

# Nottingham Anarchist

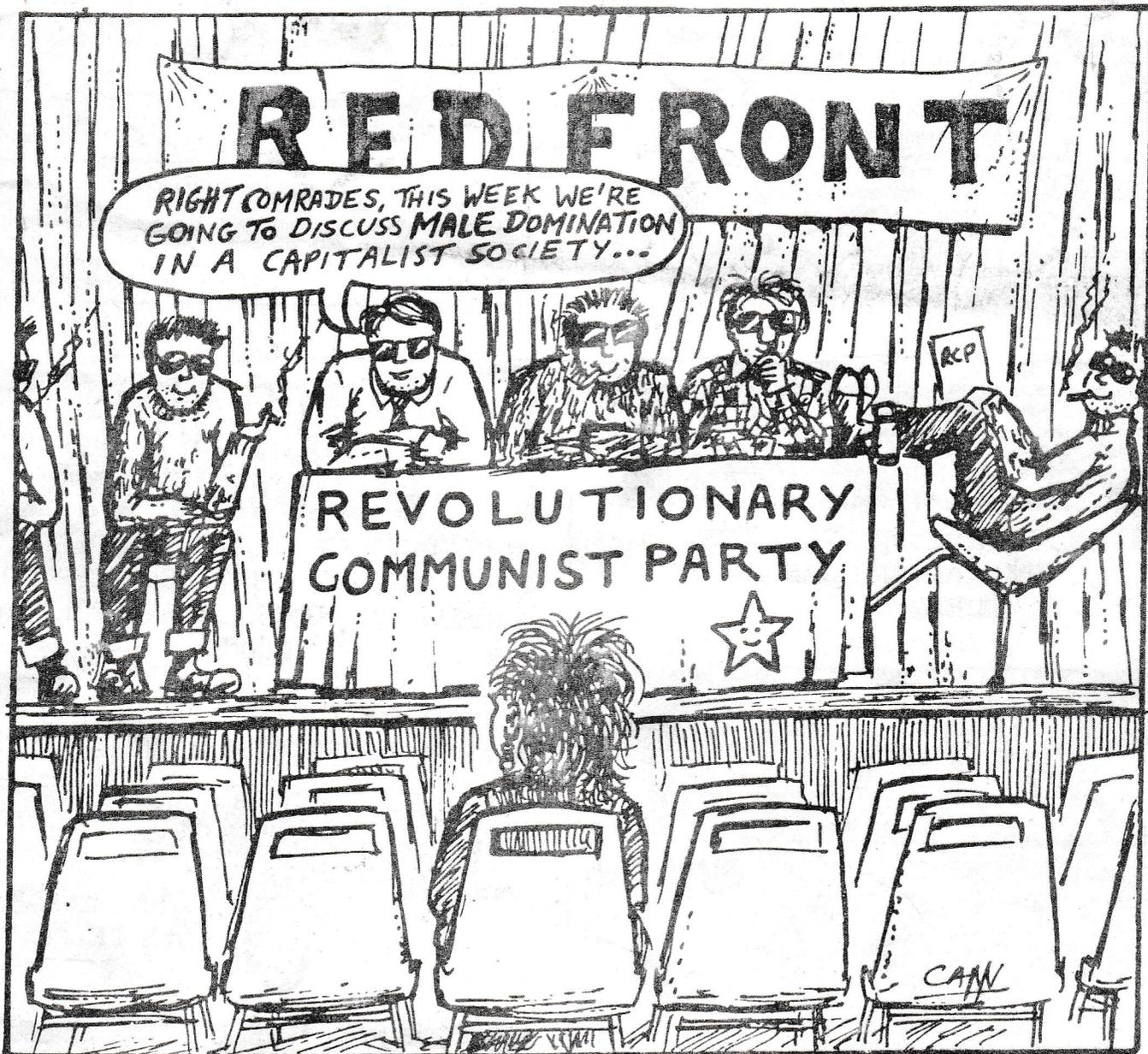
★ News ★

JAN

No 17



RCP  
EXPOSED



ASDA \* VEGGIES \* IRELAND  
LETTERS \* REVIEWS \* MORE

# POLL TAX

## Can't Pay, Won't Pay

The Council Departments responsible for registering all adults over 18 started work on September 14th in Scotland, which is being used as a testing ground for the phasing-in of the Poll Tax elsewhere in the country. But in multi-occupant council and private rented flats in the outer schemes and inner cities, doors have been slammed in the faces of those drawing up the electoral register (which will provide data for the Poll Tax register).

'Weekend World' (ITV) on October 11th highlighted the Drumchapel scheme residents stating that they would evade or refuse to pay the tax. 'Panorama' featured similar declarations from tenants in Paisley's Ferguslie Park.

At the moment only Scotland is being prepared for it's introduction but it's vital that news of resistance is widely publicised to encourage others, either those soon to be affected or the rest of us who will be affected before too long. It's crucial that those prepared to agitate against the tax organise independently to canvass their neighbours and circulate information.

The Labour Party has launched the 'STOP IT' campaign 'designed to complement the efforts of MP's, political parties and local authorities'. It will be vital to rise to their challenge and expose how they'll seek to police opposition and keep protests within the law and in the spirit of attracting favourable media coverage.

In any case Labour Party 'opposition' is a fraud. All Labour controlled Regional Councils in Scotland - such as Lothian and Strathclyde - have, along with other councils, agreed to IMPLEMENT the Poll Tax.

Opposition to this tax offers a great opportunity for a genuine community of interest to actively take on

the Government and their appeasers on the 'left'. This will only be possible if a large minority are independently organised, determined, imaginative and prepared to do much groundwork. Council workers could play an important role in the resistance by boycotting and disrupting all work connected with the new tax.

Officially called the Community Charge the Poll Tax is expected to be paid in Scotland from April 1989 and in Wales in 1990. It will be phased-in in England between 1990 and 1994. It's important this gradual introduction is not allowed to water down opposition.

The tax will be payable at the same rate by all adults over 18 who are residents of a local authority. The level of that charge will be decided by that authority. Unlike the present system it will not just affect householders.

Claimants will have to pay 20% of the charge. Supposedly this will be made up by increases in the giro. However, this increase will reflect the national average poll tax and not the actual amount being charged. There are to be no concessions for people on YTS, JTS, trainee nurses or apprentices.

The Poll Tax is a tax to rob the poor to pay the rich. Not only is the tax levied irrespective of people's ability to pay, such that most ordinary people are going to be a hell of a lot worse off compared to the well-off. But it's been found (the Government's own figures) that once the grant safety nets, which are supposed to ease the phase-in, are taken away areas of London like Hackney, Lambeth and Tower Hamlets will be paying at rates 3 times those of the posher areas like Kingston, Richmond and Harrow. In Nottingham we'll be expected to pay £207 a year.

Can't pay - Won't pay! Let's start the spade work of resistance now!

FROM COUNTEE-  
INFORMATION

In Nottingham, the rates for a terraced house are just over £200 a year. That means that single people living in the worst conditions, outside bog, no hot water, no garden will pay more. Most people in those conditions will pay twice as much. The poorest people, living in cramped houses will pay many times more.

## PROTEST AGAINST THE LATEST STATE ATTACK ON LESBIANS & GAYS

CAMPAIGN COORDINATING MEETINGS  
ADMIRAL DUNCAN  
TUESDAYS  
FROM 8pm

## 20th FEB. 1988 NATIONAL FESTIVAL & RALLY IN MANCHESTER

TRANSPORT FROM NOTTINGHAM  
DETAILS SOON

### BENEFIT

SKEETA/FABULOUS SIDEBYRDS  
OLD VIC. TUES 2nd FEB  
8 - 12 £1.50/£1

## STOP CLAUSE 27

# RAMOTH BENEFIT

RAMOTH IS AN ALL WOMEN COLLECTIVE  
PROVIDING PRINT SERVICES TO  
COMMUNITY, MINORITY AND POLITICAL  
GROUPS

THIS BENEFIT IS TO RAISE MONEY FOR  
A MUCH-NEEDED REPLACEMENT MACHINE

BANDS  
MUSIC  
FREE FOOD



THE GARAGE  
25th FEBRUARY  
£3

MONEY WELL SPENT

NOTTINGHAM ANARCHIST NEWS  
BOX A  
180 MANSFIELD ROAD  
NOTTINGHAM

# HELLO

Welcome to issue 17. Its been a long time. Eight weeks, in fact. Due to reasons entirely within our control this issue has been delayed. As you may be able to tell several articles in these pages are somewhat dated. However, we have decided that they ought to be printed because a) You might find them interesting, and b) people have gone to the trouble of writing them. We hope to be back to our normal schedule with No. 18 out in February. Because of this shorter time between issues the print-run on this one has been reduced. Please pass this one on to someone else to read so it gets as wide a circulation as possible.

