

Crime and punishment

THE DESIRE FOR punishment — the inflicting of pain on perceived wrong doers — has a long and inglorious history. Religions which are the hand-maidens of authoritarian rule are full of accounts of the most horrendous punishments dished out by God and his followers. An eternity of hellfire awaits even minor offenders against God's (and by extension rulers') order. It is an essential fact of punishment that it is imposed by people in power upon those who are relatively powerless — parents and teachers against children and the State against its citizens. It is equally true that punishment is ineffective in achieving its aims.

Anarchist communists have serious and fundamental objections to the idea of punishment on a number of grounds — moral, ideological and practical. Kropotkin, for example in his pamphlet *Prisons and their Moral Influence on Prisoners* demolishes all of the arguments used by the State to defend human incarceration. In what seems remarkably up to date arguments, he writes in 1877 that "Once a man (sic) has been in prison, he will return. It is inevitable, and statistics prove it. The annual reports of the administration of criminal justice in France show that one-half of all those who yearly get into the police courts for minor offences received their education in prisons... As for central prisons, more than one-third of the prisoners released from the supposedly correctional institutions are reimprisoned in the course of twelve months after their liberation" (from Kropotkin's *Revolutionary Pamphlets*, Dover Books).

Pathological

The picture in Britain today is hardly different, indicating a pathological lack of imagination on the part of the State. In Britain around one person in a thousand is currently in prison — and crime is said to be continually on the rise! So much for their effectiveness in combatting crime.

There are a number of arguments which are used to support the idea of punishment. These include the idea that a given action deserves a certain reward or punishment. So, good children deserve rewards and naughty children deserve to receive a punishment. This may seem fine in principle, the problem arises in allocating a just and deserved punishment. What punishment is deserved for armed robbery for example, a slap on the wrist, community service, or execution? The punishment meted out in practice will vary according to the prejudices, values and attitudes and irritation of the



"Anything I say will be taken down and used in evidence against you..."

judge in a given case. But the fact remains that whatever the punishment, it involves the imposition of suffering on the individual by the State on, usually, the lower orders. Since most laws are designed to protect private property and social inequality in defence of the rich, it is not surprising that most punishments are inflicted on the lower orders who do not share in the pickings.

Another standard argument for punishment is that it deters people from carrying out criminal and anti-social acts (again defined in terms which support the status-quo). The problem with this approach is that it does not work. As Kropotkin pointed out earlier in this article, prisons are full of persistent offenders who have frequently been punished. In the 17th Century in England, prisoners were executed in public for stealing silk handkerchiefs. Whilst the crowd was totally enthralled at the hanging, thieves would mingle and steal silk handkerchiefs! So much for the ultimate deterrent. People, quite simply, will only commit crimes (generally) if they are pretty sure they will not get caught and punished.

Primitive

Many people have a primitive basic need to extract revenge for a wrong committed against them. Blood feuds between families are examples of this approach, where one wrongdoing has to be

matched by another from generation to generation, to the absurd point that the original cause has been forgotten about. However, as a rational response to wrong-doing, vengeance which is motivated strongly by irrational feelings, must rate as an inappropriate response.

A further approach includes the idea that wrongdoers should be helped or reformed, though there will always be an element of pain involved in the punishment. Unfortunately, the State has no real interest in exploring the social causes of crime, or for that matter questioning the nature of the problem. For every John McVicar or Jimmy Boyle 'rehabilitated', there are hundreds of thousands who have not. Punishment exists to keep the lid on social unrest but patently fails to do so.

So what is an anarchist communist view on punishment? Well, firstly it should be realised that all of the usual justifications and methods of punishment are rejected, especially in relation to anarchist communist society. The need to hurt people in the name of the State will disappear. Capitalism, in countless ways does psychological damage to people, so it is not surprising that this often finds expression in anti-social acts. Capitalist society divides, humiliates, and deprives millions of people. Anarchist communist society in contrast involves people in the

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more!**

Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation

Aims and principles

1. The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists.

We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

2. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class. Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as a political level.

3. We believe that fighting racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class women and black people as cross-class movements hide real class differences

and achieve little for them. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

5. As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

6. It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without the use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7. Unions by their very na-

ture cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow. Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc).

Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery.

Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles

themselves. 8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation. We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method. We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise ourselves on a federative basis.

We reject sectarianism and work for a united, revolutionary anarchist movement.

Clegg sprung by media

AS WE EXPECTED, Private Clegg has been released from jail after an orchestrated campaign by the ruling class media.

Clegg is a member of the Paratroopers, elite corps that are a feature of most military set-ups. They are composed of the hardest, the most psychopathic elements in the Army. Horrific training, designed to break the individual and then build them up again as an efficient killing-machine, is used to squeeze out any humanity, and make the Para an obedient order-taker, an obscene parody of what males should be. They are detested and feared by other Army units. If indeed any unrest develops in the Army — yes it could, in the right circumstances, even in a professional Army — the Paras would be used to quell any mutiny, as indeed they would be used to smash any large-scale social unrest (but the equivalent of the Paras couldn't save the Shah of Iran from being overthrown by mass action, despite the extraordinary brutality of these thugs). The Paras were responsible for the massacre of 13 on Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland, as they were for other shootings and beatings there.

What is the hidden agenda of this campaign? Is it to organise resistance in the ruling class among sections opposed to the peace talks with the Republicans? Or is it designed as an excuse to allow for the release of Republican and Loyalist prisoners? As yet this is unclear. What it did spark off was massive rioting among the Catholic working class, not completely orchestrated by the Republicans.

Looting in Luton

Talking about rioting, the three days of riots in Luton, followed by a riot in Leeds, pointed to the depth of rage amongst the working class. Particularly among the young, involving both white and black, who demonstrated a determined resistance to the police. The simmering discontent in British society is ever more apparent to the boss

class, who will attempt to hose down the flames of revolt by calling in the social fire brigade, the Labour Party at the next election.

The Conservatives

The divisions within the ruling Conservative Party that helped oust Thatcher came to the fore again with the leadership contest. With the backing of the pro-European wing of the Party, Major remained in the saddle. But the contest revealed the depths of the crisis within the Conservative Party over Europe, a crisis that may yet tear it apart. This split in Tory ranks effects the whole of the British ruling class. The needs of British capitalism continue to dictate that this pro-European wing, whether in the Conservative Party or the Labour Party, will end up triumphant. Those sections of the boss class, pinning for the days when Britain was a first league World Power, will be outgunned by those who recognise that involvement in the European Union may help hinder the French-German alliance, or see the creation of a European bloc as an alternative to backing the USA, seeing clearly that they must hitch their wagon to the EU; or again salivate at the thought of a free-trade area covering most of Western Europe.

The Labour Party, sensing victory at the next election have not ruled out an alliance with the Liberal-Democrats in order to gain power, summoning up the spectre of a coalition government along the lines of the National Government of WW2 years. Alongside this are further signs of ruling class backing for Labour. As we noted in a previous *Organise!* Sainsbury, a backer of the Gang of Four, was moving to give support to Labour. This support is now confirmed. The press baron Murdoch is making it more apparent that his press



Above: Private Clegg.

will back labour. Meanwhile the Labour leadership continues to flirt with the bosses' organisation, the CBI.

Part of the 'modernisation' process in the Labour Party consists of limiting the pull the union barons have. This characterised the recent struggle for leadership of the Transport and General Workers Union between Dromey, a loyal supporter of Blair, and Morris, representing the old school union bureaucrat, tied to Clause 4 and 'traditional Labour values'. The Socialist Workers Party, who make a habit of coming out with anti-union bureaucrat rhetoric, decided to give their support to Morris in the contest, demonstrating once again that they are one of the external wings of Labourism, and loyal supporters of trade unionism. Of course, once Morris won, he made sure that the T&G was seen as loyal to Labour, making televised announcements of support and paying for ads in national papers. Despite their rhetoric against the bureaucrats, the SWP are prepared to back one bureaucratic faction against another!

An autumn of discontent

The nurses' and midwives' unions RCN and RCM have for the moment headed off any industrial action among their members, agreeing to the disciplinary pay offers. Unrest is still

on the boil in the health service. This may boil over in the autumn, as other sectors in the health service prepare to fight. The unions will do their utmost to head this off, playing on the many divisions between health workers, especially utilising the myth of professionalism. Despite this, discontent is beginning to alter the attitude of many sections up to now not deemed as militant.

The strikes on the trains and underground planned for the summer are firmly under the control of the rail unions RMT and ASLEF, who again will exploit the artificial divisions among the workforce. RMT have already sabotaged all-out action, by using the recent ballot as justification. A repeat of the signal-workers 'victory' may take place. Against this, London tube workers now have a tradition of independent organisation, that may once again break out of union control. If tube-workers can do this again, they must make sure they link up with similar elements among the railworkers, and spread any independent action, so that united all-out strike action takes place.

JOY GARDNER

IT COMES AS not much of a surprise to see the acquittal of three cops charged with the death of Joy Gardner.

Joy, a 40-year-old Jamaican woman, died in July 1993 after immigration police broke into her flat, tied her up with a body-belt and wrapped 13 feet of adhesive tape around her head. As a not very surprising result, she died of asphyxiation and brain damage. This method of 'controlling' people who fought back against the immigration cops was used on a regular basis, and reveals the racist basis of the whole clamp-down on immigrants.

Liberals might be shocked that the cops got off. But how

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ACF NEWS

No. 3 of the Irish ACF bulletin *Irish Resistance* is now out. See article in this issue. We've produced No. 2 of *London Resistance*, our free newsheet, available from London address. You can get this free by writing there enclosing cost of postage or SAE.

The newly-formed Liverpool ACF have produced their own free newsheet *Merseyside Resistance*.

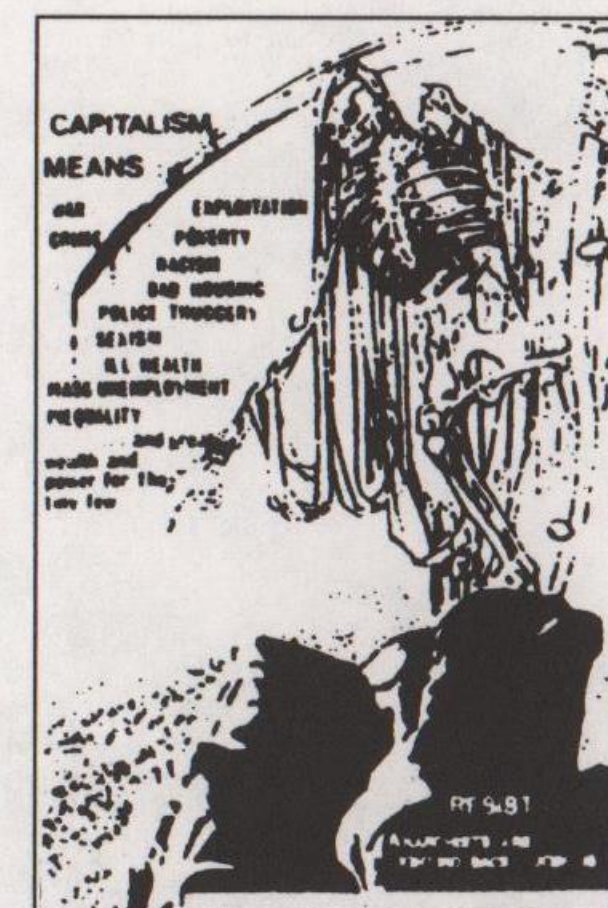
You can get this by writing to PO Box 110, Liverpool L69 8DP, enclosing cost of postage or SAE.

A new ACF group has sprung up in Hastings in East Sussex. If you live in the area make contact by writing via the London address. Ditto if

you want to make contact with comrades in the Basingstoke/Barking Romford/Dagenham area.

Active Resistance the youth magazine of the ACF should be appearing during the Summer as should our cultural magazine devoted to all aspects of culture, art, film, literature, sport and music. Watch out in the pages of *Organise!* for details.

Posters and stickers



Bundles of this poster can be got from our London address. Please send a donation. Or get a single copy and photocopy 'em.

London ACF have also produced a leaflet explaining the basic ideas of anarchist communism. Again, send a donation for a bundle to the above address.

We still have the ecology sticker available, and by the time you read this we should have four new stickers available — on homelessness, anti-capitalism, etc.

HIDDEN HISTORY

IRELAND HAS NEVER been regarded as a hotbed of working class militancy. All too often the focus has been on the actions of Loyalists and Republicans and the sectarian conflict has overshadowed the few instances of workers' unity that have occurred throughout the 20th century.

We feel that as class struggle anarchists it is part of the revolutionary process to publicise our true history: not our history as Nationalists or Unionists, but as oppressed workers.

A major landmark in Irish working class history is the 1932 Outdoor Relief Strike in Belfast, in which people from the Falls and the Shankill fought together against the Unionist government and the police.

When the Wall Street Crash occurred, Northern Ireland's economy was hit harder than most countries, as its principal industries felt the effects of America's financial instability.

Around 100,000 people in the North lost their jobs. Only 42,710 were receiving benefits and the rest had to survive on partial benefits or nothing at

all. Many thousands who were unemployed were simply not registered. Due to the poverty (which hit the working class of Belfast hardest of all), outbreaks of TB were commonplace and basic items like food, clothes and fuel were in short supply.

Protest and organisation spread in both the North and the South of Ireland. In Belfast demands made by the Outdoor Relief Workers Committee for an increase in relief rates and abolition of task work were rejected by the Stormont government. As a result a strike was called in October and on the 3rd of that month 30,000 people went on the march.

On Wednesday the fifth, the RUC attempted to block a march to the Lisburn Road Workhouse which failed as demonstrators entered the

workhouse and began to disrupt its operation.

