struggle anarchists are closer to Marx than any Leninist.

SO WHAT ? ?

By now you might be thinking: so what? Okay, so what we're criticising is really Leninism etc., not Marxism - but whatever we call it, its still shite. And maybe some anarchist ideas do come from Marx, but wherever they came from they're part of anarchism now, so what else is there

MARTIN FORAN DYING FOR JUSTICE

Martin Foran is a 45 year old Irishman, convicted and imprisoned in 1985 for a crime he didn't commit, a victim of the corrupt West Midlands Serious Crime Squad (WMSC).

There is considerable evidence available to prove Martin's innocence—until now this has been ignored. Recently, West Yorkshire Police, who are investigating the WMSCS, visited Martin in prison, where they agreed that he had been framed. They have discovered that vital evidence relating to Martin's arrest and 'confession' statements have been lost, destroyed or fabricated in the cover-up by the Squad. Martin was arrested and interrogated by the same officers who framed the Birmingham Six—further victims of the Squad's anti-Irish racism.

Martin has become seriously ill in prison, resulting in him having to have a colostomy. He has repeatedly been refused basic medical care. He now also has a discharge from his left eye and again this has been left untreated. The Home Office has claimed that Martin is receiving adequate medical care and even dared to claim that Martin is 'satisfied' with his treatment. However, regular photos of Martin's condition taken by his solicitor and the testimony of an independent consultant contradict these absurd claims. More recently Dr. Flood, Martin's doctor at Durham Prison who consistently denied him medical care, has been forced to resign following a series of allegations of negligence.

On top of this Martin has been systematically brutalised by prison staff. On one occasion he was kicked unconscious by 3 hospital prison officers. In a court action against these officers Martin was awarded compensation, yet has still to receive the money.

For how much longer are the Home Office going to allow this man to suffer? The Guildford Four have been cleared and freed and a precedent has been established that no one should be convicted on uncorroborated confession, on which Martin's imprisonment rests.

● We say—Release Martin Foran now. Give him the medical treatment he so desperately needs and let him go home to his family.

● We say—Members of the WMSCS, for the numerous instances of false conviction they have perpetrated against innocent people, are the real guilty party, yet on June 28th four of the dismissed officers were reinstated and many others are likely to get off scot-free.

● We say—that the system of justice in this country is corrupt. All the victims of the WMSCS must be released now and fully compensated.

FREEDOM NOW FOR MARTIN FORAN

Leaflet published by Martin Foran Support Group (London)
BCM Foran, London WC1N 3XX

to say?

Well, the first thing we might gain from acknowledging the debt that class-struggle anarchism owes to marxism is a better set of theories. Theories are useful, for guiding our thinking and shaping our plans: we won't beat the capitalists by accident or chance. Marx is a good starting point.

Second, it might get easier to tackle some of the problems which always appear when anarchism starts to grow. The most obvious example is the problem of organisation. Being clear about exactly what kinds of organisation we don't want, and *why*, makes it easier to decide what we do want (workers councils? syndicalist unions? community action groups?)

Third, it would make it easier for us to move class-struggle anarchism into the mainstream of resistance. Once we admit that we've got some common ground with the rest of the revolutionary Left (and it's there already, we just tend to play it down), it's easier for us to persuade people that we are a credible alternative to "Socialist Wanker" or "Limping Marxism".

There are hundreds of committed revolutionaries who joined Militant, the RCP or the SWP because they could see no other alternative to working alone. Even if it's too late for them, there will be plenty more where they came from. If class-struggle anarchism is going to have an impact, we need to reach those people.

MARX ISN'T EVERYTHING

This article isn't claiming that Marx had all the answers. Some bits of his writing are very authoritarian: his uncritical view of technology, for example, which gave some justification to Leninism. Other bits are outdated or irrelevant, such as his views on slave labour. And some things are just plain *wrong* - such as his claim that there would never be a revolution in Russia! There are things missing from Marx, too: he says little or nothing of value about the struggle of women against patriarchy, nor about ecology and green issues. But having said all of this, it wouldn't hurt us to pick out the good bits and use them.