If you brought this paper hoping for the promised long reply to last issues Nicaragua article; sorry, we decided it just wasn't worth making the effort. What's needed to be said is included in the letters pages. Any more would just be prolonging a meaningless slanging match between irreconciliable positions.

Also missing from this issue are news items on the Alton anti-abortion bill, clause 27/28 (or whatever number its reached now), the new Anarchist Socialist Group, and a run-down of the plethora of groups dealing with Irish Solidarity in Nottingham. All of this will be remedied in the next issue.

We'd like to thank Counter Information for two of the articles in this issue, an invaluable source of news from around the country. Thanks, too, to everybody else who contributed. We're

always looking for more people to get involved. News items, articles, letters, cartoons, graphics, reviews, all welcome. We hope we don't give the impression that you have to be a professional or even to be able to spel coreckly or use grammar good to be able to contribute. If you think something needs saying, then SAY IT to lots of people. If you're not confident enough to write yourself, contact us and we'll help you. There's enough shit flying around at the moment to fill thousands of pages, but until we start sharing our feelings and aspirations with more than a small circle of close friends, we'll never get anywhere. So CONTRIBUTE. And if you don't contribute to NAN do your own.

Nottingham Anarchist News can be obtained from Ouroboros, Hiziki, Rainbow Centre, Selectadisc and Black Raven. Or send us some money and we'll keep you posted (address opposite).

Hope to hear from you soon.



# ISCUMBAGS

Since everybody else in the paper is having a go, I might as well stick my oar in... There's this organisation you may have heard of called the Revolutionary Communist Party. These people have such delusions of grandeur (or perhaps its just infantile paranoia) that they give themselves party names to hide their true identities. You know the thing: Vlad the Impaler became Lenin, an ice pick became Trotsky. (geddit). I'll give a prize to the first person to come up with the real and assumed names of the RCP members in Nottingham. That shouldn't be too hard-there's only a few of them. The prize will be a bodyguard.

There is a disturbing tendency to include the words "invited speakers" on the publicity of various meetings nowadays. I have lost count of the number of meetings I've been to where Arthur Scargill, Ken Livingstone, Dennis Skinner or Betty Heathfield have been invited. Of course they never turn up, but for the price of a second class stamp I suppose it makes the organisers feel important. New heights have been scaled with the publicity of the forthcoming Clause 27 demo in Manchester. I will be there. But will David Steel, Edward Heath, Jessie Jackson and Neil Kinnock? From what I remember the latter has gone on record as being in favour of the clause! All I can say is that Bernie Grant, Margaret Thatcher and Mike Bakunin have been invited to contribute to NAN 18. Order your copy now.

News has come in of consternation among the trendy lefties of the Labour Party's chic Forest Branch. At their recent AGM an Afro-Caribbean woman had the temerity to put herself forward as Chair for the coming year. Oh, the upset of the radical, right-on conscience! She wasn't on the slate of officialy approved Left candidates. But she was a black woman. Discipline won the day. She was defeated by over 80 votes to 5 by the male candidate.

Strange things happen on the forest. In December it was the turn of 'Disco Against Drugs' when clean living young people, thousands of them, turned up to stand up and be counted against drugs. What drugs they didn't make clear, but nicotine, coffee and the dreaded Coca Cola seemed very much in evidence. Not everyone managed to stand up either. I counted several being stretchered out of the large marquee into waiting ambulances. O.D.ed on religion, no doubt. As the graffiti artists had daubed on a nearby wall: "Smack is bad, God is Worst". The best bit of the night, however, was the last record played. What were these god-fearing youngsters sent off home to? None other than the strains of the Gay Anthem "YMCA" by the Village People!

Contributions welcome to Scumbags. Any dirt, nasty rumours, slag-offs or slander wanted.

COLIN.

# MAY DAY 88

May Day was for centuries one of the most popular and wildest celebratory days in the year. Never a christian festival, it was the time of year to finally kick out the winter blues and rejoice with the coming of summer. Then, in the last century, the radical labour movement also took it for its own - internationally.

The May Day 88 group is planning a series of events in Nottingham bringing together both strands of the May Day traditions. Start getting yourself ready for: international line-up of rowdy bands; afternoon of self-education with workshops on a whole range of topics; hopefully an all-nighter (anyone got a venue?) with transcontinental music, theatre, films, poetry, art, etc. leading up to a celebration at dawn on May morning; an open picnic; and an acoustic gig with worldwide musicians.

These events will happen from Friday April 29 to Sunday May 1. The May Day 88 group is keen to see other people organizing things around the MayDay themes, at the weekend or around that time. Please let them know what you're up to so that dates don't clash! May Day 88 can be contacted via the Community Arts Centre on Gregory Boulevard.

April 1988 also sees 'Artworks', a festival involving Trades Unions and the Arts (May Day 88 is being publicised as part of this). It's being sponsored by the East Midlands TUC and East Midlands Arts with events taking place throughout the whole region. Detailed publicity will be out soon, but for more information contact: Pat Quinn, East Midlands TUC, 61 Derby Road, Nottm. Tel: 47244

(If you want to organise something then get in touch quick!)

## SQUATTING ACTION IN HACKNEY

Whilst there are 3,800 totally EMPTY Council houses in Hackney the Labour Council wants to evict 1,200 squatters because it claims it needs the property to house homeless families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Labour's opposition to the cuts has proven to be a total sham, and by dividing the homeless this Council seeks to save money.

However, the Council's eviction plans are in a big mess. On 28th October over 200 squatters took over the Town Hall. The Councillors had to abandon their meeting, and the squatters controlled the Council Chamber for 3 hours.

This was the third time squatters and tenants had occupied Hackney Town Hall within a few weeks. Both on the 27th September and on the 12th October 'people's power' forced the Councillors to flee.

Whilst demanding 'No cuts, no evictions, house the homeless' the Council used riot police to throw the

homeless on the streets. At least 3 evictions were resisted by squatters and tenants in September. In early October 5 flats were evicted - but they were all re-squatted the next day.

Squatting is a popular response to homelessness which directly challenges the power Councils and private landlords exercise over a basic need.

The Council also plan to close down 3 nurseries, a number of old folks homes and a day centre for the disabled. Service charges are going up as are rents. Part-time workers are being sacked

1,000 Council workers struck against these cuts on October 22nd, and with residents marched on the Civic Centre.

The Tory Westminster Council plans to sell off nearly half of its Council houses. Homeless families are to be moved into Portakabin homes on industrial wasteland in East London.

Over 900 Council workers struck over these plans. On the same day, September 22nd, protesters at the Council Housing Committee were arrested by riot police. The previous housing committee had been broken up by local tenants direct action.

The Tory Party's attack on the working class - to say nothing of women, the ethnic minorities and so on - is well documented. We have to show that Labours record proves that it too is quite prepared to resort to such attacks, and to using the same methods.

It's 'opposition' to the Tory onslaught is just so much electioneering. When it's remaining control is directly challenged by ordinary people - as it was by the squatters in Hackney - it resorts to riot police with as much ease as any Tory.

The fight can only be carried forward by spreading the struggles of ordinary workers and residents, using direct action and not token gestures.