The Unionist government was surprised by the actions of their 'loyal' workers who were openly in revolt. They attempted to come up with some paltry concessions which were rejected by the strikers. That night workers called a rent strike and lit bonfires all over the city. On Tuesday 11th the government banned a huge demonstration and then issued the RUC with rifles and brought in units from the Army. Fighting broke out when police tried to break up the meeting and that night workers from the Falls and the Shankill fought side by side against the police. A Protestant called Baxter was shot dead while fighting beside fellow workers from the Falls. Barricades were built and the police redoubled their efforts to break the strike.

Unfortunately, the tactic now employed by the Unionist establishment proved to be an effective one. They encouraged rumours of an IRA plot to destroy the Northern state.

They effectively rekindled sectarianism and so laid the way for the defeat of the unemployed workers' movement.

However the workers won big cash increases in relief pay and the city erupted into celebrations as the strikers marked their victory over the government.

The working class of Ireland has proved time and again that they can overcome sectarian barriers and fight together as workers against the State and against the bosses.

The Irish Anarchist Communist Federation tries to keep this tradition alive by reminding people of the hidden history of Ireland.

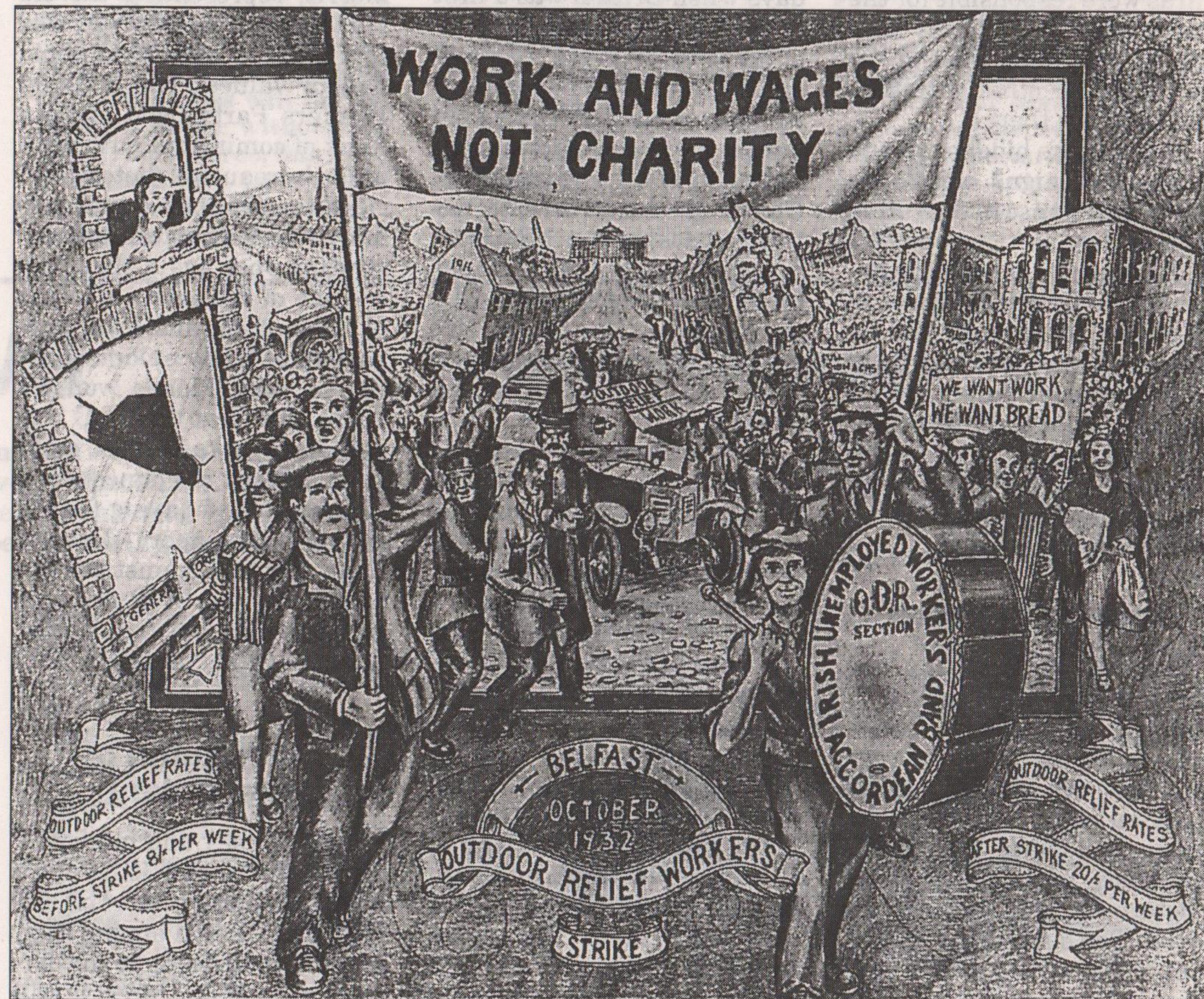
With examples of class unity like this behind us the sky's the limit!

The above article appears in *Resistance* No. 3, bulletin of the Irish Anarchist Communist Federation. Send five first class stamps to receive five issues of the bulletin from IACF c/o PO Box 505, Belfast BT11 9EE.

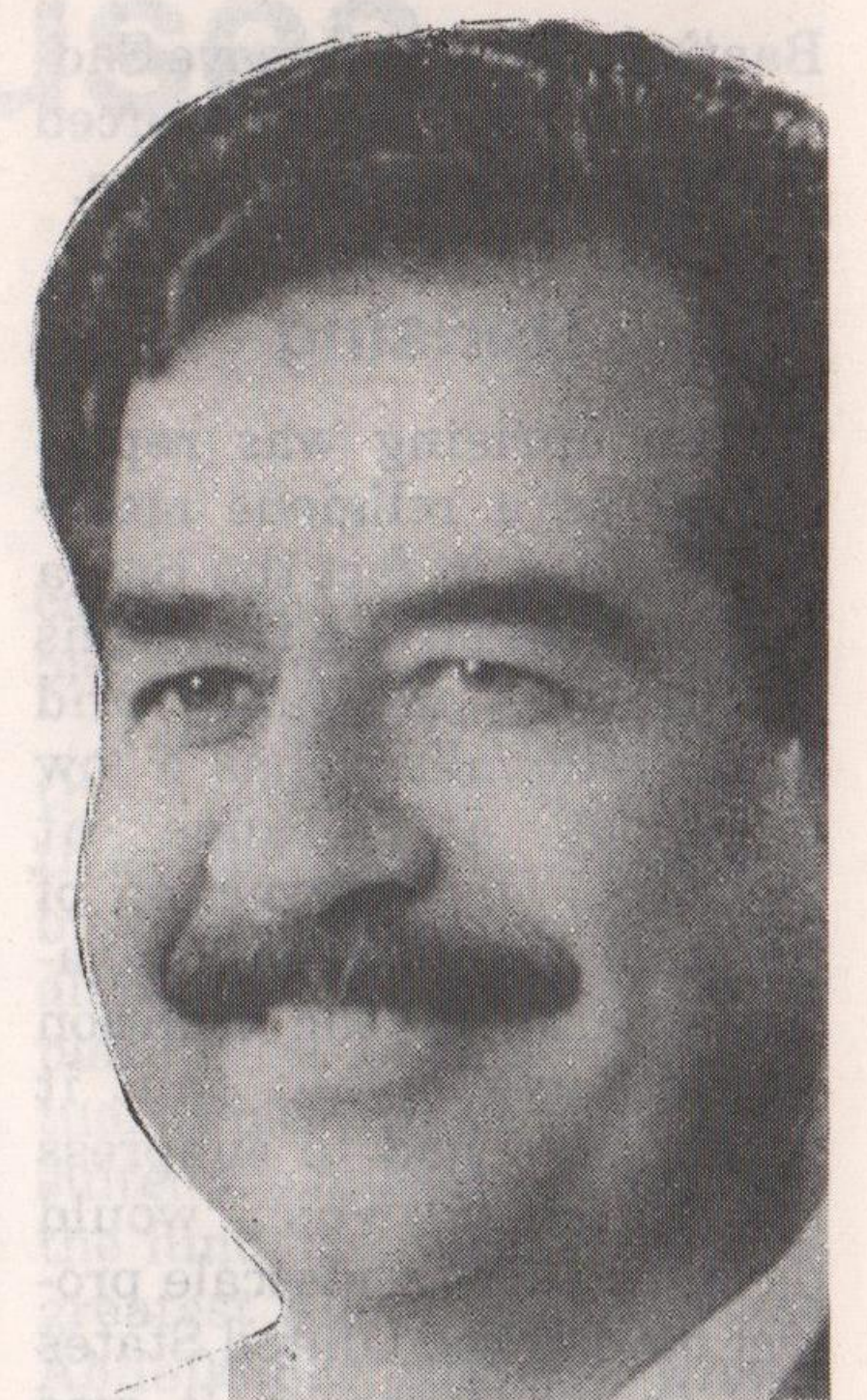
JOY GARDENER

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many of them or their counterparts in the armed forces have ever been charged, or when charged, found guilty of the murder, beating up or framing of working class people, especially blacks and Irish. Cast your mind back to the deaths of Kevin Gately, the framing of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four, of Stephan Kiszko, the murders of 13 on Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland, as just a few examples. No one was ever convicted for these brutal deeds. We cannot expect there to be justice under the capitalist State. Any reversal in the verdicts on framed prisoners was the result of sustained pressure, and even then, judicial whitewashes made sure that those who planted 'evidence' got off with maybe a reprimand. As the old saying goes "One law for the rich, one law for the poor".



Dictator of Baghdad versus the masses



Above: Saddam's smirk may yet be wiped off his face!

SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS faced several threats to his bloodthirsty regime over the last few years. In the Western press these have been described simply as a 'Kurd' insurrection in Northern Iraq and a 'Shiite' insurrection in the South.

These insurrections received different treatment in the pages of their newspapers. There was widespread coverage of the 'Kurd' insurrection, with little information on the 'Shiite' uprising. The spokespeople of the Kurds, in exile or inside Iraq, were widely reported, whilst those of the latter were largely ignored. There does exist an official 'Shiite opposition' in exile. This opposition has benefitted from the popular insurrection in Southern Iraq.

The Western media, when it wanted information, naturally turned to this grouping. The information which the Western press was supplied with, outside of that given by the Shiite opposition, originated mainly from Iran. It was not difficult to fabricate a 'Shiite insurrection'. Contrary to the Kurd insurrection, there was no documentary film showing this armed 'Shiite' opposition, and it was easy for the Shiites to hijack the insurrection in the media, thanks to an absence of information, the little there was being supplied by Iranian sources (in other words a Shiite state that supported the opposition).

Southern Iraq is made up of marshy lowlands covering an immense terrain around the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates. There are vast areas of water rich in fish and with thick reed-banks. They are an ideal place for refuge. Tens of thousands of Iraqi deserters who had fled the butchery of the Iran-Iraq war, and opponents of the regime, had formed themselves into groups there and were a thorn in the side of Saddam. This region has always been a hiding place for those fleeing repression, long before Saddam. The area is difficult for a mo-

torised army to penetrate. Deserters, militant workers with a price on their head, members of the Iraqi Communist Party, young people fleeing from the various forced labour brigades modelled on those developed by Lenin and Stalin by the Baathist organisations, came here from all over Iraq, and were generally supported by the local population. Saddam attacked the area in the '70s, destroying villages in order to smash support for the refugees of the marshes. When the war with Iran broke out, the local population got some relief at first, Saddam's regime having other matters to worry about.

But very soon, after the first victories, repression intensified. This period was marked by a massive influx of deserters. A resistance was organised which attacked trains, ammo dumps, and military convoys. The number of deserters was estimated at 20-30,000 in 1983.

It is rare for a war not to be followed by a popular insurrection. (Paris Commune 1871, the revolutionary wave after 1918 and after 1945 to a lesser extent). The Gulf War and the defeat of Iraq by the Western powers was no exception. Hardly was the war over than the insurrection broke out. Its intensity and the speed at which it spread were astonishing.

Horrific

Many people remember the horrific photos of Iraqi soldiers fleeing north from Kuwait, burnt to death by incendiary bombs of the American warplanes. President Bush rendered a great service to the dictator of Baghdad by exterminating this long cortege of soldiers, of whom a great part

would have joined the deserters in the marshes or the insurgents in the southern towns. Their retreat cut off, those surviving soldiers were thrown into the clutches of the elite Republican Guard, whom the Allied Powers had gone out of their way not to attack. The United States did not want to destroy the Iraqi Army, only to weaken it. They stopped the war in time in order to leave Iraq enough military potential to maintain power. The collapse of the Saddam regime would have destabilised the whole region.

Defeated

It seems at first surprising that a defeated Army managed to deploy itself against two insurrections, one in the North, the other in the south. But on closer examination it was apparent that the Iraqi Army had not been so defeated. In reality the Allied forces had deliberately avoided destroying it. The troops who had been annihilated by the coalition were in the main young conscripts, including immigrant workers (mostly Egyptian) who had been forced into the Army.

Beginning in August 1990, the regime had cleaned out the prisons, massacring the political prisoners, and sending the others — deserters and 'common criminals', to the front. The elite of the Army, the Republican Guard, was placed in the rear so that it could fire on any who attempted to leave the front. The victory of the Allied powers over Iraq was in reality a joint victory of the Baathist dictatorship and Western imperialism over the Iraqi masses.

