

THE CONSUMERS



Paul.

WHATEVER

RANTS AND TRACTS FROM THE PROLETARIAN TWILIGHT ZONE



CLASS ANALYSIS, FOR ANTI-CAPITALIST STRUGGLE
 LAST RITES FOR THE LAST RIOTS ?
 THE BALKANS MR UNABOMBER

Class Analysis, for Anti-Capitalist Struggle

This article is an attempt at communication with individuals and groups involved in subversive activity. The background of all present radical struggles is an attack on the social relation of capital, whether or not this is realised by the participants. The destruction of modern global conditions implies a global struggle: the only terrain on which a world-wide struggle can be fought is one which centres on a global class. The success of all or any of the partial struggles now being fought (over wages, squatting, environmental defence, work refusal etc.) means an extension and integration of proletarian struggle. An understanding of class relationships, although useless on its own, can lead to a greater effectiveness of our own struggles. This analysis has been developed out of practical experience. It is hoped that it may have practical results, that it is not theory separate from practise.

I have found that apparently minor disagreements on class analysis (such as whether teachers are middle class or working class) can turn out after much discussion to rely on very basic disagreements as to how the world is. In particular, disagreements on the nature of truth. Therefore it is necessary to start at a very basic level. My own understanding of the world is materialist. But I don't plan to waste much time arguing materialism versus idealism. The opposing world views are so far apart that there is no common ground to argue from. I will state though that the world is made and remade by material forces not by ideas. For instance, it may be or may not be the case that your ideas change after reading this. But any such change would be totally irrelevant if your actions, your behaviour do not change as well. In any case, ideas are not changed merely by the reading of some article, but in the context of some wider experience. If that were not the case then everyone reading the same stuff

would end up thinking the same thing, which certainly isn't what happens.

Where is your truth, when god is dead?

In some societies such as Europe in Medieval Times, and perhaps in some modern theocracies, it was the case that truth was something that appeared to come from outside of society. Certain important disputes were argued out and decided upon according to a fixed official truth. In Medieval Europe the fixed truth was the scriptures. The particular interpretation of the "fixed truth" might in fact be determined according to interests of the most powerful groups in society, but it was nevertheless the case that there existed some reference point around which important disputes would turn. In particular, revolutionary class struggles in the Middle Ages seemed always to have religious disagreements that corresponded to the opposing class forces. (For instance, the Muenster commune was created by Anabaptists, the Taborites were also protestants who fought against the established church, and the various class forces in the English civil war also had their own religious sects.)

This state of affairs was smashed by the bourgeois revolution. God was ripped from the centre of society leaving a vacuum that cannot be filled by a constantly developing science. With no generally accepted truth, new opposing truths are developed by contradictory sections of society. Nowhere is this more obviously so than in the area of class theory.

One current capitalist version of class theory is based on sociology. With this method, society is categorised according to type of occupation, education, and salary. In one variant, skilled workers are categorised as C2's, for example. This

class analysis is used most especially by the advertising industry. In order to maximise sales, advertising is aimed at particular groups. More interestingly, this type of analysis is also used by political parties in order to maximise the efficiency of their campaigning. In Britain, the C2's are seen by most political pundits as a crucial territory on which to fight. People lower down the scale might have a tendency to vote Labour, those higher up Conservative. Skilled workers are a significant group where careful campaigning and policy making can tip the scales one way or the other. The Conservative policies of selling off council houses, mortgage relief and of widespread share issues, were deliberately aimed at this group. Their use of the sociological class analysis has been crucial to their continued grip on power. This theory is therefore certainly true; it corresponds in an exact way with the real world. But it is only true for capitalist forces. It corresponds to their worldview, it is useful for them to plan their strategies against us. It is true, but true only for the capitalist class in the maintenance of its power. We need class theory for an entirely different reason. We wish to understand this society in order to destroy it. Therefore our theory must be based not on the scientific notion of categorising differentiable strata, but instead on the active relationship of different groups, with each other, and with capitalism and the struggle against it.

Class in History

Every civilised society has been a class society. Each of these societies has based its civilisation, its culture, its technology, on the oppression of the majority by a minority. The earliest civilisations were based on open class power. The main productive class were the slaves, who originally were kidnapped from free communities or rival civilised societies. Over time, the master slave relationship became accepted by both parties as

normal, and the slaves participated in the reproduction of their slavery.

In more recent times, the place of the slave class was taken by that of the peasant. The peasants lived in their own village communities. But these communities were not the free communities that existed before (or outside of) civilisation. The communities were dominated by the power of the lord, the church, and eventually the state. These forces were external to the agrarian community but none the less played an important role within it. The lord was the protector of the community (providing a form of protection that is usually associated with organised crime), the peasants worked perhaps one day a week on his lands in return for his care. This relationship, also tended to become accepted, and both lord and peasant recognised a system of complementary rights and duties.

Previous historical societies had class relationships that were very different from today's. But these relationships are also recognisable. Workers are often referred to as wage-slaves, and although, workers are not bought and sold, but are legally free, this phrase has some obvious reality to it. How do we relate our own class oppression to the class oppression of our ancestors? What is the common factor in all systems of class domination? The answer, which is both obvious and commonly denied is the existence of social power. In all class societies, the members of the lowest class have their power alienated from them in one way or another. This alienated power is wielded by the ruling class and their functionaries. In ancient societies, the power of the slave was alienated absolutely, so that the slave was an object, a simple commodity to be bought and sold, a dog to be kicked. The peasant on the other hand, was allowed a measure of social autonomy, within strict limits. Today the alienated power of the majority is wielded especially by the functionaries of capital and by the agents

of state and spectacle. This use of alienated social power is an active relationship with those it is used against.

"Marxism"

The society we live in is capitalist, characterised by wage labour, a centralised state, commodity production, the accumulation of capital. Can we still talk of class being determined by power in this society? The first "coherent" class analysis I came across was a Trotskyist version, touted by the Workers Revolutionary Party, the then official British section of the 4th International. The class theory they put across was that class position is determined by whether or not a person owned capital. Those that owned a large amount are the bourgeoisie, those who own a small amount, petty bourgeois, the rest of us working class. This theory (which is held by many more or less marxist groups) obviously has a lot going for it. Ownership of capital definitely is important in capitalist society! But the theory also has serious flaws in it. The biggest problem was revealed by the WRP's analysis of the Soviet Union. The USSR had all the typical social relations of capitalism; wage-labour, commodity production, etc. However it did not have a class of people who owned capital. The position of the WRP was therefore that the USSR did not have a capitalist class and was a form of worker's state. The idiocy of this position does not come from the WRP misusing the theory, but from the theory itself. A class analysis that looks only at whether individuals own capital or not to determine their class position, is worse than useless. It provides a theoretical justification for supporting particular states which are in every way capitalist. It fails to locate the real fault lines in *all* modern societies.