It's also vital to question the kind of services being affected. These were already totally inadequate and bureaucratically mis-run before this round of cuts. These so-called services served more as career structures for the 'radical' and not-so-radical middle class, than as a collective response to the needs of ordinary people. This question should be constantly raised during the struggle. We are not asking for a return to the status quo, for local Labour Party power or cosy jobs for bureaucrats and administ rators.

FROM COUNTER INFORMATION

THE YORKER (MANSFIELD ROAD) 7.30. £1.50.

26th FEB

GENERAL HEY KINGS

Split. benefit For Veggies and Nottm HUNT SABS.

I GOT CALLED FOR SUBMISSION!

WHAT'S THIS FOR BONZO?

CONCRETE SOX

DEFAULT (THE NEW 7 SECOND?)

THE JOYCE MCKINNEY (FROM THRASH CITY UK)

EXPERIENCE.

ANNIHILATE AUTHORITY

Third of workers underpaid says pay unit survey



# THE NEXT STEP

In recent months a suggestion was made by the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) that they and the Anarchist Group (S.M.A.S.H.) should have a public political debate. This was discussed amongst SMASH members and after a lot of discussion finally rejected. We feel we need to make our reasons known.

In the past we had heard rumours that women in Manchester and Bradford RCP groups had harassment from male RCP members on leaving the party. We had no further information or contact with the women involved. However, in June of this year a Nottingham woman was viciously attacked by two male members of Nottingham RCP. The reason for the attack was that she had left the party.

A woman supporter of the RCP questioned the action and was told it was internal to the party and none of your business! She suggested that males attacking women was the worst thing you could do, and was told 'don't be so bloody moralistic'.

Obviously we are not happy with the way the attacks have been dealt with by the RCP. One of them is still a branch organiser and the other is still in a position to speak publicly for the RCP. This would suggest to us, of course that they have not been disciplined, and that the party is actually condoning what they did and even covering up for them.

## REVOLUTIONARY ?? COMMUNIST ?? PARTY !!

Fortunately still insignificant, its 'full' membership no more than 150, the RCP represent the extreme version of the Leninist disease. Its structure is utterly authoritarian and its self-defined role highly elitist.

Active RCP'ers come in two sorts. There's the 'full' membership, or in common Leninist lingo the 'cadre'. And there are the officially designated 'supporters', who attend branch meetings and who are in the process of being groomed for eventual acceptance amongst the elect cadre. Joining this elect band is dependent on an 'exam' in RCP dogma. Its bureaucratic structure, by which information flows up and down, prevents any real discussion of issues amongst the membership. Discussion, if any, of this particular event will be limited to the sanitised version preferred by the supremoes at the top. Their strategic position from which they can control the flow of information, and from which they are able to destroy the development of any real, organic links between people is typical of the way elites the world over secure their pre-eminent position.

When Marx said that the dominant ideas of any age were those of its ruling class he expressed something of greater relevance than he could ever have imagined! Those ideas don't only dominate the wider society, they also infect great chunks of the 'revolutionary' movement. Certainly if we look at its understanding of how revolutionary groups should organise it's not difficult to see how Leninism has been the major carrier of this infection within the movement (1). It reintroduces and reinforces the hierarchical relationships that characterise capitalism amongst supposed revolutionaries. As such Leninist parties are simply mirror images of the capitalist state structure. This hierarchy is not only institutionalised **within** the party but also in the relationship they see existing **between** the party and the working class. But for Leninism this is all uncontroversial:

"..classes are led political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are run by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members who are elected to the most responsible positions, and are called leaders. All this is elementary. All this is clear and simple."

"The Russian Bolshevik..cannot help all this talk about 'from above' or 'from below', about the dictatorship of leaders or the dictatorship of the masses etc. as ridiculous and childish nonsense, something like discussing whether a mans left leg or right arm is of greater use to him".

LENIN: "LEFT WING COMMUNISM"

## GLIB LENIN CASTS IT OFF

That this can be so easily brushed aside is related to the fact that Leninism simplifies the whole question of Social Revolution.

When we start to discuss the idea of revolution we can't simply look at capitalism as 'production for profit', 'the wages system' and 'class exploitation'. Though these are its fundamental constituents. Capitalism rests on certain **social relationships**, certain **patterns of authority**. The constant reproduction of capitalism as a system is based on a general acceptance of these relationships. These are first learnt within the patriarchal nuclear family - 'Do as Daddy tells you' - and are reinforced in school and later at work etc. Capitalist ideology constantly bolsters the passivity of the majority and assures us that hierarchy is both natural and inevitable. This elitist division between order givers and order takers, the myth that the people at the bottom are incompetent - all this is also central to the Leninist conception.

The question of passivity is profoundly important and can't be so glibly cast off. We have to emphasise that the Social Revolution isn't simply a question of denying the ruling class its power, its more than that. It concerns the **total change** of capitalist social relationships.

## KARL MARX WAS DEAD RIGHT

Marx said that the working class must make its own revolution. In this he was dead right! In the course of things today people are denied even the most basic control over the conditions of their daily lives. The idea of the Social Revolution has to be concerned at root with **empowering** people. And this isn't something that can be done for people!

But the problem is precisely this. People - the working class, the 'masses', in fact any oppressed group - can't empower anyone, they can't control anything unless they're **conscious** of their ability ('ability' in the widest sense), to do so. In other words, they have to be aware not only of the problems to be dealt with, but also of their capacity to deal with them. Again they have to be in a position to define the problems in the first place. It follows that each individual making up this 'collectivity' also has to be conscious. How else can they actively participate in the collective project of building a new society? And if people aren't **actively** participating, in what sense are they making their own revolution?

This political consciousness isn't arrived at by learning dogma by rote. It develops by learning to think, to criticise and to analyse. It develops through activity. In the broadest sense it concerns a growing self-confidence. The development of a real political consciousness has two things in common with any other kinds of learning. One: the only sure way to success is by **'doing'**. Two: it's a **process** that never stops.

Leninist organisations, in limiting debate, bureaucratically channeling discussion and stifling dissent **prevent** the development of **conscious people**. Revolutionary class politics is about the 'self-activity' of the working class. The role of revolutionary organisations is to encourage that self-activity and to foster the creativity that historically has proven itself time and time again. When



a 'revolutionary' organisation prevents the development of conscious, competent people even within its own ranks it becomes an outright lie!

Let's re-emphasise. The development of political consciousness has to be considered as a **practical** task, no amount of learning the party line can be substituted for this. Organisations do not exist to **tell** their members what to think. Likewise organisations do not make 'interventions' in struggles with a view to **telling** the people directly involved in that struggle what to do. Indeed, such behaviour actually harms any development of political consciousness.

Furthermore, when, in the final analysis, Leninism understands the problem of revolution as a question of organisation, discipline and good timing. In the banal way that it does, it simply transfers the techniques of pure militarism onto the revolutionary plane. In doing so it again completely misses the point. It dehumanises its membership, it treats them as pawns, it burns them out in an endless routine of party building activity. More than that it forces people to subordinate a part of what makes them tick in a self-denying crass 'militantism'!

"The militant attitude is indeed counter-revolutionary, in so far as it splits the individual into two, separating their needs, their real individual and social needs, the reason why they can't stand the present world, from their action, their attempts to change the world. The militant refuses to admit that they are revolutionary because they need to change their own life as well as society in general. They repress the impulses which made them turn against society. They submit to revolutionary action as if it were external to them: It is fairly easy to see the moral character of this attitude. This was already wrong and conservative in the past; today it becomes increasingly reactionary."

JEAN BARROT "THE ECLIPSE & RE-EMERGENCE OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT"



WHAT'S A PRETTY COMRADE LIKE YOU WANT TO READ THE MINUTES FOR...?

## THE RED FRONT

Of course there is a reason behind all this. Although some Leninists do pay lip-service to the idea of self-activity, ultimately the revolution is a party affair. The key to the ultimate success of the revolution being the specifically Leninist vanguard party. The party is glorified as the brains and the consciousness of the working class. Such creativity as there is must always be channelled through the party:

"We are the party of the working class" wrote Lenin, "and therefore almost the entire working class...should act under the leadership of the party."

'ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK'

"The party in the last analysis is always right, because the party is the sole historical instrument given to the proletariat for the solution of its basic problems."

TROTSKY

"our objective is not merely to represent the working class within the framework of Parliament and British capitalism, but to go beyond both and create a new sort of society."

'THE RED FRONT. A PLATFORM FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY'

The Red Front was a pathetic sham of an electoral alliance under whose banner the RCP fielded candidates in the last general election. Of it they wrote that "...the future of the working class depends on the success of this project." ('The Red Front').

It's not only the police who maintain files on people. The RCP's file on potential recruits and others in Nottingham, which included 'progress reports' and comments, was recently lost. The police got hold of it - and all those names! Luckily its been returned to its owners. But think on - next time you have a 'friendly chat' with a member of the RCP (or, indeed, any of the other extreme Leninist groups) the 'state in exile' is already building up its files.

## THE RULING CLASS IN EXILE

It goes without saying that the theory justifying all this is one articulated by the very people who stand to benefit most from a new state dispensation along these lines. To put it bluntly we haven't only got a ruling class, but also a would-be ruling class. This is made up of all those people and organisations, reformist or 'revolutionary', who seek to realise their own particular ends on the backs of the working class.

The idea that a single organisation, however proletarian its make up, that is orientated around a particular definition of a particular doctrine could ever claim to represent the interests of the working class is patently absurd. The truth, if you like, isn't something that can simply be set down in the pages of a text book, whoever writes it. It is something that **emerges** during the course of activity and the widest possible debate. The Social Revolution is a wave and not a railway track.

In point of fact most Leninist parties are **anything but** working class. This shouldn't surprise anyone. In his classic classic text 'What Is To Be Done' Lenin wrote that through its own efforts the working class was unable to develop a 'socialist consciousness' and he looked to the middle class intellectuals to develop one for them. Whilst Lenin may have refined his position later on, that elitism remained central to his political stance. The RCP is quite in keeping with this tradition, which has always been a vehicle for the self-serving pseudo-revolutionary pseudo-intellectual middle class. Privileged in this society it seems impossible for them to envisage a revolutionary movement in which they are not granted a privileged status. Come, students of the RCP, you have nothing to loose but your illusions!! Given such a ridiculously blown-up sense of self-importance is it any wonder that someone leaving the party should be blasted as a 'scab on the working class' by baying 'comrades' left behind. That this degenerated into violence, as it had done else where, merely reveals the neurotic extremism that infests the RCP.

When all crass justifications are cast aside, the revolutionary problem is reduced to the question of gaining party power. All questions are subordinated to the interests of the party. That this allows any two-bit opportunism to pass as valid activity is merely a 'tactical question' (2). That individuals are reduced to little more than foot soldiers for the party generals is besides the point. That the working class is considered to be little more than manipulable play-doh is a non-issue.



## WHAT THE RCP MEAN BY DIRECT ACTION ISN'T

As we've said there is a role for revolutionary organisations. But it's certainly not to wean people off their allegiance to capitalism only to reincorporate them into another straight jacket. It's not to coerce, control, set limits to the debate, or in the classical sense to lead. **Practically** our task is to encourage creative self-activity and to foster the confidence and combativity sorely missing today. **Politically** the task is to set out a coherent critique of this society - but not with the **pretence** that it is (or that there ever can be) a definitive document - and to pose the revolutionary problem: that the fuck-ups in this society can only **begin** to be solved when people take **direct** control of their lives, in all its aspects. We can **facilitate** the development of consciousness, we certainly can't impose it. An imposed consciousness is a contradiction in terms.

In short the interests of the working class can only be expressed by the working class themselves, through their own organisations developed during the course of struggle. By which we do not mean the Labour Party, the Communist Party or even the Revolutionary Communist Party. Neither do we mean the hierarchical apparatus of the Trades Union movement. All of these are, one way or another, incorporated into capitalism and reflections of its ideology. This of course goes for any oppressed group struggling for its liberation. The RCP claimed that the policies of the 'Red Front' all "...begin with what the working class needs..." and that "...the only way they can be achieved is through the direct action of the working class itself". We can only shrug our shoulders and ask what kind of 'direct action' it is that is **represented and channelled** by a particular group. Direct action means precisely that - **direct, autonomous self-activity**. In the RCP dictionary 'direct action' is a meaningless contradiction.

## HALF A BRAIN

Anyone with half a brain and even the most limited knowledge of the history of revolutionary struggle knows that history itself contradicts the claims of groups like



RCP. The spontaneous creativity of the people in struggle has **always** preceded the moment when any revolutionary organisation, as an organisation, got a look in. The myth that the only guarantor of success is the 'Party' is the banal politics of the kindergarten. Take the Soviets in the 1905 Russian Revolution (see what Trotsky had to say!), the Factory Council movement in Russia in 1917, the councils in Germany in 1919, the collectives in Spain during the civil war, take Hungary 1956 where the entire state apparatus was replaced by insurrectionary workers - and no party to be seen. Whether it be a Bolshevik party or an Anarcho-Syndicalist union, any organisation that claims to be the only valid channel for the development of revolution will limit it and constrict it and if not passed over, ultimately contribute to its destruction. Whilst revolutionary agitation and organisation do **help** create revolutionary situations history has shown that the workers, once revolutionary, are perfectly able to create organisations adequate to the task. They are quite capable of taking the revolution forward. And if the revolutionary consciousness is lacking, quite simply there can be no revolution. In the same way, though revolutionaries can **contribute** to the development of consciousness, that consciousness is born out of the working classes own experience and cannot be brought from the outside.

## FRANK RICHARDS IS AN ACADEMIC!!

The legacy of Leninist manipulation and elitism is that the working class has never been so far removed from such organisations - the effects of Tory reaction notwithstanding. Whilst rightly taking a stand that is wholly separate from the Labour Party, unlike the SWP who have snuggled up to it, the cadre of the RCP fall back on the tired and stale slogans and methods that have long-since stopped having attraction for anybody bar the students.

But an organisation like this must be of great comfort for the middle-class cadre of that party (who have the gall to call the rest of us 'petit-bourgeois'). Reared in capitalist society and conditioned to accept its norms they are relieved of having to think or act for themselves. Their politics are handed out to them by a bourgeoisie academic (Frank Richards) and their practice consists of nothing more than dutifully following the dictates of the party elite and parroting the well-rehearsed party line. In this they never wander very far from the mainstream of capitalist normality and their later re-entry into that society becomes all the more predictable and easy.

Of course the RCP are **only** one of the extreme examples. That such a party bares a more than passing resemblance to a religious cult tells us more about the psychology of its membership than anything else. Some opt for religion and some for Leninism, but blind obedience and iron certainty are crutches too many people have to rely on.

When this individual left the RCP her former 'comrades' sat around the office vehemently denouncing her as a 'scab on the working class'. In this mutually reinforcing hate session they reveal not only delusions of grandeur, but also frightening parallels with religious cults and fascism; where dissent is met with violence and gut-emotions take the place of reasoned argument.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Of course Leninism is 'bourgeois' on a whole series of levels. See 'Leninism or Communism' by Jean Barrot - a Wildcat pamphlet. See 'The Bolsheviks and Workers Control' by Maurice Brinton - Red and Black. See the chapter on the ideology of state capitalism in 'The Wages System Under New Management' by Adam Buick and John Crump. See 'From Bolshevism to Bureaucracy' by Paul Cardan - Solidarity.

2. Lenin got into a debate with Rosa Luxemburg amongst others over the question of 'national self-determination' which Lenin supported. His position was wholly unprincipled, he saw it as a 'vanguard building issue' ie. the party could benefit from giving support to such a movement. For the RCP such 'V.B.I.'s are Ireland, Gay Rights, Racism. They have 'front organisations' to this effect ie. Workers (a joke in the RCP's case) Against Racism and the Irish Freedom Movement.