In the North, the Kurdish guerillas, that is to say the armed forces of the Kurdish nationalist parties, themselves put down the popular uprising, which involved both Kurds and Arabs, liberating Iraqi forces to concentrate on

the insurrection in the South. Up to a hundred shoras (workers councils) had sprung up, refusing to acknowledge the authority of the nationalists. One nationalist leader, Talabani, was refused entrance into Sulaymaniyah, whilst another, Barzani, had two of his bodyguard killed by the people of Chamcharni.

In the outskirts of Baghdad, in the neighbourhoods of Kazima, Shouala and Thaura, insurrection broke out on 2nd March 1991, then again on 13th March, but the centre of power was too close and on the 23rd there was violent repression.

At Basra, revolt broke out on 3rd and 4th March, led by the young men conscripted into the Army, and quickly joined by many deserters. In two days repression smashed this uprising. This was to be repeated at Najaf and Karbala. The Iraqi airforce, with the permission of the Allied coalition, were allowed to use napalm and phosphorus bombs on the insurgents. Helicopters, which had never been deployed during the war, were used to 'pacify' Basra, where fighting ceased on 17th March. The flames of revolt continued to flicker here and there over the month of April, but by the 16th March Saddam had gained the upper hand and showed himself on TV.

The Bush administration wanted to replace Saddam with someone who was more compliant to their commands. Bush explicitly invited the

Baathist party to remove Saddam. The insurrections forced the Baathists to close ranks.

Uprising

The uprising was represented as a religious movement, when in fact the Basra region, with strong traditions of Stalinist militancy and Arab nationalism, has a low level of attendance at mosques. The destruction of the Iraqi Army and an occupation of Iraq by the coalition would have meant that it would have had to suppress the uprisings, which would have met with widescale protest both in the United States and internationally. It was easier to leave Saddam in place to crush the revolts. The Allied massacre of the fleeing soldiers on the road to Basra protected the Iraqi State by destroying columns of armed men who would have reinforced the rebellion.

The war ended not so much because of a victory of the Allied powers, but because of one of the largest mass desertions in history and the refusal of the Iraqi masses to fight, whether they were conscripted in the Army or in forced labour squads.

Between May and December 1990, a large number of strikes had paralysed the economy in every sector: at Mosul, Baghdad, Irbil, Tikrit, Sulaymaniyah, Basra, and Kirkuk. The strikes were against austerity, the unpaid working days 'for the country', rationing, delays in paying of wages, wage cuts and an increase in hours of the working week.

From January 1991, large numbers of deserters took refuge in Basra, Al Amarah, and An Nasiriyah. Hundreds of local government officials, Baathist Party functionaries and secret policemen were shot dead, prisoners were freed, and there was a real pre-revolutionary atmosphere. If the world media obscured all of this, both the local and international ruling classes were aware of the real situation. The war between States was transforming itself into a war between classes, and it was time to form an alliance against the masses. The Dawa, an Islamist organisation in opposition, spoke of the Southern rebels as: "an

unprincipled crowd of anarchists, atheists and saboteurs drinking whisky and making love in the holy places". It established contact with the Americans and the Saudis, which up to then would have been unthinkable. The Baathists flirted with the nationalist and democratic opposition. An accord was signed with the Moudjahiddin of the People, Islamic oppositionists in arms, to crush the revolt in the South. Accords were also signed with the Kurdish nationalist leaders Barzani and Talabani to deal with the unrest at Mosul, Kirkuk, and Irbil.

The crushing of the uprising was characterised as destruction of Shiite villages in the Western press, and the resistance has been systematically characterised as such. Despite repression, this resistance continues. Saddam has resorted to a mass draining of the marsh areas, an ecological disaster up to the standard of the regime's firing of the Kuwait oilwells during the war with the Allies.

Sanctions

The sanctions imposed on Saddam by the West caused great suffering for the Iraqi masses, and in many ways strengthened Saddam's position, as he took advantage of the siege situation to portray himself as a national hero, ready to take on the Western powers.

In the long term, however, the deteriorating situation forced many into crime, as they turned to theft and the black market to make ends meet. Saddam resorted to the introduction of Sharia laws — strict Moslem laws — last June, which included amputation of a hand for theft and death for armed robbery. Iraqi TV showed an amputated hand and what appeared to be an unconscious thief in a hospital bed in close-up. Most Iraqi doctors disagree with this amputation, which they were being forced to carry out, and a strike by several hundred doctors was only stopped by the threat of imprisonment. There was widespread anger at these sentences which was vented on the medical profession. Six months ago a crowd stormed the Baathist HQ at al-Amarah and cut off

the ears of several Party officials in retaliation for the punishing drinking whisky and making love in the holy places". It established contact with the Americans and the Saudis, which up to then would have been unthinkable. The Baathists flirted with the nationalist and democratic opposition. An accord was signed with the Moudjahiddin of the People, Islamic oppositionists in arms, to crush the revolt in the South. Accords were also signed with the Kurdish nationalist leaders Barzani and Talabani to deal with the unrest at Mosul, Kirkuk, and Irbil.

Elite

As well as the popular opposition to Saddam, rifts in the ruling elite are beginning to emerge. Saddam has clung on to power by relying on Sunni Moslem clans in his heartland of central Iraq. The Dulaymi clan for example is heavily represented in the army, Republican Guard and secret police. The torture and execution of a Dulaymi air force officer jeopardised this support, resulting in a mutiny in the armed forces in the Baghdad region. This was smashed by the Republican Guard, but cracks have now

appeared in the solid support Saddam still has among the Sunni elites.

If this disillusion grows, then Saddam can be seriously weakened, and a popular insurrection, which would have to take in central Iraq as well as the North and South, could take advantage of the divisions in the ruling classes. Set against this are the two Kurdish nationalist parties, each fighting for control of the North, ready with their own prisons and execution squads to crush any genuine mass uprising (3,000 have already died in fighting there).

Also ready to intervene would be the Shiite oppositionists, and the Iraqi National Congress controlled by Ahmed Chalabi, a wealthy banker. Behind him stands the Saudi regime and the Americans. These would agree to a return to some form of bourgeois democracy and a deal with the Kurds if this meant the stabilisation of the area and the sabotage of any working class uprising.

And in Iran...

DISAFFECTION WITH THE clerical regime in Iran is increasing as the mullahs are shown to be as corrupt as any secular rulers, and as willing to put the screws on the working class.

In June a slogan appeared on a Tehran flyover calling for "Death to the Mullahs!". Last August serious riots broke out in the northern city of Qazvin in response to the worsening economic conditions. And on the 4th of April of this year, discontent erupted again with riots in the shantytown of Akbar Abad, 18 miles southwest of Tehran.

Discontent

Several hundred migrant workers protested about price rises for public transport and fuel. They overpowered the police sent to quell them, taking their arms. The clerical militias, the Revolutionary Guards, were then sent in, firing on the crowds indiscriminately. As many as 50 were killed. Crowds converged on

the area from surrounding shantytowns chanting, "Down with the Islamic Republic, Down with Rafsanjani (the Iranian President), Down with Khomeini (the heir to Khomeini, the supreme religious leader)". A news blackout was imposed and thousands of Revolutionary Guards sealed off the area.

The ruling regime is hopelessly split between the 'moderates' who want to open up to the West, and the fundamentalist clerics. A revolution of the masses could overthrow the whole sorry crew. It was mass action that overthrew the Shah and that had the potential of developing in a revolutionary direction with the appearance of workers' committees, before it was hijacked by the clerical reactionaries under Khomeini.

A plague on both their houses — The civil war in Algeria

SINCE THE MILITARY takeover in January 1992 after the Islamic fundamentalists of FIS won a majority at the elections, Algeria has been plunged into a civil war that has claimed at least 30,000 lives. Caught between the two factions, the Algerian people have been subjected to the napalm of the Army and the bombs of the fundamentalists.

As usual, the Western press have obscured the situation, reducing it to a simple fundamentalists v military. Take one example. A general strike against the government took place in February. The same day, an Algerian woman was murdered by the fundamentalists. The Western media reported only on the last event. Who profits from this? Well, institutions like the International Monetary Fund who congratulated the Algerian government on the first successes it had won in "its strategy to integrate its economy into the international economy in liberalising its foreign trade... in giving a more important role to market forces". Yes, a very great victory, with unemployment at 27%, inflation at 27.8% and the situation set to further deteriorate with the government pursuing the same course.

The IMF has presented a plan for structural adjustment accepted by the military

regime. Hundreds of nationalised industries have been privatised. This will lead to mass sackings.

The nationalists who came to power in Algeria did so after a bloody war of independence against the French colonialists. This war had certain aspects of a 'civil war' about it: the struggle between two nationalist factions — the FLN and the MNA — and with the pro-French Moslems. Within the FLN itself, power struggles raged and people like Abane Ramadane, member of the Coordination of the Maquis of the Interior were murdered by their own comrades, as well as founder members of the FLN like Ben Boulaid, who it was claimed at the time was killed by the French.

After independence these struggles continued. The Army led by Boumedienne made sure that Ben Bella of the FLN came to power, and those who objected within

their ranks were exiled or imprisoned. Oppositionists were hunted down and shot in West Germany and Spain. The regime has been characterised by frequent 'car crashes', 'plane crashes', 'suicides', 'breaking necks whilst getting out of the bath', among both the military and government officials, signalling internal power struggles. Even the murder of President Boudiaf in recent years, allegedly murdered by fundamentalists, is now thought to be the result of internal power struggles.

Packed

All the institutions — the Press, the single Party, police, unions, mass associations, and of course directors of industry, have been packed with people the regime can depend on; with allies, relations and friends. President Chadli installed practically his entire family in important positions.

It has been claimed that President Chadli deliberately provoked the mass demonstrations of young people in 1988 in order to call in the Army to reestablish law and order. He was thus assured of a united power base, by impli-

cating the Army leaders in a bloody and brutal repression.

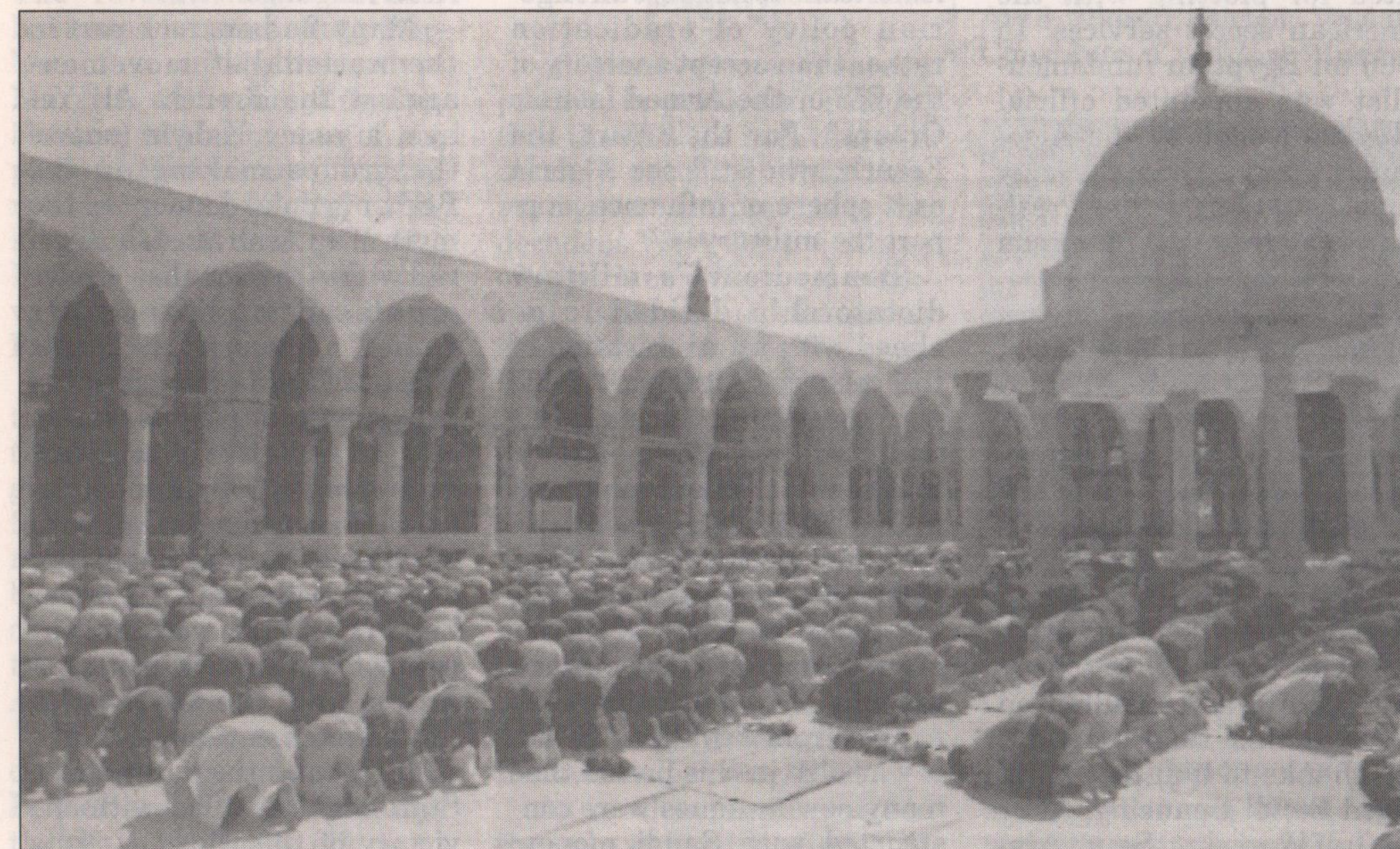
The civil war has involved the systematic murder of those very close to the regime by the fundamentalists. But along with these murders took place those of many intellectuals whose death would have suited the military as much as the fundamentalists, like the greatest Algerian playwright Abdelkader Alloula, whose throat was cut in 1994.