Ownership of capital is a crucial determinant of class; if you own a large amount of capital you are a capitalist. But it is incorrect to turn this statement round.

It is not true that not owning capital makes you proletarian. The Soviet Union was a capitalist state with a class society. The class contradiction was not one of ownership against non-ownership, it was one of possession of social power against powerlessness. The ruling class, the capitalist class of the USSR were the top managers who commanded its economy, its state and its ideological apparatus. The intermediate class between capital and labour was primarily that of the lower managers, whose job it was to rule the enterprises on a day to day basis.¹ This recognition of the forms of class power in the USSR leads us directly to an examination of so-called mixed economies such as Britain. In Britain too there is state ownership of certain industries. Certainly traditional bourgeois benefit from these industries (through the advantages of planning, or subsidies etc) but these industries are not capitalist by proxy. State industries are in no way "socialist" (in the non capitalist sense). The nationalised industries use wage-labour in order to produce and accumulate surplus value; this is the very essence of capitalist production relations. The individuals who run these industries are themselves a part of the capitalist class in their own right. Finally we look at private enterprises. The stereotypical description of a capitalist enterprise is of a factory owned by a capitalist who controls it directly. This quaint vision must be well over a century out of date (in as much as it was ever really accurate). Typical private enterprises

¹ Although Marx's Capital was written half a century before state-capitalism started masquerading as socialism, some of Marx's comments still throw light on the social situation that existed in Russia. "An industrial army of workmen, under the command of a capitalist, requires, like a real army, officers (managers), and sergeants (foremen, overlookers), who, while the work is being done, command in the name of the capitalist." and "It is not because he is a leader of industry that a man is a capitalist; on the contrary, he is a leader of industry because he is a capitalist. The leadership of industry is an attribute of capital..." volume 1, page 314, Lawrence & Wishart

today are owned collectively by capital, through multiple share ownership by both individuals and institutions. They are not operated primarily by individual bourgeois but by top managers. In free market societies, as in state controlled societies, the capitalist class includes top managers, the middle class includes lower managers. In the free market these strata exist along side private capitalists and petty bourgeois. The bourgeoisie, the owners of capital, are ruling class not because they are rich and we aren't. The bourgeoisie are ruling class because their ownership of capital gives them certain rights, abilities, power over productive forces (including variable capital, i.e. their employees). Ownership of capital is only a form of class power that appears in particular variants of capitalism. It has its own characteristics but also has some continuity with other forms of domination, just as the proletarian condition has similarities (as well as differences) to historical forms of subjugation.

Wages

I will mention another variety of false class theory. Sometimes, it is claimed that class is determined by the amount of wages that a person receives. Now, there is a class difference between the rich and the poor, but this is not due to wage differentials. A class analysis based on wage differences would result in "an infinity of classes". There would also be the problem with differences in wages paid in different regions; either we have regional class differences or regional variations in class analyses. Silly. More to the point such a theory fails to understand what wage differences are about. At one level, wages are determined by the class war, with higher wages reflecting successful struggle by workers. But this is only one side of the story as wages are determined within the context of the capitalist system. In part they reflect the different exchange value of different forms of labour power; some people are paid more because their labour

power is more expensive to reproduce. More commonly, wages vary due to fluctuations in the labour market, reflecting supply and demand for different types of labour. Most importantly, wage differentials are deliberately created by capital in order to divide the proletariat. The class is divided by jealousy or elitism, against itself. Basing a class analysis on wage differentials means taking artificial divisions created by capitalism to ensure its own survival, and then deliberately accentuating them. Such theory does capitalism's work for it, and against us.

Communist Analyses

The class analyses I have criticised so far have been essentially, or absolutely, counterrevolutionary. They are used more or less consciously to defend capitalism (though not in each individual instance of their use). There are also class analyses produced by revolutionary currents which I believe are incorrect. Jean Barrot's "Capitalism & Communism", which appeared in "Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement", is perhaps the best introduction to communist theory. Especially because it recognises the limitations of theory, and the poverty of what normally passes as theoretical activity. His description of what the proletariat is, for the most part, is an excellent modernisation/generalisation of Marx's theory. One position I disagree with though, is his characterisation of the proletariat as "those who have no reserves". Barrot attributes this phrase to the Left Communist Bordiga but says his purpose was to go back to "the general definition". The function of this definition in Barrot's theory, is to make the struggle of the proletariat primarily a struggle against economic oppression. The class struggle then becomes a function of the ill health of capital. This process is obviously a major source of class composition and class struggle, but is far from adequate to describe the proletariat. If we accept this definition, then we should also accept the

arguments of those sociologists, who (especially in the 60's & 70's) declared that the proletariat no longer existed in the developed countries. We should also accept the arguments of liberals and Trotskyists, that revolution is now located in the third world. The Trotskyists say this because western workers are a labour aristocracy and the real proletariat are the impoverished workers overseas. The liberals say it because the west is their (imperfect) paradise, and the third world countries need a democratic revolution to achieve our own general conditions of existence. Barrot recognises alienation as a producer of the proletariat but makes too much of the economic imperatives. Barrot is being too economic in fact. If we go back to "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction" as Barrot recommends, we see that "the proletariat .. is ... formed ... from the mass of people issuing from society's *acute disintegration* and in particular from the ranks of the middle class". This identification of the middle class origin of the proletariat ties in with comments in the "Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts" on the workers alienation from the product of their labour.

"...man reproduces himself not only intellectually, in his consciousness, but actively and actually, and he can therefore contemplate himself in a world he himself created. In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labour therefore tears away from him his species-life..."