So it's time to take stock. The collapse of the state capitalist governments of Eastern Europe says nothing about the

failure of Marxism, but it says everything about the failure of Leninism, Trotskyism, and every other bastard ideology that says we're too thick to think and organise for ourselves.

MAYBE HE'S RIGHT!
IT'S HIGH TIME I
INVESTIGATED SOME
"OTHER OPTIONS"!



PROBLEMS AHEAD

Taking advantage of the opportunities before us won't be easy. Any mass movement for social and political change encounters difficult problems which have to be tackled. We must understand that Leninism is still popular today precisely because it "solves" these problems. Lenin's strategies for change involved rigid, top-down organisation, planning and intellectual leadership. His simple, common-sense solutions demanded dedication, loyalty and obedience, and he got them from thousands of people - *largely because they could see the sense in what he said*. And those people didn't know, could never have dreamt, that they were paving the way for Stalin, the labour camps and the KGB.

The events of Eastern Europe make it clear that Lenin's "solution" to the problems of making a revolution don't work. But just discrediting Lenin and calling ourselves anarchists won't wish those problems away. Unless we have some idea of how to tackle them, the potentials of the next few years will crumble to dust and the capitalists will win again by default. Beyond the empty slogans, beyond the mindless slag-offs and pathetic posturing, are ideas and experiences we can learn from. Let's do it.

John, Nottingham

THE NIGHTMARE OF

CAPITALISM

The following article is translated and condensed from the German radical magazine 'Clash'. The article is unfortunately obscure in style, short on specific detail and lacking in analysis. However, it does give an alternative to the common media view that East Germany has been "freed" from the "tyranny" of socialism. As this article indicates, its people may have simply swapped one form of tyranny for another. It is significant that the article refers throughout to the "annexation" of East Germany, rather than to the "unification" of the two German states.

There is now officially only one Germany - East Germany no longer exists, it has been integrated into the Bundesrepublik (West Germany). Much has changed because of this: nationalism is becoming more predominant, the former East Germany has become a "low wages country" within a greater Germany. German nationalism has been made into an instrument of political and ideological authority to facilitate the annexation of the DDR.

After its "victory over socialism" the Bundesrepublik is going through an internal political and ideological revaluation, to establish the legitimacy of its post-war politics and economy. The overthrow of socialism signifies a "historic victory" for international capital and for the Bundesrepublik is a powerful step towards achieving a more dominant position within the imperialist power structure.

If the "victory" of capital can be celebrated as the "victory of freedom" over the "socialist dictatorship", this indicates the real dimension of European regional politics under German hegemony. The situation can be understood as the third phase of the restoration of German capital, and the restoration of full sovereignty to West Germany. This process began after 1945 with the integration of West Germany into NATO as a bulwark against the socialist states. A rigid anti-communism was made as much a part of the State's internal politics as was suppression of fascism. What was falsely understood in the 50's and 60's as the German economic miracle was in fact nothing other than the first ex-



pression of a new cycle of capital, under the diktat of the USA - and was the political and economic foundation stone for the present West Germany.

In the course of its post-war history, West Germany developed a comprehensive political, economic, military and ideological base for the maintainance of its power. Internally, it had a policy of hindering class struggle through the (now capitalist) trade unions; through forbidding political strikes; producing emergency laws; various counterinsurgency programmes against armed guerilla groups in particular and the different opposition movements in general; through external economic triumphs and penetration of countries and cultures over three continents for the furthering of its economic interests. The conquest and integration of East Germany was an essential aim, and in this context its annexation is a logical development for capital.

EAST GERMANY - A SOCIALIST COUNTRY?

The DDR was the first attempted socialist state on German territory. After the defeat of fascism it quickly became clear that an exclusively socialist state would remain a fantasy within the confines of Western Europe, and that it would be impossible to beat imperialism on its own terrain. The particular strength of socialism at this time lay in the social sphere: people realised it was important to produce their own perspectives for social development. Socialism in the DDR found itself confronted by international imperialism, but its internal democratic structure was not broken down. However, the state made an old mistake: social development was equated with productive strength, but not with meeting people's needs. Attempts to develop a socialist society within the DDR failed.