The secret police group SM (Securité Militaire, nicknamed Sport and Music) was trained in the USSR, where they learnt torture, manipulation of crowds, infiltration and counter-insurgency. The demos of 1988 were the fruit of one of these manipulations. The demonstrators were then machine-gunned by men in plain clothes. These events were the result of power struggles between different clans in the ruling regime.

The SM has infiltrated the fundamentalist groups and is manipulating them. It was definitely involved in the strikes called by the fundamentalists. Following these, the military agreed to a free press (but who are the journalists authorised to create this 'free press?'). 'Free' elections were organised, but the military had not imagined that the FLN would have such a disastrous result. The military had to annul the elections, and imprisoned the fundamentalist leaders and MPs.

The fundamentalists made their first big public appearance in 1988 on 7th October at Belcourt, a neighbourhood of Algiers, on demonstrations led by the religious leaders, the imams, with 6-7,000 people. Another fundamentalist demo on the 10th was fired on by the military, resulting in 25-30 dead.

The FIS managed to hijack the vast discontent seething in Algeria. Far from being a united organisation it based itself primarily on a rejection of the regime. Since independence, a succession of



leaders like Ben Bella to Boudiaf have imposed Western solutions "inadapted to a country of Moslem tradition" according to the FIS. It has grouped together the most impoverished, the marginalised youth, small shop-keepers and traders and artisans, alongside the Arabising functionaries, with a reactionary and religious programme. It employs an anti-imperialist rhetoric (but not a practice!). It has denounced the deal between the government and the IMF as treason.

There are two main tendencies within it — the Salafists (the dogmatists) who recall the time of the Prophet, and the Dzaraists (Algerianists) who advance an Algerian Mohammedanism and are legalists. It was they who led the FIS into the elections. The Moslem movement is itself disunited. Alongside the FIS are the 'moderates' of Hamas, and the Armed Islamic Groups, led by veterans of the war in Afghanistan: uncompromising, extreme fundamentalists.

The fundamentalists started a campaign of violence in 1989 by burning alive a nurse who had physical contact with men in the course of her work, and the fire-bombing of a flat belonging to a teacher in a women's liberation group. In February 1990 women students were attacked at Constantine University. At Blida a woman student was flogged in April 1990, and the flat of four divorced women fire-bombed. This did not stop them winning the municipal elections in June 1990.

What of the other political currents in Algeria? For its part the PAGS (Party of the Socialist Vanguard), the rechristened Communist Party, took the side of the regime as it had habitually done in the past.

At its last conference in 1993 it saluted the Army and Police, going on to say that the market economy was the way forward and supporting the measures imposed by the IMF. It transformed itself into the Ettahadi (Party, State, Progress and Modernity). This did not stop its leader being shot dead! Significantly the regime failed to condemn the murder. Soon after a militant of the Workers Party (Trotskyists) was shot dead.

The police refused to accompany an ambulance to the scene of the murder. A journalist wrote about a fundamentalist who had been acquitted after planting a bomb. He was arrested for insulting the judge! It is difficult to tell whether a murder is carried out by the fundamentalists, by the secret services who have infiltrated and are manipulating fundamentalist groups, or by Army and secret police units masquerading as fundamentalists!

The fundamentalist terror has been used as a smoke-screen and a pretext for the State to remove all obstacles to the austerity programme of the IMF. Many militants of the Workers Party have been imprisoned. At the same time the regime enlisted the help of the Algerian democrats like Ettahaddin, the Front des Forces Socialistes led by Ait Hamed, the Movement for Democracy led by Ben Bella, and the Assembly for Culture and Democracy of Dr. Said Sadi, to condone the repression.

For a long time, fundamentalism has been used by the Western powers as a weapon against the Soviet bloc. The French President Giscard admitted this in 1980. Sayed Kobt, one of the leaders of the Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt, spent three years in the USA from 1949-51. At this period he was used to destabilise the Arab nationalist regime of Nasser, in the Soviet orbit and as a source of inspiration to Arab and African nationalists. In 1967 he was executed for plotting with the American secret services. In 1980 an Egyptian fundamentalist was appointed official religious leader by the Algerian State. He was the only person apart from the President to address the nation on TV.

Another country plays a key role in the development of the FIS — Saudi Arabia. Through its World Islamic League it set up a religious school in Algeria. One of the FIS leaders, Ali Bonhadj, was one of its pupils. Abassi Madani, another FIS leader, attended the school for a period. The head of the school, Abu Bakr, was consulted on the creation of the FIS, and it was thanks to him that it received Saudi financing. After the Gulf War when Saudi Ara-



Above: Wall slogans call for an Islamic state.

bia and the FIS parted ways, the Saudi Minister of Defence declared that his country "had generously aided these ingrates". The Saudi Red Cross helped Algerian fundamentalists enter Afghanistan, where they gained valuable military training during the war against the Soviets and their client regime.

Cut off by its sugar-daddy, FIS turned towards Iran. Saudi Arabia now switched sides, giving support to the military regime.

The USA also initially supported the FIS regime against the regime. Part of the US administration still does so, but on the other hand many American businesses are prospering in Algeria because of the new petrol agreements.

On top of this, the Republicans now control Congress. Their views are reflected in a report by one Perlmutter, close to Bush, who stated: "It would be preferable for the Americans to support an Algerian policy of eradication rather than accept a victory of the FIS or the Armed Islamic Groups". For their part, the French, who still see Algeria as a sphere of influence, support the military.

Boumedienne's military dictatorship decided to go ahead with an Arabisation of the country. Algerian Arabic was considered as a dialect and Middle Eastern Arabic was seen as true Arabic and promoted in the schools. It was during this period from 1965 until well into the '70s that large numbers of fundamentalist preachers were brought in to teach this 'real' Arabic, from Egypt and Syria. It was also in this period that many new mosques were constructed with Saudi money.

The fundamentalist clerics pushed this Arabisation in the schools, mosques and universities. Islam has always been used by the regime to make the masses swallow the worst social and economic medicine.

The Berbers

The first meeting of the Algerian region with Islam was a very bloody one. Islam was introduced into North Africa by a process of colonisation, where Arab soldiers massacred and pillaged the towns and villages that refused to surrender. They met fierce resistance in the Algerian region from the local population, a non-Arab people, the Berbers. Hundreds of Berber revolts took place against the central Arab power that was established, but finally many Berbers began to collaborate and to accept Islam and the Arab language.

Many Berbers took part in the nationalist movement against the French. Ali Yehya, a young Kabyle (one of the groups making up the Berber people) denounced the myth of an Arab Moslem Algeria within nationalist circles organised in France. He gained a majority in Paris. What followed was a series of expulsions, fist-fights, knife-attacks and attempted assassinations, when those in favour of an Arabo-Islamic orientation of the movement, under Ben Bella, won the upper hand. The FLN won the war against the French using religion and the myth of a united Arab nation.

As soon as the new nation-State was installed with the victory of the FLN, assaults



began on the Berber language and culture, with a series of humiliations for all the Berbers — the Kabyles, Chaouis, Mozabites and Touaregs.

This resulted in a mass uprising in Kabylie in 1980 against the oppression of Berber language and culture. This uprising also advanced ideas about women's emancipation and it is no surprise that today the movement for women's liberation in Algeria is the most advanced and combative in the 'Arab' world. The Army was sent in resulting in 700 wounded and more than 500 arrests.

Failure

The radicalisation of the Islamic groups in Algeria is a direct result of the failure of Algerian nationalism in all its forms — whether reformist, 'revolutionary', or militarist. The 'revolutionary' currents have been predominantly Berber, often calling themselves Marxist, and concealing this because of the nature of the period. Many came from a modest rural background, keeping their links with the Kabyle countryside and the working class immigrants in France.

The fundamentalist reaction was in part a response to the Berber revolt, and the regime initially hoped to use the fundamentalists to tame this resistance, as the standard-bearer of Arabisation. Because they are non-Arabs, they are a main target of the Arabising FIS.

In response, many armed defence groups have set up in Berber areas. Unfortunately, the State has made efforts to integrate this grass-roots re-

sistance into their own war against the FIS.

Despite the civil war, strikes have taken place in the docks, and the gas and oil industries in response to the measures of the regime. This has decided that the repayment of the debt was a priority over the feeding of the people. For example, the prices of coffee and sugar have gone up 50%, and it has been decided that only limited quantities of certain foodstuffs should be on sale. For example, only 800,000 tonnes of milk compared to 1m in 1991, at a time when the population is increasing.

Other products regarded as superfluous or of secondary importance have been banned from import, like mushrooms and meat. Also banned from import have been textiles, clothing and shoes.

Favour

It pleases the Western powers, in particular France, that the FIS are in favour of a market economy, that they are against emigration to the decadent West, for the return of Algerians living and working in Europe, and for a strong rule over the masses. This was the tactics of the Socialist administrations in France, but as noted earlier, the Gaullists now in power favour the military. Whether the FIS or the Army, the Western powers want a strong regime that will meet their demands that emigration from Algeria, and through Algeria from black Africa, be limited, and that the masses be controlled.

As revolutionaries, we see the only way out coming from independent initiatives with-

Anarchism in Arabic

Lebanese libertarians Al Badil al taharouri have translated *Anarchism* by Daniel Guerin into Arabic. Despite some flaws, this is still considered by many to be the best introduction to class struggle anarchism, written by someone actually active in the movement for a change, the late Daniel Guerin, veteran libertarian communist. For more details, write to Al Badil al taharouri via BP 177, 75967 Paris cedex 20, France.

ROMANIA

The fall of Ceaucescu led to his replacement by another bunch of bureaucrats who had been part of his regime!

As elsewhere, the regime is attempting to impose austerity programmes on the working class and peasants. Simmering discontent has led to a general strike on April 11th of this year. The first to strike were health workers in Cluj Napoca, a town in Transylvania. This had been preceded by a strike of 5,000 Tube workers in the capital Bucharest on 3rd April. The government was forced to concede pay rises and improvement of working conditions.

The Cluj strike was followed by a telecommunications workers' strike in Harghuda and Ploesti, where there was also a large demonstration of petrol workers. There were major demos in towns throughout Romania — in Arad, Ploesti, Birlad, Vaslui, Constanta, Cluj, Iasi, Buzau,

Calarasi, Timisoara. Out on strike were petrochemical, metal, health, car and telecom workers. A demonstration of 70,000 assembled outside Victoria Palace, the home of the Romanian parliament. This is massive by Romanian standards. Slogans chanted were "Down with Iliescu!" (President of Romania) and "Down with Vacaroiu!" (the Prime Minister), "Who will Execute the Government?", and "Thieves!"

The government were forced to make concessions through the mediation of the trade union bloc CNSLR (National Confederation of Free Unions) led by Pavel Todoran. Despite the orchestrated action by the unions, a number of actions, including strikes and blockades of railway lines were spontaneous.

Friends and Neighbours

If you like what you read in *Organise!* you might be interested in these publications:

Counter Information. Quarterly newsheet produced by independent collective. Information on struggle worldwide. Free copy with SAE from Pigeonhole Cl, c/o 11 Forth St, Edinburgh EH1, Scotland.

Subversion. Quarterly magazine of group of same name, with politics close to ours. Free copy from Dept 10, 1 Newton St, Manchester M1 1HW.

in the working class, and within the women's organisations and Berber defence squads, that can break with both the military and the fundamentalists. Knowing the

strong traditions of revolt and, despite everything, strong libertarian impulses amongst the Algerian masses, we do not think this is completely impossible.

The class struggle in prisons

An interview with Graham at Swalesdale

ACF: What forms of resistance take place in prison?

G: There isn't much these days. The great days of the '70s, '80s and early '90s are well gone. After Manchester, people saw the results. We all resist in our own little way, using the system for what we can, getting what we can out of it. But major resistance, no.

But resistance is good because I am looking at the results right now. In my cell there's a toilet and a sink and while it's not very nice living in a toilet, it's a lot better than having to shit in a tin bucket; and having washing facilities with hot and cold water is a lot better than having to wash with just a jug of cold water... and the reason I've got those facilities is because the lads who rioted at Manchester put their liberty on the line for me... and every other prisoner, which we should never forget.

For resistance to be good it's got to be something big like that, where there's a lot of publicity behind it and there are enquiries and so on. But petty resistance, arguing with the screws and refusing to go to work etc, get you nowhere. We've got a whole wing here that's extended into a punishment block, but because the authorities can only give up to 14 days punishment, the governor will say, "OK, I'm not giving any punishment for this offence but you'll be transferred to 'A' wing." There you are locked up 23 and a half hours a day and you get nothing: no association or television. And in some of the cells where former prisoners have smashed the toilet and the sink, then they

are taken out completely and we are back to the old prison piss pot. And this is a brand new prison, it's only been open five or six years.

So, resistance, there's no such thing because there's no class solidarity in prison these days. Drugs are the rulers in prison on the one hand, and parole is on the other. If you're not worried about where your next fix is coming from, if you're not a heroin addict, then you're worried about what the screws are going to put down on their report. We now have a system of SI reports. These are confidential (to the screws) notes that are put into your record. Often, if they want to be funny, they put down what they want about you. Everything you do is noted and written about. To get away with anything is almost impossible.

I thought I'd got away with it in Nottingham prison when I refused to work in the tailors' shop. They put me in the punishment block where I stayed for three months. They came down and tried to have a little go at me with the result that I smashed up the cell and it cost them £18,000 to put it right. The immediate result was to put me back on my original wing and to say I could have any job I wanted, "just keep quiet". I thought I'd won. I should have known a lot better because the result of that is that I'm sent to Swalesdale. This is the class of prison I was sent to when I started eight years ago, so I've really gone back to my bird. It hasn't deterred me, I'm still the same person I was, but it just makes me a bit more wary. I think before I act now and

make every action effective rather than just for a laugh. There's no laughs in this game, especially when doing a life sentence.