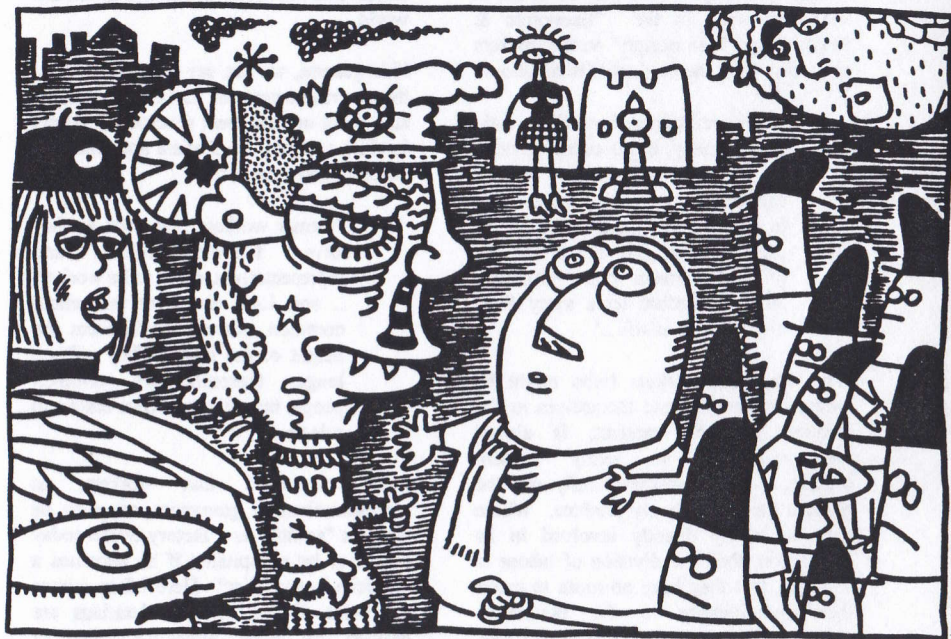
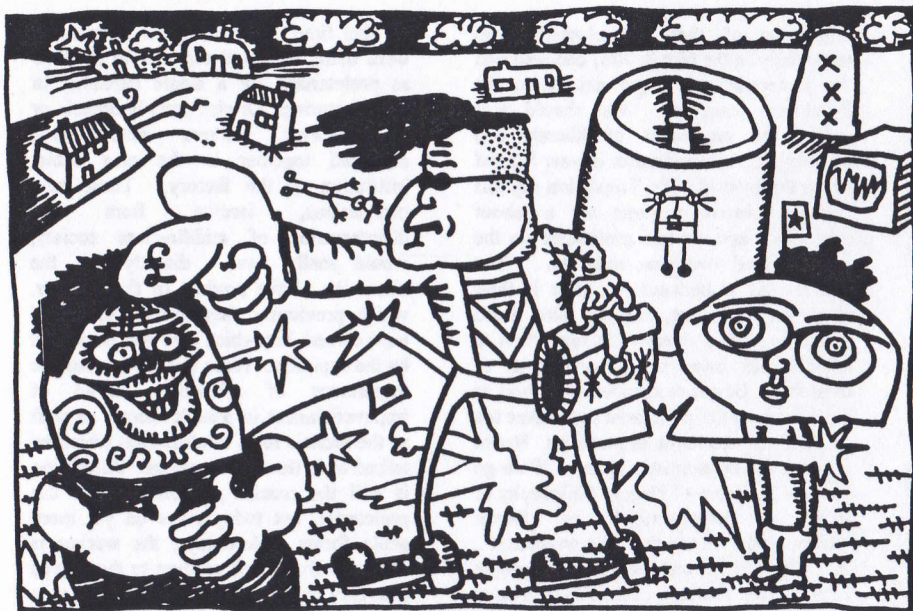
This idea that workers (who might be women or men) create themselves in the creation of their product, is almost incomprehensible in really modern industry. Most workers hardly see the product they collectively produce. Where they are really directly involved in its production, then the division of labour is so acute, that they have no room to assert their individuality in the productive process. This was not true in Marx's day.

At this time, petty-bourgeois producers were being collected together to produce as proletarians for a single capitalist in manufacturing. Or else petty-bourgeois or manufacturing workers were being collected together in the new social institution of the factory. These new proletarians, issuing from the disintegration of middle-class society, would really have directly felt the alienation of the product of their labour, which previously they themselves would have owned, but which now was possessed by the capitalist. From this we can see the importance of alienation, ahead of impoverishment in Marx's theory, as well as the archaic form of alienation which he talked of in the above passage. Alienation is still the crucial pre-condition for the proletariat, but today takes on yet more acute forms. Nowadays, the worker is alienated from their product to the degree that they hardly recognise it as their own product. The process of producing yourself through your product is itself an almost alien concept. It belongs to another world.

If in general, we can say that Marx's class theory was correct for its time, we should also point out his most spectacular failure in class analysis. In Statism and Anarchy, Bakunin had written that

"former workers .. as soon as they have become rulers and representatives, cease to be workers .. and look down on the whole common workers' world from the height of the state. They will no longer represent the common people but only their own claims to rule them."

Marx responded that workers, as representatives or governors, cease to be workers "as little as a factory owner today ceases to be a capitalist if he becomes a municipal councillor" Here Marx misses the point disastrously. Proletarians are defined by their alienation, just as



bourgeois are defined by their possession of capital. Factory owners are not proletarianised by the assumption of even greater alienated social power. But proletarians cease to be such when they become representatives, because they take on the power that a ruler or representative possess by definition. Marx is useful where he talks about alienation or political economy, but his politics (and activity) were mostly bourgeois.

Class theory and its use

So far a way of determining the class position of different groups in society has been identified, by analysing the amount of social power that they wield. But it has not yet been said what this characterisation means, how it helps us. The utility of class analysis is in identifying the material interests of different social groups, both in the day to day running of capital, and in the on going struggle against it. The main reason why the proletariat is so often identified as the revolutionary class, is precisely because it has no material interest in the maintenance of capitalism, either immediately or in the long term. The capitalist class, both owners and top managers, are the class that directly benefits from the present society, and will organise whatever measures are necessary to ensure its continued existence. The middle class, be they petty bourgeois, peasants or the new middle class, are society's leftovers.

The middle class are both exploiter and exploited, or they are neither; they have some small privilege but no real security. Proletarianisation is a constant imminent danger for the middle class, and something they always fight to prevent. This struggle can be reactionary where it means a struggle against the proletariat to defend middle class position. But it can potentially be revolutionary when it is a struggle against capital's encroachment, and can lead to united action with the proletariat. In general, the middle class are

only defined by their position in this society, and not by their struggles. This is because this class has no clear class interest in or against capital, and so never struggles as a class.

The proletariat is defined first of all by its dispossession. It exists as a negativity, as something alienated from this society, and which can never be wholly integrated. These radical chains lead to radical struggle. Proletarian struggles are always anti-capitalist (in potential) because the proletariat can find no liberation within capitalism. Its struggle therefore tends towards an all out struggle against capital. This tendency comes to the fore only too rarely. Most of the time the proletariat exists primarily as a class defined by capitalism. Only through struggle can it form itself into a community consciously opposed to capitalism. The material conditions of existence of the class precede radical class consciousness.

The capitalist class is a small minority of the world population. Capitalism requires competition and therefore struggles between rival capitals. The capitalist class can therefore never be fully unified. However, capitalists must struggle not only against themselves, but also against all the other classes. The ruling class is under permanent assault from many directions. This results in a high degree of class consciousness possessed by the capitalist class. When a powerful anti-capitalist struggle breaks out, rival capitals can temporarily bury the hatchet and act in concert against the proletariat. The usual stereotype of the bourgeois is of a fat, top-hatted oaf, smoking a large cigar. It should be realised that the ruling class is small, fast and ruthless.