# printed lett'ers

dear Nottingham Anarchist News

In reply to the caption competition: I think John Truscott is on a Nicaragua Solidarity march, and the old smoothie is shouting "why are all these other people here? Don't they know I'm the only person who really cares what happens in Nicaragua?"

The self-styled Sandinista (Nottingham Branch) continues the tirade, reaching hitherto undreamed of levels of irrationality: "Why is it in London, anyway, that's what I want to know. Eastenders is the opium of the people". Sings: "My old man said jump on the bandwagon, and don't dilly dally on the wayup. Get off me offset litho, sparrer". His head explodes.

Please could you put this ad for us in your mag:

TOADSTALL BOOKSHOP  
YOUR CORPORATION NEEDS YOU  
STORE DETECTIVE REQUIRED  
( Piecework )

Toadstool is a trendy bookshop in a trendy shopping area. Unfortunately, there has been a recent trend towards stealing the merchandise (gollee).

This jolly well needs to stop if we are to continue to live in the style we are accustomed to.

GOOD WORKING ATMOSPHERE  
COMPANY 2CV  
WOULD SUIT EX-SERVICEMAN

Ideal Christmas presents from Mushroom:

### TRENDY BENDY DOLLS

Just pull the cord and the trendy, bendy doll will say "Do you need a bag? We really need to save money, I mean trees, trees, trees, save trees, I mean trees. I bet you thought I was a petty profiteer for a minute then, didn't you?" Just like a real Mushroom shop assistant.

Lots of love P. C. MENSA

dear NAN

another good issue, cheers.....

Now on to the Nicaragua argument.... for starters does it whether Sandino, undoubtedly a great revolutionary, was a Marxist or an Anarcho-syndicalist? He is dead and heroes should be destroyed, not built up. I read in a Canadian Anarchist paper about Sandinos contacts with anarcho-syndicalist elements in Mexico and it sounded plausible. Nethertheless, he probably came into contact with a loot of Marxist theory and this was also an influence. Incidentally, I understood that the urban proletariat - largely anarcho syndicalist - threw their weight behind one of the prospective presidential candidates as a result of a deal and that as a consequence their red battalions helped to prevent

Zapata acheiving a completely successful revolution. If true then to ascribe Sandinos class-conscience to their influence leaves something to be desired.

As to Truscots point that Sandinos famous Quote "only the workers and peasants will go to the end" corresponds exactly with Marxist Leninist concepts, well O.K. but doesn't it also correspond with Anarchist Revolutionary concepts?.. the concepts of anyone seriously interested in revolutionary change? Again, incidentally, Marx was not very interested in peasants, believing that they would disappear as a class through the industrialization of spreading capitalism.

Another spurious point is that the Sandinistas power is peoples power and therefore if the Sandinistas use their power corruptly then it is the Nicaraguan people who are corrupt. It is an important point that the Nicaraguan people are, to a large extent, armed and thus able to resist any attempted dictatorship. It is also true that the Sandinistas had and have overwhelming popular support and this should be recognised. But if it is peoples power that is being used, why is it not being used directly by the people through assemblies, workers councils and direct democracy? The power that the Sandinistas use was given to them by the people in an election, but this, to anarchists was a serious mistake by them. Not because we object to the Sandinistas, but because we object to a centralised state, with centralised power used on 'behalf of' the people and not by them. This separation of people and their power, and its concentration, does tend to corrupt its wielders and is dangerous in what it allows the wielders to carry out. It is blind of Truscott not to realize this is a possibility, even if he denies it is an actuality at present.

It is good of Truscott to point out the positive achievements of the Sandinistas, but the previous article did not deny these, just didn't mention them (and they do get coverage elsewhere) and indeed argued for support for the Sandinistas. But it must be critical support - a support that keeps a critical eye on the Nicaraguan state. A state is not a people and state power cannot be people's power; a "workers state" is a contradiction in terms. Nethertheless the Nicaraguan people deserve our support and they support the Sandinistas form of government.

If we were to be involved in a revolution here, we would also make mistakes and we must not be armchair perfectionist critics. However, if we would not be satisfied with the achievements made by the revolution and carry on demanding more, then why should we say what has been achieved is good enough for anyone else? The revolution should be an ongoing event, not "it's done and it's over and everything is perfect". We must continue to be critical of everyone and ourselves, but not just be critical and not offer support. Many of the anarchist purists who condemn the Sandinistas supported the miners. Why, were they any more anarchist? I will support the Sandinistas and other groups in struggle while retaining my right, my duty, to be critical and to carry on demanding more revolution. Always.

Yours, Sam.



# ASDA

About a month ago the local council decided, in secret, to sell about two-thirds of the Hyson Green site to ASDA for them to develop as a site for a massive hyper-market development.

About a month ago the local city council secretly decided to sell two-thirds of the Hyson Green flats site to ASDA for them to develop as a site for a massive hyper-market. A previous 'consultation' process with the former residents had shown that they wanted the flats site to be re-developed for residential purposes. Indeed it had been promised that many of the former residents could move back into the Green after the houses had been built. An on-the-table offer of £3.75 m. from ASDA changed all that. The new, Tory council took up the offer.

The council has tried to justify this sale with talk of its being in the best interests of the people of Hyson Green. Clearly the council is less concerned with the 'regeneration' of the Green and more with the attractive offer of getting rid of the problem and making a quick buck at the same time.

Far from regenerating the Green a hyper-market would decimate it. It would be a facility for the car owning population of the suburbs. ASDA have estimated that 30 thousand people a week will visit the store and that it will attract 10 thousand cars a week. From a traffic point of view it's not hard to imagine the very real problems that lay in store for the local residents.

The fact is that the site is wholly unsuitable for a store of this kind. Even if such a thing were desirable. The Co-Op had considered it for a Superstore but had rejected it. The Chief Executive of the Co-Op in Nottingham expressed surprise at ASDA's intentions.

The plan has generated some vocal opposition - the 'Homes Not Hypermarkets' campaign. Its early days yet so its difficult to comment conclusively about any aspect of it. However some provisional comments might be in order.

\*The Campaign. Community organising offers a way out of the sterile backroom politics of the mainstream. It also gives an active voice to people who are generally denied one. It therefore has the potential, at least, to directly challenge the elitist and exclusive status quo.

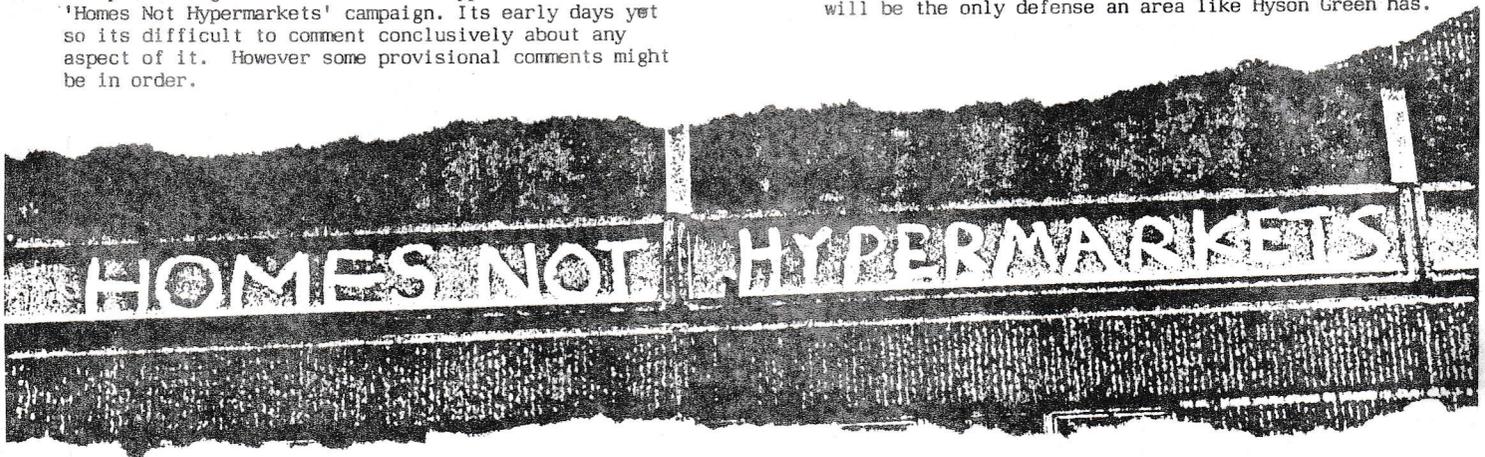
Community organising should mean just that..the community organising. So far the campaign has avoided the committee mentality that informs so much political activity. So it should. We can't out-professionalise the professionals nor can we out-scheme the schemers

activity. So it should. We can't out-professionalise the professionals nor can we out-scheme the schemers, and even if we could it would be wholly counter-productive to try.