So resistance is out because there's no class solidarity. None whatsoever. You might get two or three people who will stick together but you won't get the whole prison going on sit-down strikes anymore. That's all finished; so there is no resistance, not as such.

React

ACF: How do the authorities and prisoners react to stories of prison rebellion?

G: Usually the screws just go out and sulk and the lads sit by the television cheering it on. I don't think it adds to or incites riots in any other prisons because it is very much 'dog eat dog', I'm afraid, in prisons today. The prevailing view is that if my comrade is getting the shit kicked out of him in some other prison, "what's it to me?". I'm alright here with my feet up and a fag in my hand. That seems to be the attitude. The only time when prison riots go from prison to prison is when they are prison officer-instigated. Prison officers may have a grouse with the Home Office and work to rule etc, and they make it quite plain that if we smash the place up a bit and help them, then our visits go ahead and so on. So, every prison tends to go up at the same time. The situation is coordinated by the Prison Officers Association. Sometimes rebellions are isolated. There's a gaol up North which got destroyed as bad as at Manchester. That was prison officer-instigated but the POA refused to back them on the matter, so they just made as much trouble in that gaol until it went up. So, a riot in one gaol being reported in the media does not affect the next gaol to the extent that the gaol will 'go up'. In fact, it relieves the tension. If you are walking around bored and fed up and a prison goes up when you are all sitting round watching television, jeering and shouting, it relieves a lot of the tension! Then you go out and take the mickey out of the screws. I think the screws are a bit relieved when riots occur in other gaols because it lessens the chances of there being one in their own particular gaol.

ACF: Could you describe the hierarchies that exist in prisons?

G: The top dogs are the heroin sellers, the purveyors of death. I hate them as much as I hate any other oppressor. But, they have the money, they have the heroin and everybody wants it and they're looked up to. Heroin is now boss and it's filthy.

There isn't much of a hierarchy, except that a decent thief is considered OK and

a sex offender or a grass is at the bottom of the shit-heap.

ACF: Could you say something about prisons and costs?

G: Well, what you've got to remember is the aim of this government is privatisation, to sell off the gaols. So, the more prisoners you have got and the longer you have them in, the more viable a proposition the gaols are. In this prison, for instance, one of the aims is to keep the costs down because this prison is virtually unmanageable in the way it's built. It's one that the government has got to get shot of as quickly as possible.

Somewhere like Nottingham, which is a nice little prison and holds only 200 prisoners, is being extended so as to hold 500. It has to hold at least that number before the private sector is interested. It's all geared up to the private sector and career management. It's got very little to do with prisons as such. Prisons are such a difficult issue that the government wants to put them on somebody else's back, ie the private sector.

ACF: To what extent are basic human dignities allowed or denied?

G: I think I should tell you about visitors being strip searched at the gate. In some prisons this is handled with a bit more dignity than others but I don't think it can be handled with dignity as far as prisoners are concerned, eg a prison officer looking at his wife's intimate parts.



As far as prisoners are concerned, we are locked up in our cells overnight. If I want to use the toilet I can. Unlike the old-fashioned spy holes in the cell door, we now have slits which are about a foot long and three inches wide, from which the screw can see the whole cell. We are not allowed to cover this up. So if you want to go to the toilet, I have to do so in full view of a prison officer. And don't forget, there are a lot of female staff here.

Also, what we used to do is wedge the door shut so that it can't be opened. In some prisons, with more relaxed regimes, they will allow this if you explain that you are on the toilet. Here it is an offence, so

any officer can see what you're doing. During the day, anyone, prison officers, prisoners, welfare officers etc, can walk in at any time. There is, in short, no dignity whatsoever in prison. In this prison, officers regularly enter the cell, order you to strip and then search your cell. Prison officers want to look at your private parts, they say they want to see what you are hiding in your Y-fronts! It's very hard for some people to take if they're shy.

Assault

The reason for stripping people is done under Home Office Psychiatry Team recommendations. According to them, if an inmate is forced to display his genitalia to a prison officer, he is not so likely to assault him. He is more likely to be made to feel small and kept in his place. It's just psychological control. They're not interested in what you are hiding.

A person can only be internally searched by a medical officer. A person who is suspected of having swallowed drugs given during a visit is taken to a room with no facilities whatsoever and the contents of his crap are examined. I think that is a little undignified — of course real drug smugglers don't bring in the stuff like that. It's part of the silly little games that the authorities want to play with you.

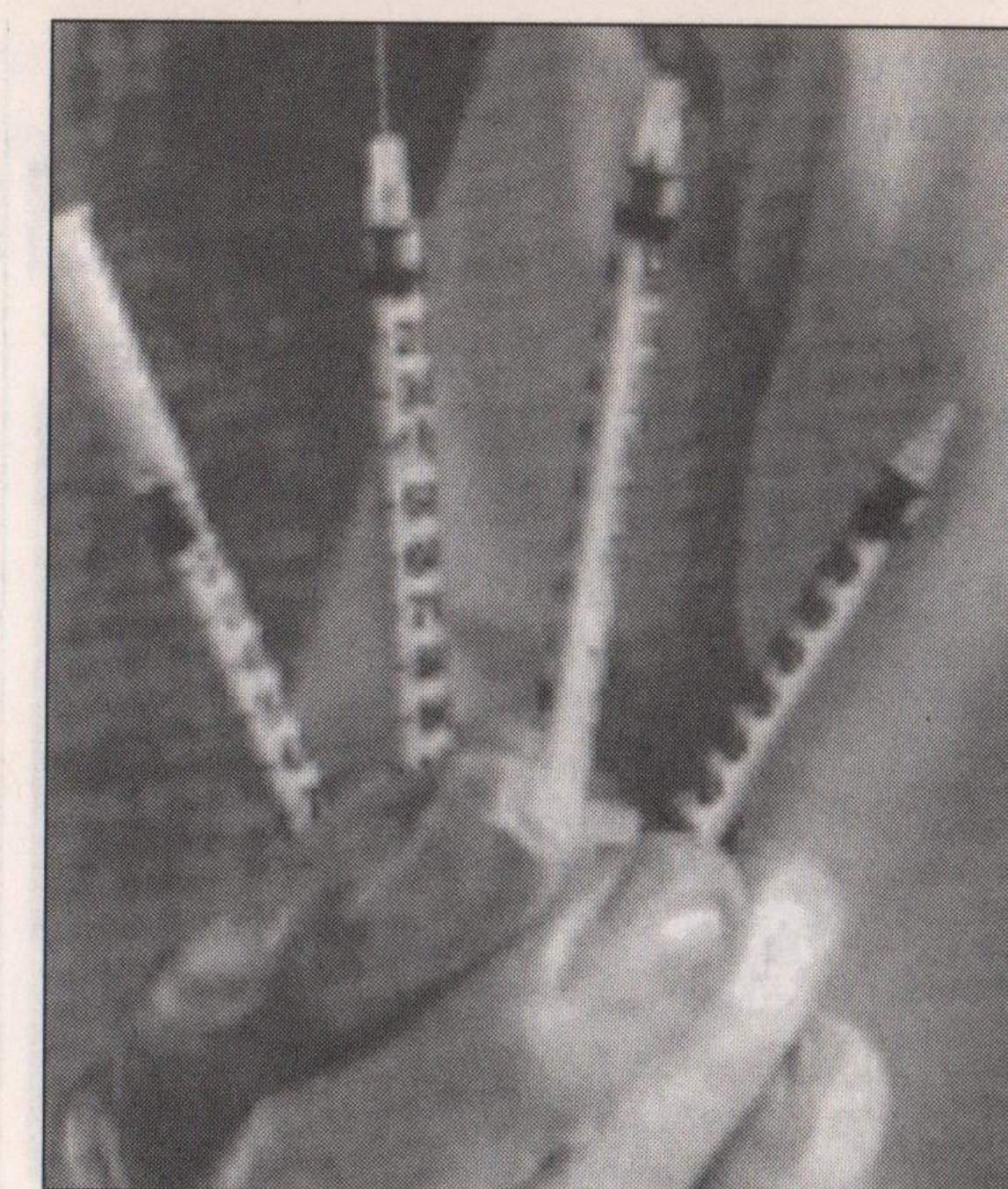
When you get sentenced to prison the state owns you. You are no longer a human being. At the moment we are regarded as commodities. When the private sector gets hold of us, we will revert to being slaves. At the moment we are treated like farm animals, so long as we do as we are told and are where we're supposed to be, that's all they are concerned with.

ACF: Could you tell us about prisoners' political awareness?

G: Prisoners are a reactionary bunch since survival is the key in here. There is scope for political development; there are people who are willing to learn why their lives are buggered up. The prisoners who are into politics are mainly in the top security prisons, eg the provos. Even then such prisoners are not that interested in politics in gaol since survival is the key question. We tend to see it as two different worlds: prison and out there. And when people out there start lecturing us, telling us how to live, we say, "You come and live in here, you bugger and you try it!"

Reactionary

Prisoners can only be reactionary. Management over the years, over to the fine tuning stage now, have so perfected their control that anybody trying to educate people politically is just moved from prison to prison. The maximum any long-term stay in one prison is two years. The authorities don't want you to get permanent friends; they don't want you to



start trusting people and they don't want you to start fighting back most of all. There isn't much scope for political development except for people who were politically aware before they went into prison, like myself. But you're very much on your own and you have to do it by using the government's weapon, ie paperwork, not by violence or any other means. Violence is no use in prison. The only time that violence is any good is when you can get away with it. You can't get away with it easily in here as you are completely trapped. There is nowhere to run, in here you have to use intelligence, not force. Not many people can do this as prisons are substitutes for our closed-down mental hospitals.

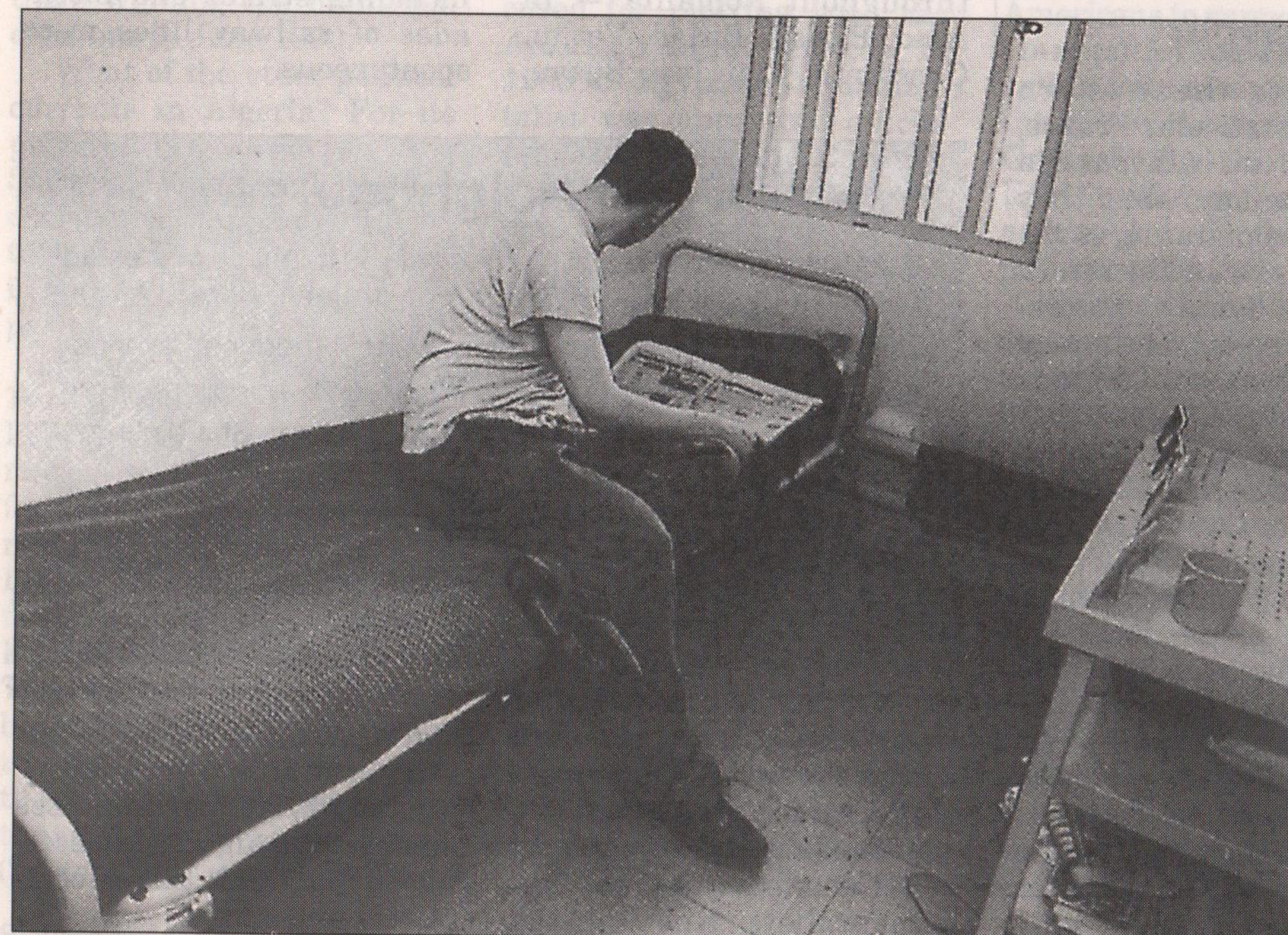
ACF: Are you forced to do any work?