So who are our enemies; just the capitalist class or both they and the middle class? When it comes down to it the answer is: neither. What really destroys us is not the rich or their functionaries, it is the social relations of capitalism. It is the

accumulation of capital, wage labour, social isolation, the state, borders, and more besides, that we are really need to do away with. In as much as the capitalist class, the middle class, or even the working class defend these relationships they act against our own liberation and the liberation of humanity as a whole. The point about class analysis, is that we can see who is most likely to defend these relations, and who is most likely to attack them. I once had a talk with someone who said that we should reopen Auschwitz and exterminate the richest 2% in this country. This kind of extremism has a sort of gut appeal. But there were a couple of problems. One was that this guy was a South African fascist who identified himself as an Anglo-Saxon. He argued that apartheid was more strongly established in the UK than it then was in South Africa, and that the ruling class was entirely of Norman origins. His wish to wipe out the rich was akin to the Nazi extermination of (Jewish) finance capitalists. The second problem was the industrial, and therefore capitalist, nature of his solution. The reason that we can't use prisons, concentration camps, or even firing squads for our liberation is not that we are liberals who respect an absolute right to life. It's because these are dehumanising institutions for the jailers as well as the condemned. Rebel violence can be liberating, but can never be institutional. We use enough violence to achieve our aims; we need to create a new community out of our struggle, hopefully as many people as possible can be integrated into this human community as rapidly as possible. As the revolution develops, more and more people will be attracted to it. We aim to unite with whoever really shares our struggle no matter what role they play under normal conditions. The situationist Ratgeb/Vaneigem expressed this brilliantly: "Doesn't it give you a certain sense of pleasure to think how, some day soon, you will be able to treat as human

beings those cops whom it will not have been necessary to kill on the spot?"

Back to reality

This article has presented a theory, an analytical tool. But it has done it in a too abstract way. Where did these thoughts come from, a book, a discussion, a dream? These ideas did not appear fully formed but have been put together by me from my own experiences in this society, and my own experiences in my struggle against it, as well as from talking with other radicals and reading different books. This is a process started perhaps fifteen years ago and still continuing (though my ideas on class have only changed in details in the last eight years, say). I will retell some of my own experiences, so that you can understand more where I am coming from, and to bring this down to earth a bit more.

"But Teacher!"

My first involvement in any collective class struggle was at age eleven. At that time I was going to the comprehensive school on the council estate where I lived. Most of the kids there were working class, or else they were lower middle class. (Of course they all had similar amounts of social power, none, but where people are "temporarily" outside of the cycle of accumulation, it is probably sensible to look at their class background.) That year there were a number of teachers' strikes which resulted in some disruption of classes. We even got sent home early a couple of times, which was brilliant. Some kid, with a good sense of humour, had the idea that we should all go on strike "in support" of the teachers. Basically we just all met up at the tennis courts and didn't return to lessons. What was the reaction of the teachers to this mass "support" for their cause? They made no attempt at fraternisation with us. Their only response was to try to get us to return to normal passivity. One vision that stays with me is of one of the teachers, a

leftwinger, fighting with one of the fifth years to prevent him joining our strike. All the teachers, and all the pupils recognised the true situation, that there could be no unity between the students and staff, only class conflict. Teachers, as part of their job, have a role in supervising and disciplining pupils. They also disseminate capitalist propaganda. Their role is one of socialising school kids into capitalist normality, the five day week, obeying orders; even the more or less useful stuff such as teaching kids to read is carried out because capitalism needs an educated workforce. Teachers, at least those who work in compulsory education, are part of the middle class, because of the direct power they wield and because of their role in perpetuating ruling class ideology (although they are not major players in this field). Of course teachers do engage in collective class struggle. When these struggles are not aimed at protecting their "status", but are for a wage increase say, then we can even see some sort of "proletarian" content. But struggles that go against this society, struggles which hold the seeds of capitalism's destruction, are those that are expansive, which tend to unite more and more people. Teachers are, through their social position, divided against a large part of the proletariat (schoolkids) and they will have to go that much further to break from their social position. This doesn't mean that there can't be some individuals who are more strongly against their official role, I certainly have met a couple of teachers who have been involved in riots for instance. But class analysis is not useful for predicting the behaviour of each individual in a certain class position, only the general characteristics of that group as a whole. I should add here that there are certain categories of teachers, those who do not work in the compulsory sector and who are not deeply involved in the reproduction of ruling ideology, who are probably proletarian, or at least much closer to that condition. I'm thinking in particular of those that work in community education

colleges, and some of those that do workplace training. This is not because I want to make some exception, perhaps for someone I know, but because they do not possess the criteria that make them middle class; i.e. capital, power, a significant spectacular function. This lack of homogeneity, sameness, is not just restricted to teachers, but appears in almost any sociological grouping. I will say again, sociology, the identification and classification of separate groups in society, is of no use as a basis for radical class analysis.

It's Official

I have worked only in the non unionised private sector, or in temporary or casual jobs. This, together with the fact that I had a basic anarchist critique of unions before I left school, has meant that I have never been a union member. To me they have always seemed organisations of this society, not things outside or against it. This has meant that much of my criticism of unions has been second hand, based on the experiences of friends, family and comrades as well as stuff I have read. I have only come into conflict with unions in certain large workers' struggles, and first of all that against News International 1986 - 1987. This struggle started when the majority of the workforce was sacked. The union tried to keep things legal and peaceful, supposedly trying to win over public opinion. The struggle of the sacked printers, local youths, and extremists was continually violent, aimed at the cops, scabs and NI property. The police tactics were also very violent. The top bureaucrats of course condemned any violent action by the pickets (but not the cops) over their PA. This surprised no one of course. What particularly struck me were the actions of the steward in charge of the picket, Mike Hicks. He not only condemned the violence, even that in self-defence, but called anyone attacking the police, "agent provocateurs" (i.e. police agents). He also physically attacked

people who argued for this type of action. These counterrevolutionary actions were carried out not by the top union bureaucrats, but by a low level official. Hicks himself was a Stalinist, and so a more or less conscious counterrevolutionary. But his actions are not so far removed from that other union officials. Unions are capitalist institutions which have as their function the representation of variable capital, i.e. workers. They negotiate the rate or form of exploitation, according to their own interests (they need, from time to time to demonstrate their usefulness to both boss and worker). They are entirely part of the present system and can only attempt to repress any struggle that goes against this system. Union officials, at all levels, are in the belly of the beast, and are in fact separated from the proletariat. This is due to the increased social power that they enjoy. Their middle class nature can be seen by the fact that despite often being the most militant of workers on day to day issues, in the more bitter struggles they always play a conservative role, pulled three ways trying to represent the workers, the union, and the manager or boss.

Growing up in a working class environment, I gained a hatred for the police before gaining any formal radical politics. Friends and family were arrested or imprisoned, the pigs came round our house to check up on us, we were stopped and hassled in the street, they came to our school to indoctrinate us. The "marxist" class theory, that just looks at the relationship to capital, defines the police as proletarian, because cops don't own any means of production. Some groups run with this result, and call for the unionisation of the police (in Germany, unionised cops have been on strike for more repressive powers). Other groups find it embarrassing to define pigs as working class, and twist their theory to correct this one error. In reality, police are middle class, and not because they are the exception to the rule. They are the purest

example of holders of alienated social power. Those radicals who call teachers or shop stewards "soft cops" hit the nail on the head; these other middle class groups are only a diluted form of the archetype.