The strength of community organising lies not in any financial resources or hype-professionalism, but in the untapped talent; the ideas, skills and energy of the people. The 'regeneration' of a place like Hyson Green will come from putting those talents to work, on the basis of the widest possible active participation.

At the end of the day people are the only asset worth considering. And we have to recognise the wider possibilities of a community campaign in this light. It can help build bridges between the various communities that live in the area, it can get people talking and moving. Only on the basis of this is 'regeneration' either possible or worth considering.

Undoubtedly areas like Hyson Green are vulnerable to the ups and downs of the market economy and until we get rid of that all else will be piecemeal and palliative. But successfully doing that is dependent upon revitalising some sense of community and some healthy 'street culture'. And until we do get rid of it a revitalised community will be the only defense an area like Hyson Green has.



## more letters

Nottingham Anarchist News

re your article on the Mushroom bookshop, the members of the '87 Peace Festival committee would like it to be known that the article in no way reflects their attitude towards Mushroom, and in fact finds the article to be divisive and in total opposition to the spirit of freindship that exists between Mushroom and the Peace Movement generally. You also forgot to mention that Mushroom did in fact make a substantial donation to us.

Yours sincerely  
Bill Haines (on behalf of Mushroom the P.F. committee)

Reply: the article referred to made quotes from a letter passed on by people involved with '87 Peace Festival who were very obviously NOT pleased with Mushrooms behaviour. The donation amounted to £20 in total with much reluctance.

Dear sir

even though I hadn't made any chance to know about punk when I had stayed in England therefore had been totally ignorant of it, I have now become a sort of person who mostly agree with them and support them since I got to know a punk boy last year.

when he went back to England this summer, he brought some punk materials one of which was your newspaper "Nottingham Anarchist News (No 15)". No matter how much I listen to the Pistolls or the Dead Kennedys etc., I think it's rather meaningless unless I keep in touch with punks and get their up-to-date information .

I wonder if you could send me your papers regularly . I'm able to pay you in cash when you let me know how much it costs. I hope to have a positive answer from you in the near future.

Thank you.

Best regards, Kiyoko Suzuki.

# REGGIE THE VEGGIE VS RONALD THE BASTARD.

I have always had the comforting feeling that when the revolution happens, Patrick will be behind the barricades with his twin burners going full chat, dishing up Veggie's famous veggieburgers, heedless of the bullets. From a benefit at the Garage to a mass trespass at Coulport, Veggies are always there to feed us, but if the McDonald's Corporation have their way, they could be in big trouble.

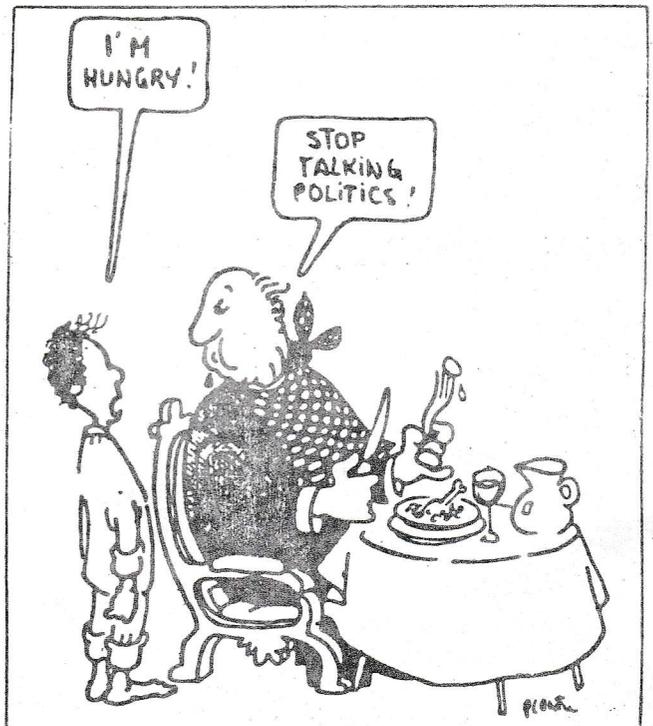
It's not perhaps widely known that Veggies is a charity which donates all its surplus proceeds to Vegfam, an organization committed to feeding the world's hungry without exploiting animals. Concern for the world's starving and the world's resources has always been a fundamental principle at the heart of Veggies' operation. A while back, Veggies reprinted a Greenpeace (London) article called "What's wrong with McDonalds", and distributed it from their stalls. The article, part of a world wide, continuing campaign against the multi-national corporation, charged McDonalds with the destruction of South America's tropical rain forest to make grazing land for the cattle whose various bits are destined for Big Mac's yummy junkburgers, and the torture and murder of these animals. It was said that the cleared timber was used to make paper containers for McDonald's food products.

The poor quality of McDonald's food was also attacked, together with the low pay and working conditions endured by their employees. The spotlight is on Big Mac, and they don't like it; they have instructed solicitors to demand printed apologies from many organizations that have been critical, among them Leeds student union newspaper, the Guardian, BBC2 and Veggies for distributing the Greenpeace article. McDonald's solicitors claimed 1) that their clients were not responsible for slaughter houses, 2) that their meat does not come from cattle reared on former rain forest, and 3) that rain forest trees are unsuitable for paper.

Let's look at each of McDonald's denials in turn. First, whether or not they own slaughterhouses, they are responsible for turning live animals into very dead hamburgers. I do not see how anyone can claim to do this "humanely".

Secondly, raising cattle on cleared tropical rain forest. Since 1924, big business has tried to tame the jungle with million dollar projects, including that inventor of production line misery, Henry Ford. Each time the jungle has won; its soil is very poor, and the huge plantations had to be abandoned. In 1970, Brazil's military government encouraged the troublesome poor crowding its drought stricken north east, to "go west" and clear large tracts of tropical rain forest to grow grain. But after three years, crop yields dwindled away to nothing, and the starving settlers gave up.

Then large companies were given financial inducements to clear the land for grazing cattle, but big business found this too unprofitable, so cattle ranches tend to be small and forest clearing slowed considerably in the early '80's. But it still continues in Rondonia province, on Brazil's eastern borders; thousands of landless peasant families are settling there, because the jungle soil and climate support coffee and cocoa crops (but not grain) and the land is cheap. Needless to say, the indigenous peoples have suffered most from the attempted exploitation of the jungle; they have been brutally slaughtered by settlers and company henchmen, and have been exposed to European diseases to which they have no resistance, so that some tribes have been completely wiped out.



McDonald's beef may come from a variety of sources, and they cannot really deny that some may come from cleared jungle because, as Veggies point out in their response to McDonald's denials, their buyers are unlikely to know where any particular batch of carcasses has come from. Veggies make the criticism that American cattle are usually fed on grain, and turning grain into meat wastes 90% of its food value. Instead of being used to make junk food for wealthy nations, this wasted grain could be used to feed the world's starving. True, but Veggies' suggestion that this grain could come from cleared jungle doesn't hold up, for the reasons given above.