G: Yes, comrade, we are forced to do work and the work is onerous. The work in most prisons involves textiles, working at sewing machines and light assembly work. If you aren't involved in something else then that is what you do. The work is repetitive and only one operation is done by one man throughout the shift. It is soul-destroying and the pay is pretty low. Prisoners aren't allowed to practise their skills. Engineers, for example, would be made to work in the kitchen because you are not allowed to know more than your instructor.

Here are some pay rates. Light textiles pays £5.60 a week, education £5.10, light assembly work £5.60, gardening £5.10, orderlies £6.10, kitchens £8.10, unemployed nil and retired £4. Given the costs here in prison, it is impossible to live on a prison wage. Everybody has a fiddle.

ACF: Could you tell us something about the internal prison economies?

G: The black economy is based largely on heroin today. People can bring in a small supply of heroin easily and it is taken to the cell and mixed with other substances to stretch it out a bit and then sell it. One prisoner told me that a bag of heroin mixture sold here for £10 has about 50p worth of heroin in it. The big money-maker today is heroin, whilst be-



fore it used to be tobacco. Cannabis is very extensive too.

Heroin

Also, there is the buying and selling of clothing. Somebody with a good supply of money from selling heroin will buy nicer clothes than others have got. Some of the younger lads hooked on heroin will sell their backsides which again is part of the unofficial economy. The amount of money to be made out of heroin means that it is virtually uncontrollable.

ACF: Would you say something about your own situation?

G: My own situation was that I was called to assist a young girl (aged 14) who was being beaten up and her clothes were being removed by a large 23-year-old man. He was wielding a pick-axe handle and in fact he whacked her over the head with this because she was black. When I went to ask him to stop so I could take the girl to hospital, he attacked me. Rather than let him hit me I took out my knife and stabbed him in the nose, upon which he collapsed. I didn't kill him, it only went into his nose (extremely painful, I should think). He died of a sub-achranoid haemorrhage which is near enough by natural causes. And I am still appealing after eight years.

ACF: Any final points?

G: It doesn't pay to stop crime; it pays very well for the people who run the penal system, judges and so forth. The cannon fodder are not only the prisoners but also the prison officers. If prisons were empty and there was no more crime, there would be a lot of people out of work and with privatisation going through, it would be rendered a dead duck. This is a vast industry. Each governor gets a good bonus, about £20,000, if there are no escapees from his prison, and the top dog gets even more than this.

What is important is that you people involved in the revolutionary movement keep it alive. Your business is propaganda or whatever, but it's important that people like me in here can keep up with current affairs by reading your magazines. When I've read them I can leave them on the landing or pass them on so they are read and people can see an alternative, a way out. A great deal of prisoners in here are not criminals but social inadequates. But it should be realised that they have no opportunity to be anything else. Everyone is a human being and can be educated and pointed in the right direction.

The above is an edited version of an hour and a half taped interview, which contains much more information than space allows here. If you would like a copy of the full, often humorous and insightful version on audio tape, please write to Organise!, enclosing a cheque for £5. All proceeds go to the prisoner.

Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY THE TIME you read this, Mumia Abu-Jamal may be dead, executed by the State of Pennsylvania.

Mumia Abu-Jamal started political activity at the age of 13, in 1967, when as a school student he protested against the 'education' in Philadelphia's segregated schools. Frank Rizzo, Philadelphia's police boss, led busloads of baton-wielding cops to smash the protest, arresting 57 and seriously injuring 22. Mumia was among those arrested. He was again arrested in 1968 when he took part in a demonstration against a presidential rally by the champion of segregation, George Wallace. He was yet again arrested the following year when he was among those rounded up in HQ (by now the 15-year-old was the Panthers' Minister of Information). Later on in the year, he was the first speaker at an event to commemorate the murder of Panther leader Fred Hampton in Chicago by the police and FBI. In the '70s he broadcast as the "voice of the voiceless" over local radio.

All of this attracted the attention of Rizzo. When Mumia spoke against the murder of 11 MOVE members, he went to the head of the list of those Rizzo wanted put out of action. Rizzo had orchestrated the siege of the MOVE commune house which culminated in the death of 11 members. The MOVE was a group of black activists who were moving towards anarchist positions. Rizzo personally warned Mumia that: "...one day, and I hope it's in my career, that you're going to be held responsible and accountable for what you do".

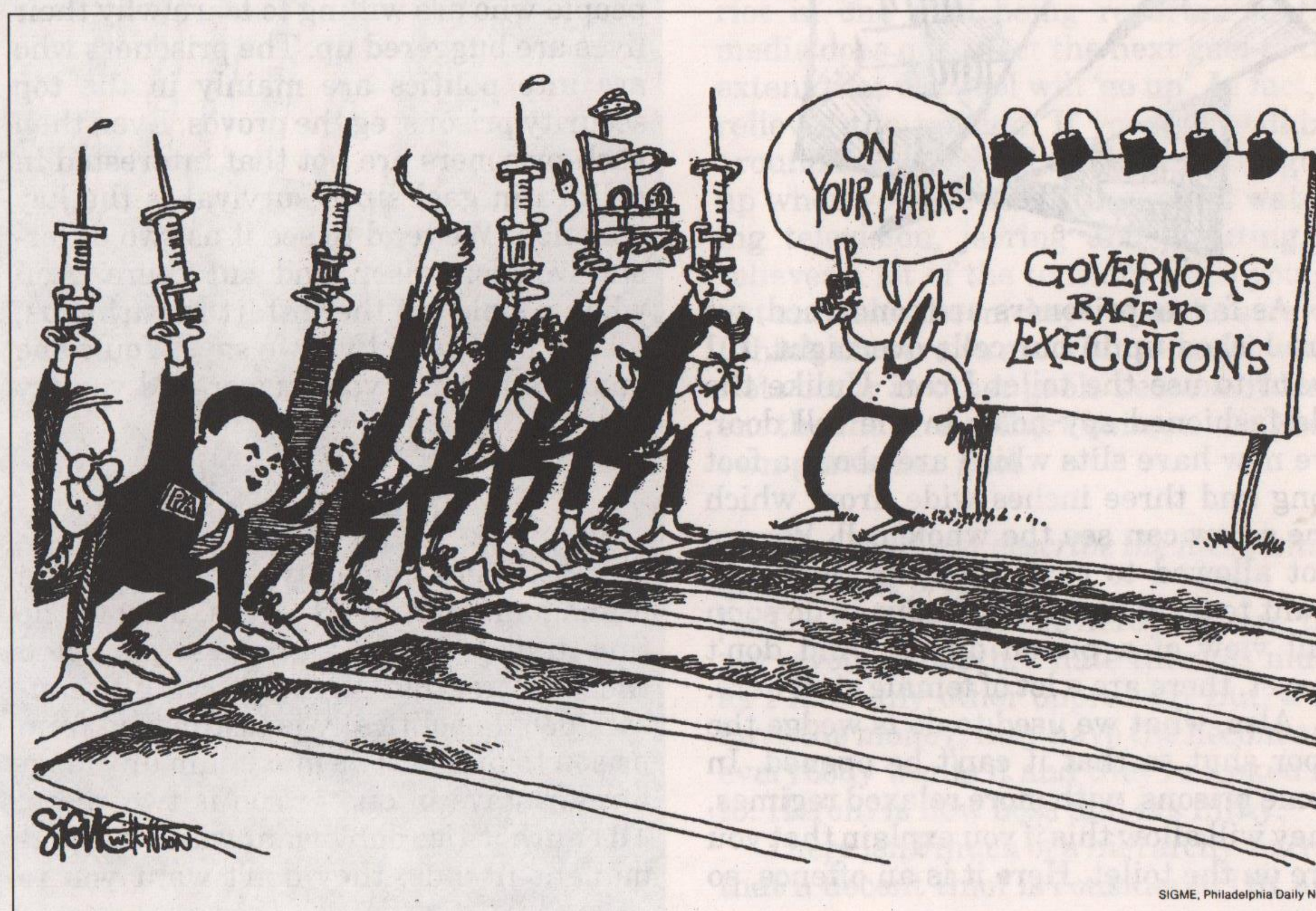
The opportunity came in 1981 when Mumia was shot in the chest by a cop, who was found dead. He was sent to Death



Above: Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Row. Whilst critically wounded, he was beaten and kicked. At the trial he was denied the right to represent himself or have an attorney of his choice. Despite four witnesses stating that someone else had shot the cop and fled, Mumia was sentenced to death, his political past being used as evidence that 'proved' he was a 'cop-killer'.

In prison he has been denied the use of a typewriter or much library time, yet continues to write articles and essays on a wide range of political issues. The Philadelphia police managed to get 12 broadcasts by Mumia cancelled on National Public Radio, but failed to stop the publication of his book *Live from Death*



Row. (Despite the cops hiring a plane that flew over the publishing house flying a banner that attacked the decision to print).

Death

The election of Tom Ridge as Governor of Pennsylvania in 1994 was to be a turning point in Mumia's long suffering. Ridge is a supporter of capital punishment. He has already signed five death warrants and has now signed one for Mumia. Unless the level of protest can be raised, he risks being murdered by the State in August.

In Britain the campaign against the judicial murder has been taken over by the horrific Stalinists of the Spartacist League, who are invested in the Partisan Defence Committee, along with Trotskyist grouplets like the Revolutionary Internationalist League. The pickets of the US Embassy have been used as an opportunity by the Spartacists to chant their robotic Party-building slogans. Nevertheless, it is up to everyone to attend the pickets and marginalise them. We urge all libertarian revolutionaries to attend the picket and try to get as many as possible at them.

Similarly you can show the video *From Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal* that the Partisan Defence Committee have, by phoning 0171-485 1396. Say you're interested in the Mumia case and ignore any Spartacist recruiting.

You can get the book *Still Black, Still Strong (Survivors of the War Against Black Revolutionaries)* from Semiotext(e) with info on the FBI campaign against the Panthers, MOVE, etc. £5 plus 50p P&P from Counter Productions, PO Box 556 London SE5 ORL.



ACE Anarchist Communist Editions

ACE pamphlets are available from c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Anarchism — As We See It. A new, revised edition of our very popular pamphlet. Describes the basic ideas of anarchist communism in easy-to-read form. 60p & SAE. *Manifesto of Libertarian Communism?* by Georges Fontenis. A key text of anarchist communism. Though flawed, the best features need to be incorporated into modern revolutionary theory and practice. 60p & SAE. 6th printing now available.

Role of the Revolutionary Organisation. Anarchist communists reject the Leninist model of a 'vanguard' party as counter-revolutionary. What then is the role of a revolutionary organisation? This pamphlet sets out to explain. All libertarian revolutionaries should read this fundamental text. 60p & SAE.

Basic Bakunin. A revised edition of our very popular pamphlet on one of the founders of revolutionary anarchism.

The Myth of Labour's Socialism. Just a few copies of this one left, so get 'em soon! Describes the nature of a Party set to administer British capitalism again.

COMING SOON! *Manifesto for the Millenium* and a pamphlet on ecology.

Aspects of Anarchism. Collected articles from the pages of *Organise!* on the fundamentals of anarchist communism. 30p & SAE.

Making Progress is out of print at the moment.

Prisoners' support: ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

Prisoners' Justice Day: August 10th

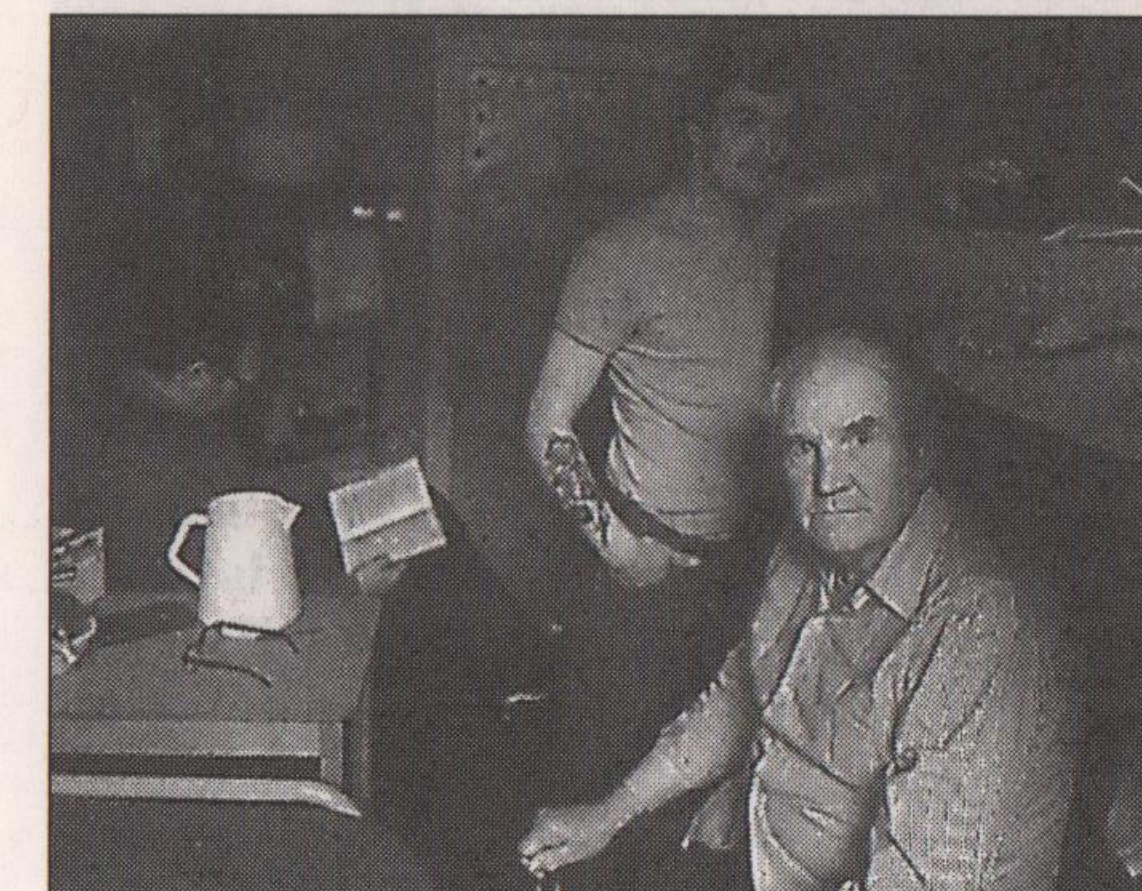
IN 1975, prisoner Eddie Nalon was left to die after a suicide attempt. The panic button in his cell was disconnected. Fellow prisoners at Millhaven Maximum Secure Unit in Canada went on hunger strike in protest.