Contradictions

I have pointed out contradictions or capitalist interests in certain class theories. I can't however claim that the one I have presented can unerringly categorise every individual. One problem area is that of "housewives" or other full-time unpaid carers. (The role of the stereotypical housewife, who stays at home, looking after the house and the kids, has gone into decline since the sixties. This is due both to women's struggle, and to capitalist restructuring, away from the model of factory and stable nuclear family. But this role is still something of an archetype for women in this society.) "Housewives" and other carers perform labour in the context of a capitalist society. They produce and reproduce the commodity of labour power. The work they do is productive labour appropriated by capital as surplus value. Having said this, the category of "housewives", like the category of wage labourers, is not homogenous. Just as some wage labourers are middle class because of the social power they wield, so it is with "housewives" as well. These at first glance all appear to have the same social power and so all appear to be of the same class. It would be wrong to argue this way. As hinted at in the discussion above on school kids, in these areas, where the means of subsistence aren't paid directly as a wage for work done, it is often necessary to look at the "class background" of the people involved. So that if a woman who doesn't go out to work is married to a middle class man, it is probably reasonable to say that she is middle class too. She would certainly share some of his material interests, and therefore consciousness. It is still the case that "housewives" don't have any direct usage of social power, and are effectively unpaid workers, so this may

mean a downward pressure on class position, a partial proletarianisation. I am aware that this is a weakness in the class analysis I have put forward. There are other difficulties that now arise. What happens when a couple are from two different classes, say one a manager, the other a non-supervisory worker? From the example on housewives, we would have to say that the non-supervisory worker is elevated into the middle-class. If this is starting to get silly, it is not because the class analysis is totally wrong, it is because this is the wrong way to use it. Classes are social phenomenon, that are created in the mutual antagonism inherent in exploitative society. Using class analysis to analyse individual people in isolation is a moralistic endeavour, not a radical one. This is an important fact that many leftists totally ignore. For them the ability to individually "analyse" and condemn particular political enemies (or justify themselves) is their only reason for using class theory.

Class Community

Class is a social relation amongst large groups in society. It is not an object open to scientific analysis but exists in the conflict between classes. These class conflicts are power struggles primarily between a minority of possessors of social power and a majority whose social power is alienated from them. In capitalist society, alienation takes on specific forms. These include direct authority relationships, capital, and the spectacle. The function of, and need for a class theory is to understand how to destroy capitalist society by and through the creation of anti-capitalist modes of living. The revolutionary proletarian struggle is not an attempt to raise the proletariat to the position of a ruling class, but to abolish all classes through the destruction of capitalist social relations. The real communist movement is our struggle, the community we create through struggle against the social relations that destroy us.

Communist or anarchist society is the victory of this real social movement, the generalisation of this human community.

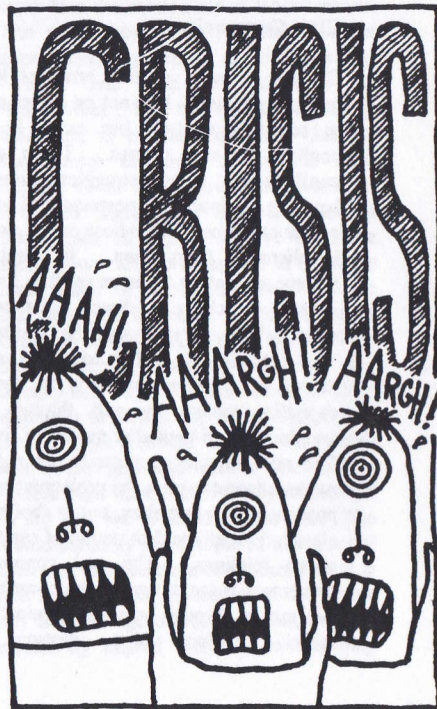
STEVOID.

WORK



IT MAKES YOU UGLY

THE CONSUMERS



Paul.

LAST RITES FOR THE LAST RIOTS?

IDLE SPECULATION....

Let's be honest about it the anti poll tax riot in Trafalgar Square in 1990 and the battle of Hyde Park railings 1994 were the last great successful saturday afternoon protest riots in central london that we are likely to see in our lifetime. They represent the twilight of a fine history of riotous demonstrations in central london in the last 200 years or so. (See for instance the excellent "The Battle for Hyde Park: ruffians, radicals and ravers, 1855-1995 published by Practical History, 121 Raitlon Road, SE24. Free or donation.). Outside the centre of london Wapping was perhaps the last great insurrectionary industrial picket line situation in the capital we shall see. Welling was one big kamikaze march into a state ambush. With its new high tech control toys and the massive urban restructuring now taking place the state is getting round to the business of shutting these events down. As for the periodic

spontaneous insurrections in the inner cities born of desperation these are a different matter. They will return every few years regardless of technological control but in future proletarians will pay a heavy price for them in terms of arrests.

In the old days there used to be a good game you could play. For years it was possible to get up in the morning and catch the coach to the saturday afternoon demo against the latest such and such nasty policy of the government. You could then hide in the middle of the crowd with your comrades and toss broken bits of trot placard at the lackeys of the state or assorted politicians on the stage, go home, and then sit around a telly watching what had happened on the evening news. This game is now passed its sell-by date.

A whole movement of protest scenes, oppositional communities and rebellious urban subcultures based on street and community resistance have grown up over the last three decades. Benefiting from the strength of parallel industrial struggles during part of this period (for instance struggles around picketing from the pentonville 5 to the Wapping dispute), they have also been generously subsidised by fortnightly giro cheques and the old student grant system. Some of them, like the squatting scene, were, by strange contradiction, actually protected by the fuddy duddy inertia and anomalies of the legal and bureaucratic system. After many years of dithering, the state is now seriously attempting to dismantle these oppositional communities.

Within about three years time surveillance cameras will be as commonplace as lamposts. Virtually all outdoor urban spaces will be under camera. It will take quite a few years more before they have cameras inside all our houses but this too will eventually come. The cameras are all being linked up to computer systems and soon computers will be able to recognise you from your face pattern and automatically follow you from the moment you leave your front door to wherever you go. Now we should try and make the state's job as difficult as possible, but in this situation the idea of "masking up" before a demo is just clutching at straws. This can't really save us from what is to come.

If the state wants to stick up cameras at street corners there is very little we can physically do about it. A few activists might try smashing them with hammers but they will just get themselves arrested, nobody will hear about it, the cameras will be replaced in hours. There are high tech weapons the military have that can wreck micro electronic circuitry and communications equipment from a distance, unfortunately these sort of toys cost millions of pounds and aren't likely to be found in the hands of your local activist group. The only two areas of struggle where significant resistance to the ongoing encroachment of surveillance is going to be viable are the workplace struggle of skilled professional workers who can articulate arguments for professional secrecy and privacy, And the struggle around housework where the system still depends on a lot of voluntary effort and initiative from us.