Finally, the use of rain forest trees to make paper cartons. Wood pulp for paper is made from conifer trees such as pine, fir and spruce, and the USA is the world's largest producer of wood pulp. Brazil's pulp production



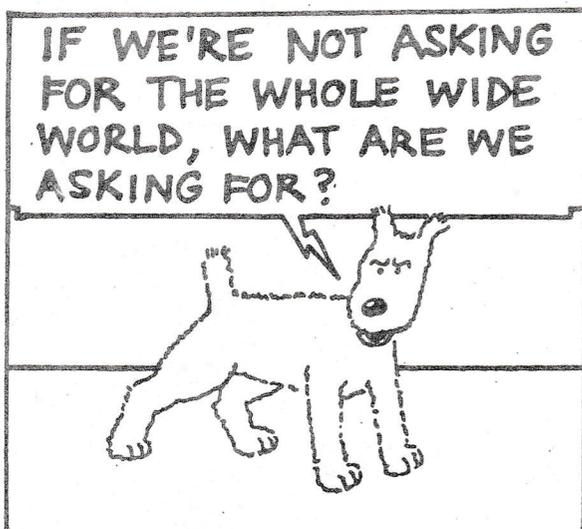
# REGGIE THE VEGGIE VS RONALD THE BASTARD..

is very small, probably because only about 7% of the rain forest trees are conifers (a profitable spin-off to anyone clearing rain forest, would be the valuable hardwood trees like ebony and rosewood). So the pulp for the US container industry is more likely to be home grown in plantations which may be properly re-afforested. However, even if the trees in Oregon do eventually grow again, paper production needs energy and other materials, and the net result of all this unnecessary consumption can be found littering the pavement outside your local McDonald's.

It is doubtful if any multi-national corporation concerned in the meat business is entirely blameless for the destruction of the tropical rain forest. If there is big money to be made from clearing the Brazilian jungle, then someone will do it. But even if the tropical rain forest connection isn't very strong, it doesn't let McDonald's off the hook; they are still guilty of killing large numbers of animals, and squandering the earth's resources. Also, McDonald's have no answer for the charges that their food is crap and their employees are low paid and work in lousy conditions; how could they have? The truth is that once again, a few are making monstrous profits by selling rubbish, paying low wages, and wasting resources while millions starve. Once again, the few are in control and have the laws of the state on their side, ready to be used against those-like Veggies- who dare to speak out. That's what multinational capitalism is all about.

So just what is the current, on-going bottom-line monstrous profit situation? Basically, that nice Ronald McDonald who is so kind to the kids in the telly ads, makes \$1.32 million clear profit PER DAY, and is threatening to take legal proceedings against the charity, Veggies, whose assets stand at about 550 quid. Veggies have supported us, now it's our turn to help them, by buying their products, and donating to their defence fund.

Bob



# ENNISKILLEN & THE WAR IN IRELAND

News of the IRA bomb which exploded in Enniskillen on Remembrance Sunday left us stunned and shocked. Not, as the media would have it, because of the shattered asanctity of Remembrance Day, but because of the sheer pointless waste of life which resulted from the bombing. This was the IRA at its worst: blundering, ineffective and careless. Whether by accident or not eleven innocent people died.

But this does not alter the complexion of the war in Ireland. The Enniskillen bomb was not an act in isolation, but a tiny part in an enormous pattern of violence, intimidation and discrimination. This cycle of repression is, for the most part, the work of the RUC, the British Army and the British State; and the Catholic community its most frequent victim.

The day after Enniskillen, Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein (political wing of the IRA) distanced himself from the bombing, saying he regretted it, and that he could in no way justify it. In 1972, thirteen unarmed Catholics were shot dead in Derry by the British Army. The British State, its generals, its government and its Prime Minister offered no regrets, no sympathy, no acknowledgement of error or guilt. It would appear that the British State have less of a conscience than the Republican Army they claim is so callous.

The Falklands War was fought over the issue of "self-determination" for the islanders. The Catholics in Ireland are batoned, imprisoned and killed for fighting for that same thing.

Mr Tom King, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, talked of the "revulsion" at this "terrible crime" - "using violence for political ends". The scale of political violence practised by the British government - both directly and indirectly - in Britain, South Africa and Northern Ireland renders such hypocrisy farcical. That the main cause of the outrage should be that the Enniskillen bomb 'desecrated' the very day on which we are prompted to remember those who have died in war is ironic in view of the fact that Britains war against the Irish people, and its consequent victims (on all sides), make it the bloodiest conflict Britains troops have fought since the second world war. The only way to even begin to bring peace to Ireland is to get the troops out.

All this in no way legitimizes the bombing at Enniskillen. Just as in any war - including those in Nicaragua, Afganistan and South Africa - there is the sad and pathetic spectacle of innocent people dying for no reason. But the outraged, almost manic attacks on the IRA in most newspapers is a signal that there is much more at stake here than the death of eleven people in the six counties. Here is the British state sinking its teeth into a corpse to drain it of the last of its blood. In for the kill. Let's split the Nationalist community. Let's wipe out the opposition. Let's get the Catholics knuckling under...

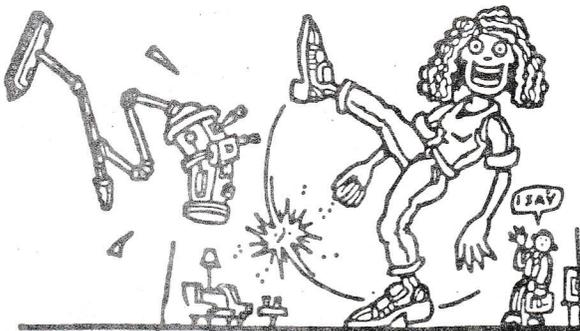
If this media/state onslaught, if even the brutal killing itself makes us for a minute fall into line with the accepted, censored half-truth propaganda we are told about the Republican resistance in Ireland, then it will have served its purpose for the British government. That government doesn't just want your tears and your sympathy. It wants you to close your eyes to what is really happening in Northern Ireland.

Enniskillen was a terrible mistake for the IRA. But it does not alter the basic fact: that Irish people are suffering an invading army of occupation. The IRA are fighting that daily brutality with force. In our safe English armchairs, can we dismiss their war against colonialism because of the Enniskillen bombing?

# HOW TO PIRATE RADIO

RADIO IS MY BOMB (HOOLIGAN PRESS, 2.40p) Hello again from the Nottingham Anarchist News DIY basement! I'm just rummaging around to see if I can find a few bits and pieces to knock up a wireless transmitter, because this book had me reaching for the soldering iron (AAARGH, SHIT! Who left it switched on??).

SOD THE HOUSEWORK!  
I'M GONNA BE A RADIO PIRATE!!



If the mindless, patronizing drivel spewed out by the likes of Radio Trent's Steve Merrick has you running for the toilet, and you think you could do better, then this slim, highly practical, volume is for you. It tries really hard to de-mystify all aspects of "pirate" radio broadcasting, and includes everything from how to build equipment, to what to do when the filth arrive! Not only does it tell you where to stick your aerial, but there are also articles on how to make programs, how pirates need to relate to the community they broadcast to, and pirate radio in other countries. The layout and the graphics are varied and interesting, and help to make the book a gripping read.

Regretably though, the section on "Radio Electronics" might as well be written in ancient Etruscan; witness this gem of a sentence: "The L-R signal is mixed in a balanced modulator with a 38kHz sub carrier to produce an amplitude modulated double sideband". Might as well be a "double sideboard" as far as I'm concerned, so if you really want to get stuck in with the old long nose pliers, maybe support from a basic electronics text book would be useful. But one thing the book makes perfectly clear is that pirate radio is more than a collection of bits on a printed circuit board, it's continuous support and energy from a lot of committed people at all levels, and burn-out has caused many outstanding pirate operations to shut down for good, as much as arrests.

And the arrests have been many; the state needs to keep tight control of radio and TV broadcasting, so that public opinion can be moulded, and the electorate goes to the polls with the right thoughts on election day. This illusion that the people have some free choice or control of their government could be shattered by hundreds of pirate stations broadcasting the reality that the politicians don't want us to hear - so lets get out there and TRANSMIT!