So was born Prisoners' Justice Day. It is a day of protest when people remember those who have died in prison, whether from the routine brutality of prison life, murder by screws or other prisoners, or suicide.

It spread throughout Canada and is now an International Day of Action, involving both prisoners and their supporters. Actions have included work-strikes, demonstrations and hunger strikes. It is also about building solidarity between prisoners and increasing support from the outside.

In Britain, the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) began supporting Prisoners' Justice Day in 1992 and since then an increasing number of demonstrations and events have taken place here. This year it will hopefully be bigger still and everyone who can support it should do so. Various actions and demonstrations will take place around the country; the more that are organised, the better!

For more details contact: London ABC, 121 Railton Road, London SE24 OLR. Tel: 0171-274 6655.



John Perotti

John Perotti, the anarchist prison activist, has again been set up by prison authorities and placed in an isolation control unit. His work for fellow prisoners has long made him a target of the prison authorities. He was intending to start a hunger strike from May 1st, 1995, unless he was released from isolation and transferred to a prison in a different state.

John is asking that letters be sent protesting at his treatment and demanding that Director Wilkinson transfer him out of the state immediately.

Send to: Governor Voinavitch, Vern R. Center, 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215, USA.

Letters of support to: John Perotti, SOCF *167712, PO Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio 45699, USA.

David Bowen

David Bowen was a remand prisoner at the time of the Strangeways prison uprising in April 1990, awaiting trial for stealing a pair of curtains. In December 1992 he escaped from custody while being transported from Hull prison to Manchester Crown Court. He was found guilty in his absence of conspiring to commit grievous bodily harm on prison officers (which he denies) and sentenced to nine years. He subsequently received a further three years on a trumped-up charge of perverting the cause of justice and has recently lost an appeal.

He is now being tried for escaping from lawful custody, for which he is pleading not guilty. He is presenting a defence of duress, citing his treatment in prison, including verbal and physical abuse from screws at Hull prison.

David and the 22 others convicted at the Strangeways show trials are scapegoats for the prison system and a warning to other prisoners not to make trouble. They deserve our support.

Send messages to: David Bowen, DA0146, HMP Leicester, Welford Road, Leicester LE2 7AJ.

WHOSE HERITAGE?

THE LAST FEW years have seen the growth of the so-called 'heritage industry'. It found a fertile soil in the social climate of late '80s Britain and has continued to flourish as the commercial management of our social life expands still further. The heritage industry is not just a commercial phenomenon, though. It is part and parcel of attempts by the British ruling class to use a visible past to construct an image of enduring traditions, to promote national unity and to hide class conflict.

The roots of this political presentation of the past can be traced to the last century. In the late 19th century, capitalism and the established institutions of the Crown, the Church and the aristocracy were perceived to be threatened by working class militancy and republican and revolutionary ideas. Sections of the ruling class had a broad cultural response to these pressures to accompany the usual legal sanctions and police violence. This included the invention of grand royal ceremonies, the promotion of patriotic and imperial themes within ceremonial music and the architectural remodelling of London in keeping with its status as imperial capital. The overall intention was to emphasise the traditional, 'enduring' aspects of the governing institutions in order to overawe, enthuse or intimidate the mass of people.

One facet of this cultural offensive was the Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882, proposed by Sir John Lubbock to "preserve from demolition or decay works

of ancient times that are tangible evidences of the gradual establishment of the great institutions". Under the Act a Royal Commission was formed and an Inspector of Ancient Monuments was appointed. The first Inspector, Lubbock's father-in-law, General Pitt-Rivers, elaborated on his role: "The law that Nature makes no jumps can be taught... in such a way at least to make men cautious how they listen to scatter-brained revolutionary suggestions".

Power and Prestige

The primary focus of the Act was the preservation and presentation of castles, mansions, abbeys and churches — all visible expressions of the power and prestige of the Church and the aristocracy. The National Trust, formed in 1895 to encourage the appreciation of 'national treasures' among the lower classes, developed a similar bias towards celebrating the ill-gotten gains of the British ruling elite, their 'gangsters' castles' built on slavery and oppression abroad and exploitation at home. The kind of national unity and sense of natural order that such displays were intended to underline required amnesia or ignorance of past exploitation on the part of those it was supposed to impress. Even today we are invited to marvel at the good taste and sophistication of a class that continues to prosper at our expense (heard the one about Lord Muck who left his stately pile to the National Trust so that he could still live on site while NT members pick up the tab?).

The manipulation of the past has continued to be a preoccupation of the ruling class. In 1975, as if to echo the anxieties of a hundred years before, a Department of the Environment document, *What is our Heritage?*, stated that "heritage would give a feeling of continuity and a sense of security to face the difficult years ahead". This was published at a time when the confidence of the capitalist class had been severely shaken by a tide of working class militancy. The DoE document shows that the idea of a 'national heritage' was being tied explicitly to the promotion of social cohesion and stability. Meanwhile, a new counter-offensive against the working class was in preparation.

The policies pursued by the Thatcher administration were to a great extent the continuation of the austerity policies pursued by the previous Labour government. The social and political climate of 'Thatcher's Britain' proved to be the catalyst for the growth of the heritage industry. It would be wrong to say that there was some grand design behind this development, especially as there were certain contributory factors that might not have been predicted, but the 1975 DoE document does look strangely prophetic.

One contributory factor was the leisure industry. Increasingly, capitalism has required us to make profits for capitalists in our free time as well as in our work time. US capitalism pioneered such

Below: Stoke Newington pumping station is to be turned into a climbing centre.



developments with covered shopping complexes, private spaces designed to attract consumers at the weekend. The packaging and selling of less tangible commodities via 'theme parks' was to follow. Wild spaces became national parks, devoted to a more subtle but nonetheless real encroachment on self-generated activity. The commodification of the past would be just one more step in this process, helped along by government policy in the eighties.

State-manipulated social disintegration and a sense of loss and disorientation on the part of many people reinforced an attachment to things old. There was a vein of nostalgia here to be tapped by the leisure industry. As fast as the familiar anchors of everyday life were removed they reappeared as 'heritage'. Look at how recession-hit factories and warehouses have been turned into leisure attractions, eg the soon-to-open Castle climbing and sports centre in North London (previously a pumping station), the turning of slate mines in North Wales into tourist attractions and the various developments in Docklands. Changes in employment patterns accelerated this process as the government promoted a 'candy floss economy' based on the selling of services from which the leisure and tourist industry were ideally suited. 'Heritage' was to remain a major theme for the ruling class, but with a more commercial bias in keeping with Thatcherite ideology. With this 'market-led' approach there was less emphasis on the pomp and circumstance of the aristocratic past in favour of a broader, more populist emphasis, but with a restricted set of interpretations in tune with a *Daily Mail* view of the world.

Natural Order

Museums and heritage parks appeared that sought to portray the everyday life of working people in the past. At first sight it would seem to be an acknowledgement of working class history, but at a deeper level it is about representing working class people as fulfilling pre-set roles and subordinates in the 'natural order'. It is about presenting a communal or national past with an absence of class conflict. Such critical distortions of working class experience can be found at the Beamish open-air museum, which aims to show Geordie life at the turn of the century, complete with trams, pubs and an apparently harmonious community in period costume. It's an all-singing, all-dancing Hovis advert with no hint of the grinding poverty or bad working conditions. The Ironbridge Gorge museum also glosses over the harsh realities of the Industrial Revolution with its emphasis on the 'nuts and bolts' of technological achievement and not the misery that existed. HM government has nominated Ironbridge as a 'World Heritage' site.

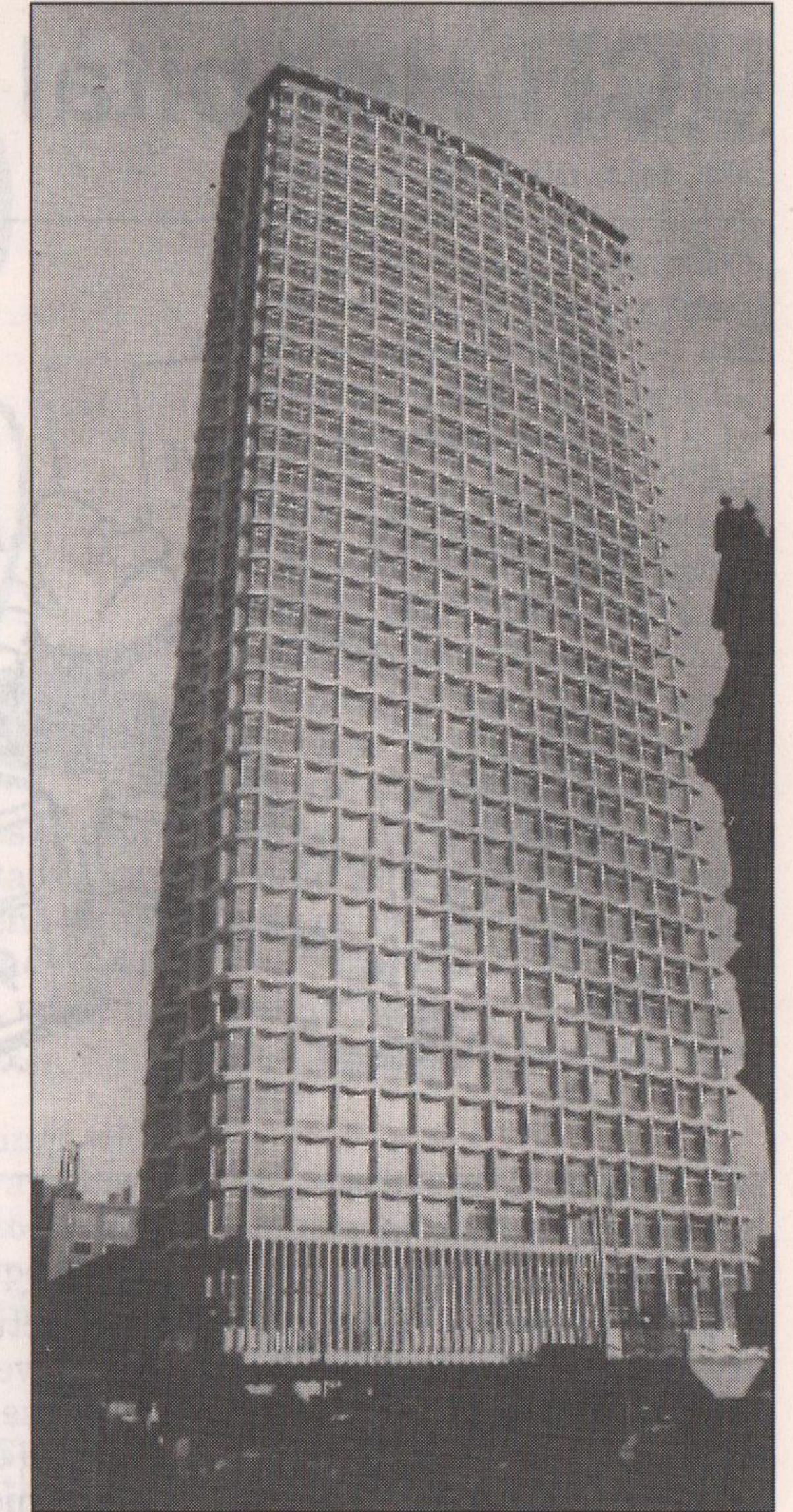
A sinister twist to the heritage saga is the proliferation of mining museums

around closed-down collieries. You can almost see the grin on the face of government ministers as their mortal enemies, the miners, become museum pieces. Through the heritage process it is as if we are being told that the working class is no longer making history, it is history. It tallies with the oft-repeated idea that the class struggle is somehow a thing of the past. One slate mine museum in North Wales even sells a pamphlet which tries to argue that a major strike in the mine's history was one of the main reasons that the mine is no longer thriving.

The promotion of nationalist ideology through heritage is just another step in reinforcing a perception of social cohesion and class peace that our rulers want us to share. The *Mary Rose*, Henry VIII's ill-fated tub, was dredged out of the Solent to the accompaniment of post-Falklands hysteria. The nationalist overtones of such icons as HMS Victory are inescapable, while the old Royal Naval College at Greenwich will be declared a World Heritage Site in time for the Millennium celebrations to be held there. Added to that we've had the nationalistic jamborees around the D-Day and VE Day anniversaries.

We've seen the visible past used to construct an image of enduring traditions in stained glass and stone, to promote patriotism, national unity and class peace. It is an idealised past that in recent years has been turned into a saleable commodity, diluting to an extent the message that sections of the ruling class might want to get across, but still affirming the values of wage slavery, hierarchy and the market. It also reinforces a view of culture as 'English', encouraging the white working class to identify with their white rulers and to see ethnic groups (the Irish, Afro-Caribbean, Asian etc) as being outside this common cultural 'heritage'.