These cameras do make a difference, if they didn't the system wouldn't be installing them. They permanently alter the nature of open and social spaces. Just as the introduction of the machine gun signalled the demise of the full frontal infantry charge, the mass use of surveillance cameras and all the other repressive techno bits and pieces makes the position of the traffic bollard throwing streetfighting demonstrator rather precarious. Wearing the traditional autonome winter woollies to keep your face covered isn't going to work for much longer.

People over about 60 can remember a world without television, some of them can remember struggle without television. In about ten years time adolescents will have virtually no memory of an outdoor urban world without constant surveillance. They will listen spellbound to our tales of another world where the community could meet, gather, organise, put up posters, express themselves or simply just hang out in streets and outdoor places without being seen all the time by the state. Some estates are now so miserable and oppressive and at the same time so watched and controlled that the quality of life in many ways is literally better in a place like Ford Open Prison! And in prison you don't have to pay any rent. What difference does it make if you misbehave if you are just threatened with being moved from one prison to a parallel prison? This could be a key to future resistance. Some prisoners could end up being freer human beings despite being behind fences than many citizens. In the refugee camps in Hong Kong the rioters had almost nothing to lose. It would be in their interests to be arrested and charged, this would delay their extradition to Vietnam!

The "media tart" exhibitionist rioter is the antithesis of the skmask wearing paranoid clandestine streetfighter. If you've been caught on camera tossing eggs at a visiting politician then you might as well be proud of it. With minor acts of defiance under the rule of camera, feeling and looking guilty is two thirds of the case against you. Grinning back with pride and confidence is your best means of defence. Children will pick up and learn this skill. We will just have to damn the cameras and flaunt our resistance in the open. Elements of media tart exhibitionist rioting could already be seen in the hot fortnight of rowdy demos outside council offices against the poll tax and in the strangeways uprising: Here the rioters were already captives of the state but turned themselves into a real life subversive soap opera.

The rise of the "fluffies" is not surprising. In future most premeditated organised street resistance will have to be nonviolent resistance. Nonviolent resistance is not necessarily "fluffy" in itself, but the fluffy arms of the state (charter 88, liberty, greenpeace etc..) are ideally suited to colonise it and coopt it for bourgeois politics.

The thirty something ageing anarchopunk veterans like ourselves are a bridging group between a disappearing past era of struggles spanning from the late sixties to the start of the nineties and the new struggles of the world of tomorrow. The particular shape and form that struggles take is related to the historical era in which they belong. Flying mass pickets during the miners strike that could catch the police off guard by getting up early and disappearing down the motorway into the fog, and violent demonstrations fought with sticks and placards like the poll tax uprising, are forms of struggle that belong to a certain historical era. This era is not yet fully finished but it has only a short while yet to go before it comes to an end.

ERIK '95

First of all I am a communist. Communism is the struggle for a world in which all forms of money and production for profit or exchange will be destroyed. Production will be for use, and distribution will be according to needs and desires, there will be no buying and selling of products in a market place, people will be free to take what they choose from various distribution centres or outlets.

Communism

YUGOSLAVIA

We are reprinting below a leaflet that was put out by BM Haven (BM Haven WC1N 3XX). They say they have been in the process of getting together a lorry load of aid for a "Workers Aid to Bosnia" convoy going to Tuzla. We are in favour of the comrades from London giving solidarity and making direct contact with proletarians in struggle in the former Yugoslavia if that is what their action is able to achieve. However there is no way we can avoid taking issue with some of the arguments in their leaflet. We want to reply to some of the points in the leaflet and also put together our own thoughts on such conflicts as the one in ex-Yugoslavia and what, in terms of communist and anarchist solidarity, we can do about it.

STOP THE ETHNIC CLEANSING! JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM! SUPPORT ANTI - FASCIST AID FOR BOSNIA

Don't be conned by the figures in authority, the media and even sections of the left who tell you that the Balkans conflict should be left alone, that it is impossible for you to do anything, that it is nothing to do with you.

If you are an anti fascist, then the struggle of the workers and people of Bosnia-Herzegovina is your struggle.

The conflict is constantly presented as 'warring factions' all bent on mutual destruction with the good old UN trying to separate them. This is a lie. In 1992 Serb forces invaded Bosnia and began 'ethnic cleansing' operations. To date over 20 000 women have been systematically raped by the Serbian Chetniks (fascists and ultra nationalists), thousands of Bosnians have been held, starved and tortured in concentration camps, thousands more have been butchered in mass summary executions. The atrocities committed against Bosnian men, women and children are too many to count, some too horrific to describe.

The arms embargo imposed by the West has meant that to resist this genocide the Bosnian people have had to defend themselves with shotguns whilst the Chetniks have the entire weaponry of the ex-Yugoslav army at their disposal. In effect the arms embargo has been imposed on the Bosnians alone.

The Bosnian people did not start this war; it was forced on them when they were invaded. In Tuzla, Sarajevo and many other towns and villages, Bosnians of Serb, Croat and Muslim origin lived together. 30% of all marriages were 'mixed'. Today they are defending that multi ethnic, multi cultural way of life against the racists, nationalists and fascists who claim it is 'natural for people to want to live amongst their own kind'.

The Bosnian army (BiH) has Moslem, Serb and Croat members, they are fighting for one thing only, an undivided country in which all people can live in peace.

Anti Fascist Aid for Bosnia

is a small group of anti fascist anarchists and like minded activists who formed on

the return of the August 1995 Workers Aid for Bosnia Convoy to Tuzla.

Our aim is to show our solidarity and support for the ordinary people of Bosnia by raising enough money to buy a small 7.5 ton lorry and fill it with aid ready for the next Workers Aid Convoy to Bosnia. The convoy is headed for the Bosnian mining town of Tuzla, a community at the centre of resistance to ethnic cleansing. There Muslims, Croats and Serbs have a long history of struggle against oppression. The miners of Tuzla collected and sent money to the miners of Britain during the 1984 strike, now they desperately need our support and solidarity.

If you would like to become involved in raising money or aid or would like a speaker to come and explain more fully what our aims and ideas are please contact us at

BM Haven, London, WC1N 3XX

It is sad enough when joe public gets mobilised by pseudo charitable campaigns to support capital's war effort but anarchists and communists like us really ought to know better. So many of us just get used time and time again by the state left as expendable pawns for all sorts of spurious front campaigns. If there is one sin worse than leninoid vanguardism it is anarcho-rearguardism. As anarcho-rearguardists we "don't want to be leaders" and we "don't want to impose our will on others" so we allow others to be our leaders and manipulate us!!