THE ANNEXATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The transformation of the East German economy after the annexation constitutes nothing less than an attack on its social structure. Its forced adaptation to the capitalist world market and to capitalist "standards" have brought it the kind of authoritarianism, oppression and exploitation that can only exist under capitalism.

The annexation of the DDR is comprehensive: complete destruction of

existing communities; unemployment; sexism and racism in new guises - all the typical evils of capitalist society. It is only a natural consequence that this occupation has inspired political and economic resistance. However, the West German state has experience of suppressing opposition, and the many political and economic difficulties in East Germany will not easily be overcome.

This is not to say that the East German state was without faults. Its biggest mistake was to reduce people to a purely economic function. Any manifestations of dissatisfaction were dealt with by a mixture of direct repression and bureaucracy. But there was left a political vacuum in which a general desire for the kind of living standards available under capitalism could thrive, without any political alternatives being considered.

RESISTANCE?

The transformation of East Germany into a "consumer society" has not progressed smoothly - nor is it likely to. Little is known about the real situation of the Left within East Germany, however, it is evident that there is a large body of opinion that is against the concept of "unification"

CLASS WAR

CLASS WAR IS THE BIGGEST OF ALL THE ANARCHIST ORGANISATIONS. AT PRESENT IT IS THE FASTING GROWING WITH GROUPS SPRINGING UP ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND NEXT YEAR THEY WILL BE HAVING A INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THERE IS NOW AN ACTIVE CLASS WAR GROUP IN LIVERPOOL, WHO HAVE BEEN BUSY FLOGGING CLASS WAR AND DISTRIBUTING LEAFLETS AND POSTERS AS WELL AS LOTS OF OTHER THINGS. IF YOU AGREE WITH CLASS WAR'S AIMS (AS STATED IN THE PAPER) AND WISH TO GET INVOLVED CONTACT THE P.O.BOX.

MACKENZIE FRIEND

Those who have been following the campaign against the polltax will know the term "Mackenzie friend": it means some-one who accompanies another person to court to give help and advice (though a Mackenzie doesn't speak directly to the magistrate or judge.)

Mackenzie friends were first established after a divorce case in 1971, in which the judge stated that "every party had the right to have a friend present in court to assist by prompting, making notes and quietly giving advice". Since then it has been thought that very person who represented themselves in court had the right to have the help of a Mackenzie, and Mackenzies have been widely used in poll tax court cases. But the "right" is a right no longer.

In a test case brought at the Queen's Divisional Court on 21st December last year, the presiding judges decided that it is purely at the discretion of the magistrate or judge in any case whether a person can have the help of a Mackenzie.

The test case was brought by a couple who were refused the help of a Mackenzie during their court appearance for non-payment of the poll tax. They appealed on the grounds that the magistrates concerned had acted unfairly towards them and had not conducted their case properly. However, the decision at their appeal was that there is no legal right to a Mackenzie, and since their original case was "straight-forward", the refusal of a Mackenzie was not unjust.

It is nothing new for judges to "make up" the law in this way, nor in this instance is their decision surprising: the judiciary is part of the ruling class and so will always uphold the interests of the ruling class. In hundreds of poll tax cases around the country, magis-

trates have denied people the help of a Mackenzie friend in court. Imagine the amount of time and money that would be taken up if all those cases had to be retried because the magistrates had acted improperly! A victory for the anti-poll tax movement on such a scale would be unthinkable!

This appeal decision need not be too big a setback for the anti-poll tax movement, it simply makes it all the more important to encourage people to turn up for their court cases and to make sure they are well briefed in what to say. Also, of course, a court case is just one of several rounds in a non-payment battle. A court case only establishes whether a person is bound to pay the poll tax. The powers-that-be then still have to collect it from them!

However, the appeal decision applies to all court cases, not just to those concerning the poll tax. It will hit hardest at people who can't get a solicitor, and who aren't confident and articulate enough to defend themselves without help - in other words, it presents yet another obstacle to working-class people getting any satisfactory hearing in the Great British "Injustice" System.

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An artist's impression, drawn contemporaneously, of the execution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and an Archbishop after London was taken over by revolting peasants during the first poll tax revolt of 1381. (Courtesy St. Albans Against the Poll Tax)