This book is available now, from your friendly BLACK RAVEN BOOKSTALL, at events, gigs and in Listergate on dry Saturdays.

Bob

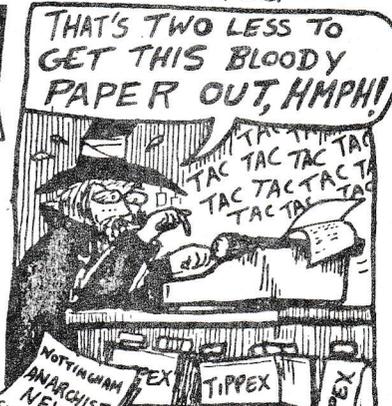
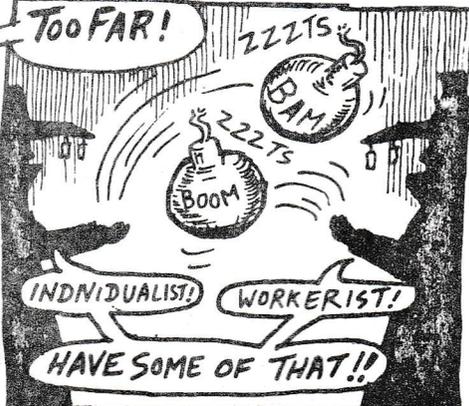
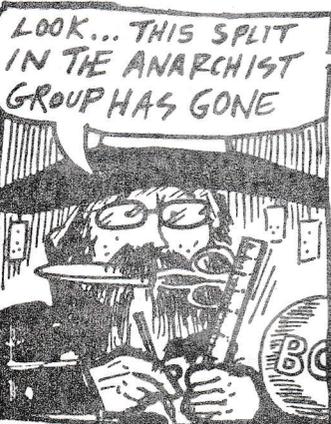
# MAURICE

A mainstream gay film with a happy end. Impossible, you say? For once the British Film Industry seems to have been able to lay off the tragedy we are so used to from the portrayal of gay men and lesbians in film. It may not seem like a big thing to have the occasional film that ends unhappy; but if all you ever see about the relationships like the ones you have yourself is that one partner kills themselves or emigrates to Antartica or gets married, it can get pretty depressing.

"Maurice" is a different thing altogether. Not only has it got a happy end, but it expresses well the atmosphere of secrecy, fear of discovery and its consequences in 1920's Britain. It wasn't just the scorn and

# LIFESTYLE

THIS WEEKS HANDY HINT: IF YOUR KITCHEN CEILING FALLS DOWN REMEMBER YOU WONT HAVE SO FAR TO REACH TO CHANGE THE LIGHT BULB; HAVING THE LIGHT NEARER THE FLOOR, GIVES AN EXCITING DRAMATIC EFFECT



STAY- On board R.A.S. "TITANIC" WITH:

© TITANIC ENGINEERING & GRAPHICS '87

hate of society and the loss of respect from about everyone around, but also imprisonment, hard labour and flogging, as male homosexuality was illegal at whatever age. The characters in the film react differently to this threat: Clive, after seeing a fellow student sent to prison and ruined, withdraws from his (only platonic - he thinks everything else is to sordid) love affair with Maurice, gets married and tries to pretend it never happened. Maurice, after initial hesitation, realizing that he is really gay attempts to be "cured" by a hypnotist. He is advised to go and live in a country where being gay is not illegal, as "the British are not inclined to accept human nature". Whereas both Clive and Maurice are upper class and have their reputation and income to worry about, Alec, the third gay character in the film and servant at Clive's home, has no such restrictions and goes all out with his love for Maurice. Holding hands in public, writing letters asking to meet him, there is nothing two-faced about his love: "The first time I saw you I thought, 'I wouldn't mind having him'." I totally enjoyed the film. But when you watch it, make sure you know who's sitting near you. We got some funny looks when we clapped at all the scenes where everyone else let out disgusted grunts.

Two last comments: the winning characters in the film few as there are, are quite feeble and unconvincing and could have played a bigger role in the storyline, as they probably did in real life. Also, when will there be such a romantic mainstream movie with a happy ending - as gloriously unrealistic as you could see in any straight movie - for us lesbians? The setting I suggest would be the literary circles in 1920's Paris, Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein etc.... Looking forward to it.

P.S. I consider myself possibly incorrectly gendered to do this review and it has only been printed because no gay man could be found to do it instead. Fiver.



## 'The May Days Barcelona 1937'

Ed. Vernon Richards. £2.50.

To mark its centenary Freedom Press are issuing a six volume series of selections from the various journals it has published over the years. This book is the supplement to volume 2 - selections from 'Spain and the World' the journal published during the Spanish Civil War.

The May Days proved a significant watershed in the civil war. They didn't only mark the real beginning of the end for the influential and powerful anarcho-syndicalist union, the CNT; but also and more importantly, for the revolutionary gains of the workers and peasants; gains which had already been deeply undermined.

Including a number of contributions from various sources the book details, in a blow by blow account, the events themselves; the rising tide of counter revolution preceding them; and the general political repression surrounding them.



The May Days refers to the outbreak of armed conflict in Barcelona which began on May 3rd. Specifically they were sparked off by an attack on the telephone exchange by state troops. The exchange had been controlled by the workers there, though largely members of the CNT there a significant number of workers organised in the socialist union, the UGT. Incidentally, this situation of workers control had been 'legalised' (after the event) by a Government decree on collectivisation.

Barricades were erected throughout Barcelona as a result. But these weren't simply a response to state attacks on the these particular workers; rather they were a product of the deep conflicts between the social and political forces within the anti-fascist camp. This conflict found its reflection in the fundamental disagreement over the question of how the war against Franco should be pursued. On the one hand there were those for whom the civil war had to be a revolutionary war. Against them were those who argued that the Popular Front struggle against Franco and fascism had to take precedence over any question of social transformation. The period since the outbreak of the war had been marked by some profound revolutionary developments. The examples of social reconstruction have a lasting value that goes way beyond the narrow confines of the civil war. But there were other developments; that countered and eventually destroyed the gains the workers had made. Taking the form of a gradual restoration of state power, the conflict between this and the revolution came to a head during the May Days - leaving 500 dead and twice that number wounded.

The book sheds light on the manipulative and growing counter-revolutionary power of the Communist Party, which, the world over has always been a bad egg, and on the seemingly curious and contradictory role of the CNT - which proved to be both a revolutionary inspiration and a vacillating barrier to its growth.

Whether or not the outcome of the events could have been different is a moot point. Given that the revolution had not been able to consolidate itself before this, probably not. The failure to push ahead in the early days left an unworkable alliance facing Franco, and opened the door for Stalinist manipulation. Ultimately it paved the way for the restoration of bourgeois state power - exactly what the rogues in the Communist Party wanted, given Stalins then current foreign policy concerns. Much of the blame for this has to be laid at the door of the CNT. Its leadership preferred to use their prestige to gain a place for themselves within the Popular Front, where they found themselves constantly out-manoeuvred; and in doing so they helped make a noose for both themselves and the revolution.

The book includes a chapter taken from Burnett Bollotens magnificent "THE SPANISH Revolution" which is the best book on the subject. The editor, Vernon Richards, provides some critical comments at the end, including a bibliographical sketch. His own book 'Lessons of the Spanish Revolution' develops a useful Anarchist critique of the CNT and is also available from Freedom Press, probably because Comrade Richards is Freedom Press.



# We'll give you a hand to improve the environment.

At BP we know all about the environment and how important it is. We are one of the world's largest oil and natural resources groups. Destroying the earth in over 70 countries around the globe.

That might sound odd coming from a company which regularly spends millions trying to convince you how much we care.

But at the end of the day, our business is destruction of the earth. From chopping down the Amazon rainforests to digging up

uranium in Australasia. From providing animal feed for factory farms to designing all sorts of weapons systems.

In fact the only thing we don't do, is care...

And with over 21,000 petrol stations worldwide, we can provide plenty of fuel for your anger.

BP. We're as British as troops on the streets of Ireland.

Britain at its best.