On too many occasions this century we have allowed ourselves to be fooled into openly supporting the bourgeois state in the name of "antifascism". Working class self defense as a form of practical action and Antifascism as a political ideology are two different things. Certainly we will physically fight back against anyone who violently threatens our community be they fascists or bailiffs or police or rapists. "Antifascism" as an ideology, on the other hand, is often used as a means to mobilise the working class to subordinate its own interests and support capitalist democracy and the existing establishment. Being "against fascism" is a delightfully meaningless political position that is almost impossible to disagree with. After all, apart from the poor fascists themselves, everybody claims to be "against fascism",. Social democrats and liberals can say they are "against fascism", bosses and police say they are "against fascism", even authoritarian conservative nationalists can say they are "against fascism".

Antifascist sloganeering was one of the main excuses for the serbian nationalists launching their wardrive and ethnic cleansing campaign in the first place! Using second world war anti nazi propaganda the serb nationalists were able to stir up fear amongst many serbs against croats and portray them all as the reincarnation of the ustashe. Likewise the mainly secular "muslim" population were stereotyped as fascist fundamentalists. The croatian nationalists and ustashe revivalists have also regurgitated second world war antifascist propaganda and say they are fighting chetnik fascism. The bosnian army, backed by the us government and CIA arms drops, cloaks itself in western style pluralist liberal gloss but is perfectly happy to collaburate with ethnic and social cleansing and social cleansing

carried out by the croatian army when it suits it. As well as "ethnic cleansing" all the armies in ex-yugoslavia are involved in social cleansing against their "own" people. For instance when paramilitary and police units carry out sweeps in the towns and cities looking for unemployed men they can imprison and then send to the front this is social cleansing. Quite a lot of the "ethnic cleansing" can actually be understood as social cleansing by proxy. For instance the removal of serbs from krijina and western bosnia by croat and bosnian forces took place with a nod and a wink from milosevic the head of the serb republic. It quite simply creates a supply of ultra cheap slave labour who are forced to depend on particular capitalist bosses for protection. The extreme right today are always just an appendage of the state who are cynically discarded when the dominant bourgeois faction has finished with them. Milosevic the "socialist" has shut down the offices of seselj and

his fascist radical party as a move "against fascism" and temporarily put seselj in prison. On this basis milosevic's socialist serbia can claim to be taking direct action "against fascism".

If the multiethnic character of an army made it antifascist or made it worthy of our support we would have to end up supporting all sorts of militarist garbage and armies around the world, even armies that are currently at war with each other. One multiethnic army that has perhaps the most advanced equal opportunities programme in the world is none other than the army of the U.S.A.! Franco's fascist army in spain was multiethnic and, like the republican army, recruited international brigades from all over europe. It even included moorish soldiers from north africa who were black. Despite nazi ideology regardingslavs as racially inferior, the SS were quite happy to recruit ukranian units on the eastern front. Is this any reason at all for revolutionaries to support these armies?.. Of course not! And saying "Bosnia didn't start the war" is a bit like saying sainsbury didn't start the price war against tesco.

Despite the claimed multiethnic nature of the bosnian army they are in fact part of the violent seperation process by their waging war to assert the national borders of a new state in bosnia. This straight away divides proletarians within those borders from proletarians outside them. Defending a frontline in a conventional capitalist war will involve the prevention of any proletarian fraternisation across those lines.

So the bosnian army is fighting fo "an undivided country in which all people can live in peace". Well that is what all national armies wage war for. An "undivided country" is a place where the capitalist state has achieved social passification and buried all social struggle and opposition. But internal peace is precisely the necessary precondition the state needs to successfully launch war against other countries! Mind you the original yugoslavia was supposed to be an undivided country in which all people could live in peace. Capitalist peace is the prelude to capitalist war, or more precisely capitalist peace is only a particular moment of capitalist war because capitalism itself is a permanent state of war. When the "People" live in peace the proletariat is about to be butchered. By talking of the "Bosnian people" there is a danger of helping the system to invent and construct a new bosnian national chauvinist identity. Aid for Bosnia could end up implying discrimination against non-bosnians.

An important point to bear in mind is that the leaders of the rival armies all come from the same officer corps: The old boy network of the JNA Yugoslav National Army! The war while killing on the ground, at leadership level is often fake. The generals on all sides are old friends who know each other personally, they all made their careers in the yugoslav army. They would all have sat together in class at military academy.

Where for many years "serbs", "muslims", "hungarians", "gypsies", "jews" and others were mixed to the point where they could no longer be defined as belonging exclusively to one ethnic group or another, the war situation has imposed a systematic terror to force them to seperate into their supposed ethnic groups. But why do our lives have to be identified purely in terms of countries or traditional cultures or supposed ethnic group? Human society is not just a bunch of anthills, we can consciously reinvent the shape of our society and change the things we do and rebel against restrictions and assumptions imposed on us by the past. For every traditional culture and identity that is inherited we choose to invent a counter culture and a counter identity if we want. Even perceptions and assumptions about race can be deconstructed.

As long as we talk about the war in ex-yugoslavia in terms of serbs, croats, muslims or in terms of nations, countries and "peoples" we will simply go round and round in circles and never really be able to understand it. The only way we can really understand this war is to see it as a war between rich and poor. Whatever the individual opinions of the different leaders are as to why they are fighting the war, the overall objective logic of the war situation is to smash the proletariat throughout the whole region of yugoslavia and beyond.

The multi ethnic bosnian authorities may not be saying "It is natural for people to want to live amongst their own kind.". But they are saying the territory of bosnia is for the self determination of the bosnian people. In other words all other humanity beyond the borders of bosnia are excluded. This is the same as all liberal democratic states. Britain is multi ethnic but it still has racist immigration laws. Even those from hong kong who have british passports are now told they can't seek refuge in multi ethnic liberal democratic britain. In california proposition 187,

designed to attack poor mostly latin "illegal immigrants", will be enforced by a multi ethnic police force. Millions of voters from all ethnic and racial groups in california democratically voted for it. The only difference between bosnian racism and the crude racism of the chetniks and ustashi is that bosnian racism will be of the sophisticated western liberal democratic variety. The right of nations to self determination? We would rather the right of nationalists to self extermination!

While Workers Aid for Bosnia are asking us to take sides with bosnia we have also come across lefties who have passionately argued to us that the war in ex-yugoslavia is a western imperialist conspiracy against serbia. They argued that because the serbian leadership tried to prevent the western backed breakaway of croatia and bosnia that therefore serbia was anti-imperialist and we should take sides with serbia. We have always been a bit suspicious of those on the left who come to us talking in the rhetoric of anti-imperialism, it is usually a sign that they are about to tell you which particular part of capitalism they want you to support. To describe the world as imperialist is a bit of a vague truism, all hierarchical civilizations in history have been imperialist and all rulers big and small have had imperialist ambitions. But the specific conditions of daily life that thousands of years of imperialism and hierarchical civilization are now finally trying to impose on us on a truly global level for the very first time are a vicious integrated worldwide free market, a modern consumer capitalist democracy, global commodity spectacle, and wage slavery and proletarianization for the whole human population apart from the rich elite.

Multinational corporations, particularly in the U.S., have lobbied hard to start large scale gun running into the war theatre to rake in lots of money. We have to be careful not to be fooled by the various charity tentacles of the bosnian governments campaign to buy guns from the U.S. arms manufacturers and boost their profits. Many of the guns will just dissappear into the black market, as in afghanistan and end up in the hands of all sorts of bourgeois interests both inside and outside bosnia. In fact the embargo is being flouted by the U.S. government and middle eastern states anyway, just like the economic sanctions aimed at trying to starve the population in the new scaled down rationalised yugoslavia, leak like a siv. It is with their new guns the bosnian army has recently been able to push serbs out of western bosnia, with the help of their (antifascist?) croatian army allies of course. If we are going to plead for the lifting of the arms embargo against the bosnian government we should at least have the anarcho-capitalist decency to demand the lifting of the economic blockade against the population in the serb republic and montenegro.

Not only does "humanitarian aid" give a good alibi for western military invasion and for ethnic cleansing (deporting proletarians to refugee camps) but also the humanitarian aid convoys allow the fighting factions to be fed while economic blockade attacks the living conditions of proletarians. The convoys are also used regularly as cover for ARMS SHIPMENTS. High street charity shops provide the ideological and financial fuel for capitalist warmongering around the world. The trashing of charity shops is long overdue.

"Workers Aid for Bosnia" are a minor front of trots who have finally worked out some sort of position after years of not knowing which bourgeois gang to toady up to. It would be a tragedy if we were to restrict ourselves to being an anachronism of a sad trot charity racket such as this. Will workers aid for bosnia be making any direct links with any open outbreaks of class struggle such as strikes/ occupations/ draft resistance/ price refusal/ taking and sharing of goods?... Indeed how can a campaign supporting the official bosnian army contemplate any kind of support for such forms of class struggle which will amount to an unpatriotic sabotage and undermining of the bosnian national war effort? Among other things the sarajevo government has been blocking aid to the families of draft resisters.

Our internationalism doesn't consist in "doing something here for proles over there" in an alienated and seperated way, it consists of us creating our own riot here against our own bosses and recognizing it as all the same fight. It is the passivity and resignation under daily misery in our lives here that permits the development of the war in ex-yugoslavia. Our collusion with the system's routine; tapping the keyboard in the office all day, or sitting at home waiting for the giro to arrive, queuing up peacefully with a shopping basket in kwiksave, this allows the massacres and atrocities to happen. A social explosion is needed right here in our own lives.

In the meantime what practical things can be done? For a start we can give solid solidarity and aid to all draft refusers regardless of which capitalist army they are in danger of being conscripted into. There are plenty of contact addresses available

for the sending of political communication throughout the whole area of ex-yugoslavia, pick up the relevant leaflets at your local radical drop in centre. One simple but important thing we are in a position to do is to gang up with working class refugees from ex-yugoslavia, give them material and social support, help fight to prevent them being deported back to the warzone. Hey- we could even try marrying one of them! But again this isn't a question of alienated, seperated charitable support, it is a question of solidarity with fellow comrades.

For a good analysis of the powerful history of class struggle in yugoslavia and how the current war was engineered to crush it write to BP54-BXL31, 1060 Bruxelles- BE BELGIUM. For a decent leaflet on the subject of fascism and antifascism and also stuff on yugoslavia write to BM CAT, London, WC1N 3XX. If you're not into long texts but you fancy some excellent underground antiwar comics write to Saša Rakezić, c/o Gordana Basta, Milovana Glišića 11, 26000 Pančevo, YUGOSLAVIA. And send some International Reply Coupons as donation.

E.T.V. 1995.



"extremists"!

MR UNABOMBER: ABOUT AS CONVINCING AS THE TOOTH FAIRY

Come on, hands up, how many of us have been taken in by this so called "unabomber" crap? Are we really supposed to believe this fairy story about a super-devilous uncatchable elusive individual ecoterrorist who has been bombing since the seventies with impunity, while the F.B.I., C.I.A., U.S. government and police force with all their power and resources haven't a clue who he is? The police say unabombers devices are meticulously made, that he is an inventive genius, that he leaves no clues except one: Forensic examination shows his monogram after each attack! But then this is what the police SAY, and the media report it with glee so it must be true. It is all very flattering as it appeals to the fantasies of many an individual eco-anarko-activist who imagine themselves to be some sort of revolutionary terrorist zorro. It also helps build up a parody in the minds of the population of the depraved dysfunctional anarchist bombist which is what we will all sink into becoming if we don't respect the wisdom of our betters and carry on working and watching T.V. This is the extremist bogey you will turn into if you complain too much about environmental destruction and start questioning consumer capitalist democracy.

And since when did extremist nutters normally get free space on the basis of threats to kill for their latest text-novel-gossip column in major quality newspapers like the Sunday Washington Post for real? There is no shortage of would be literati queuing up outside newspaper offices demanding their outpourings be published with threats to melt the polar ice caps, poison world food supplies or stuff furry animals into spin driers (even this little mag could do with an increase in circulation). So what makes unabomber any different? Why should he get special attention?...unless there is manipulation going on.

No, if anything is meticulous and the product of inventive genius it is the construction of this garbage tale of Mr Unabomber, we end up believing he exists because we want him to exist. Since the seventies in the U.S. there have been quite a few unsolved bombings, arson attacks, acts of sabotage. Some of these will just have been personal grudge attacks; angry neighbours or jilted lovers. Some might be mafia attacks. Or it could be a question of spontaneous class war outbursts; a sacked employee getting revenge on their boss. No doubt some of them will have been the work of different political terrorists motivated by anything from nationalism to environmentalism. Somewhere in a bedsit in North America there might well be an anorak who has read a few bookchin books on ecology and may have had a hand in a minor incident or two: The police will know all about him. In him they see a wonderful opportunity to improve their clear up rate by pinning all the unsolved cases onto his shoulders while at the same time stirring up a propaganda bogey threat they can use as a weapon against various opposition movements. It also means more funding and promotions all round.

The media can lump unabomber into the same boat as the Gulf War hero rightist militia fanatic accused of the Oklahoma bomb, and now (Oct '95) we hear of this "sons of the Gestapo" train sabotage in Arizona. Strategy of tension or what? It goes as a warning to us all, anybody who disagrees with the rule of capitalist democracy, junk food and Hollywood is an anarchist-fascist-barbarian! They're all weirdos! They're all "extremists"! They're all the same! Time to give up reading Sunday newspapers and go for an afternoon picnic instead.

WHATEVER : This has been a one off mag containing articles of anarko-socialist persuasion compiled by E.T.V. The lead article was by Stevoid. Thanks also to Andy for help with the Yugoslavia article. Write to us at; F19, 28 Silver Street, RG1 2ST.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

BYE FOR NOW!

For an afternoon picnic