What are the possible working class and revolutionary responses to this cultural offensive? Because heritage is such a diffuse quality there are a number of different areas susceptible to conflict and subversion. On a practical level class struggle can flare up at any time and in any place. For instance, while 'living museums' celebrate an industrial or rural past there is an industrial present of job insecurity, shit wages and conditions within the heritage industry as much as anywhere. So the potential for conflict is there. There is also a conflict in the interpretation and use of the past, a conflict which this article is intended to encourage. The past is important in gaining a sense of working class tradition, not to discourage struggle but to inspire us in the present. There is also the 'quality' of historic things and places, which are not 'precious', having as much potential for use today as any day. Look at what's been done in the 'old town' districts of many British cities where streets have been cobbled and 'Victorianised' with railings and bollards. Plenty of ammunition there for present-day conflict!



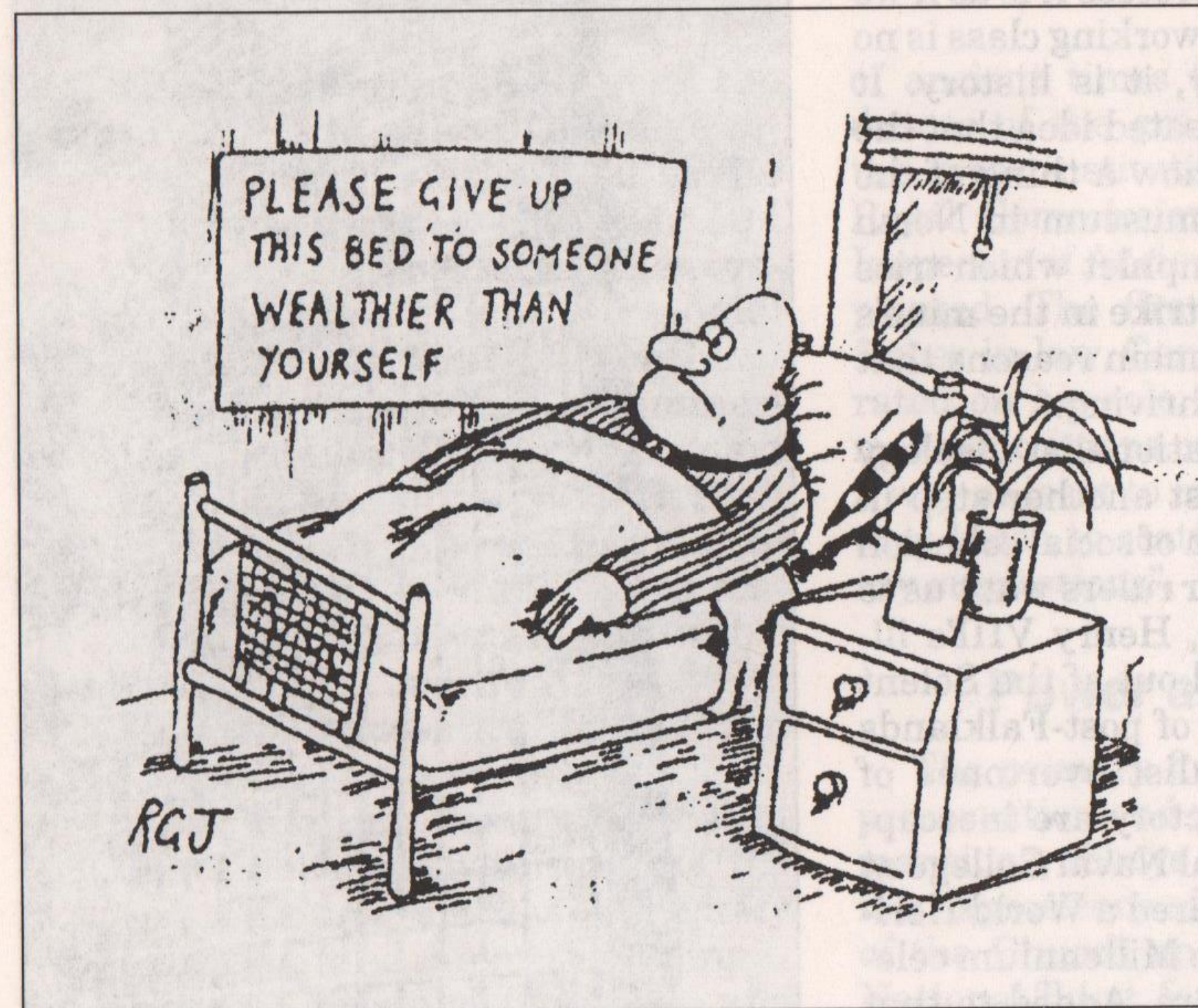
Above: Centrepoint, ruling class phallic symbol on Heritage list.

As for the aristocracy, it has been said that they have been largely insulated from everyday class conflict both because of their social distance and the spatial distance imposed by their deer parks and grounds. Historically it has been their agents further down the social scale who have got it in the neck from a vengeful poor, eg the bailiffs, gamekeepers etc. In view of their continuing influence and the important place the architectural expressions of their wealth have in the heritage spectacle, then the purely accidental fires at Uppark House and Windsor Castle provide food for thought. The monumental architecture of the rich and powerful has often been a target of attack. During the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico last year, peasant rebels undertook the demolition of town halls using sledgehammers. As they said: "Our thinking is that we have to build socialism".

These are just preliminary thoughts on the subject of heritage and the possibilities for its subversion. No doubt others can add ideas and observations of their own.

Editors' note: This article was not written by an ACF member and the ideas contained in it do not represent the ACF. Though we would generally agree with the main views expressed in the article, there may be disagreement as to what should actually be done.

UCH Hospital strike



Occupational Therapy: The incomplete story of the University College Hospital strikes and occupations of 1992/93/94

THIS PAMPHLET was put together by a number of participants in the struggle against closures at the University College hospital in central London.

It consists of an account of the fight against the management and union tactics (and the manipulative antics of the Socialist Workers Party) by the UCH Community Action Committee, plus an analysis of the continuing assault upon the NHS, and by extension upon the entire working class, on the part of the State.

Direct action

From the outset, the Action Committee was organised autonomously of the union involved (UNISON) and encouraged a direct action approach, utilising occupations, demos and strategies to extend the struggle.

This inevitably meant a conflict with the 'official' structures. It also brought them up against that self-proclaimed vanguard of the working class, the SWP, whose hacks, prisoners of their leftist ideology, were committed to keeping the struggle within the confines of trade union practice; not sur-

prising, when these Trots often actually constitute the lower levels of the union apparatus itself!

It is a clearly-written pamphlet which rejects the triumphalism of the SWP and doesn't pretend that the struggle ended in a workers' victory.

It didn't, though not for want of trying. The events around the UCH occupations do, however, supply revolutionaries with valuable experience and lessons to learn from.

Resurgence

We may be looking at a potential resurgence of struggle and resistance in the coming months as workers in the health service reject the Government's pay offer.

If those in struggle can unify and extend themselves, taking on the nature of a counter-offensive against austerity and cut-backs across the board (though not in the boardroom!), then we may yet see a working class victory for a change. We need one!

We strongly recommend that comrades read this pamphlet.

Copies are a mere £1 each, including postage and packaging and are available from: News for Everyone, Box 14, 138 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NS.

NEW PAMPHLET!

London ACF are proud to announce the appearance of a new pamphlet in the Stormy Petrel series: Malatesta's *Anarchism and Violence*. Complete with a new introduction by an ACF member, this important document in the history of anarchist theory refutes the common misrepresentation of anarchism as mindless destruction while restating the need for revolution to create a free and equal society.

Copies of this pamphlet, and the previous Stormy Petrel, *The Friends of Durruti*, are available from ACF (London), c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 at 75p including postage.

The Friends of Durruti were a much misunderstood group who attempted to defend and extend the Spanish Revolution of 1936. Included are an historical introduction from an ACF member and two political statements from the Friends themselves.

EE Cummings

The Enormous Room by EE Cummings. £8.95, Liveright.

Treason

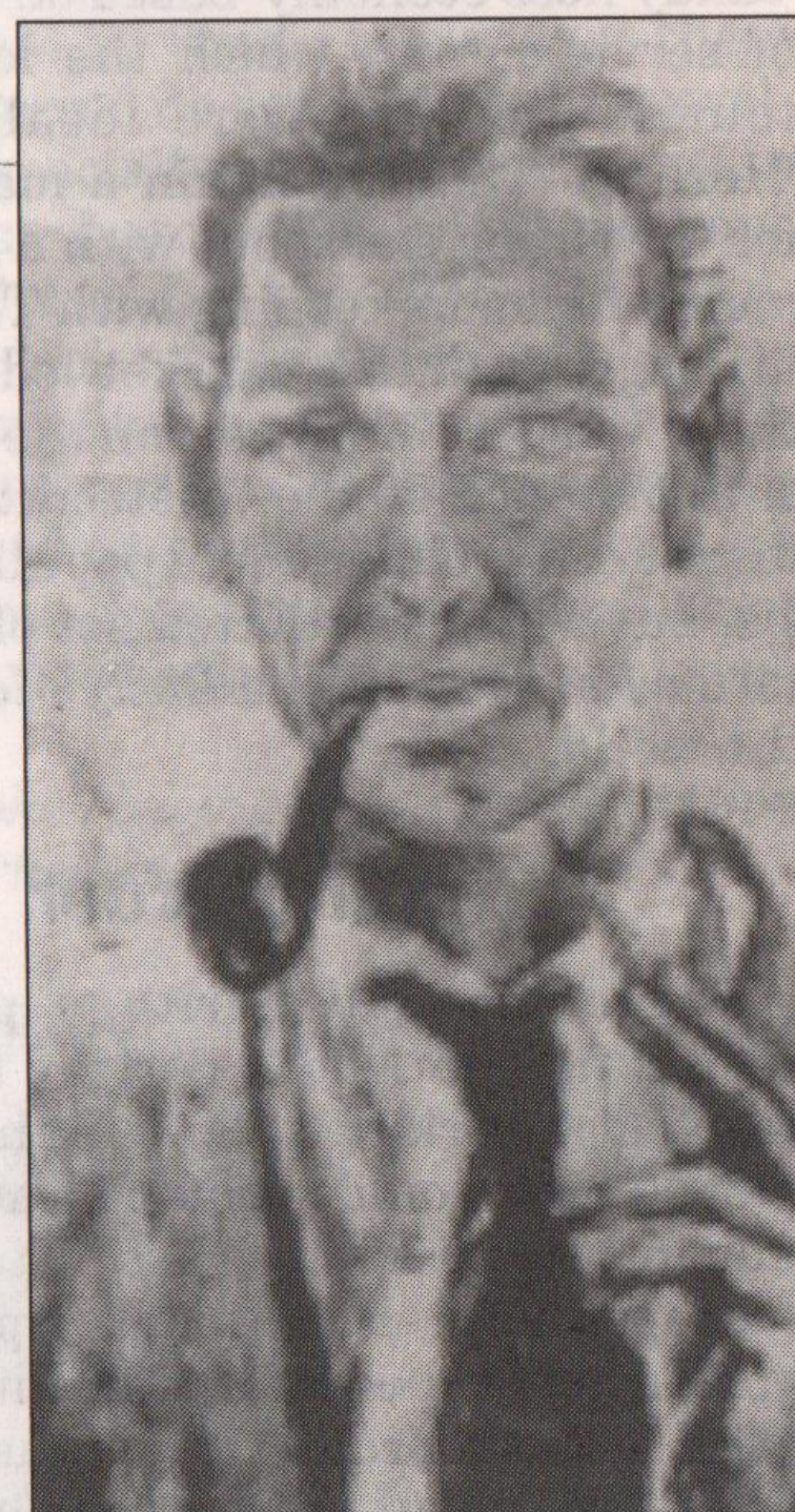
IN 1917 THE AMERICAN writer and poet EE Cummings, whilst serving in France as an ambulance driver, was arrested for treason and imprisoned in an internment camp for three months.

This happened because of his correspondence with the American anarchist Emma Goldman.

He published his account of his experiences five years later in this book.

Warmly human in its appreciation of the prisoners and scathingly contemptuous of the guards, it is a highlight of 20th century literature, suffused with an anarchist spirit. Who can forget Jean Le Negre, the pimp who impersonated an officer, Emile the Bum, the Schoolmaster, Monsieur Auguste, and a host of others like The Bear.

"A big shaggy person... an anarchist, wrote practically all the time...; wrote letters (which he read aloud with evident satisfaction to himself), addressing 'my confreres', stimulating them to even greater efforts, telling them that the time was ripe, that the world consisted of brothers etc... He had, I think, —



Above: EE Cummings.

Vive La Liberté tattooed in blue and green on his big, hairy chest. A fine bear. A bear whom no twitchings or muzzle nor any starvation nor yet any beating could ever teach to dance..."

Drawings

This new edition has previously-suppressed material and includes the drawings Cummings made in the concentration camp.

Open Eye

Open Eye, Issue 3

THE LATEST issue of this investigative magazine carries articles on David Icke and his links with the far right, the operations of MI5 and Special Branch, and loads more. Available from radical bookshops or from BM Open Eye, London WC1 3XX, enclosing £1.70.

Kate Sharpley

KATE SHARPLEY Library Publications — The Kate Sharpley Library, named after an anarchist militant at the start of this century, has produced a number of pamphlets.

Of particular interest will be *Personal Recollections of the Anarchist Past* by George Cores, and *Memoirs of a Makhnovist Partisan*. Available from KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1 3XX for £1 each post free. Send for a full catalogue at £2.



WHAT DRIVEL! I refer to your 'Article Writer Replies' to a letter from JW, East Ham in number 38. Some remarks:

1. It seems your nameless writer wishes to confirm the working class in apathy and disillusion by branding all sex workers as 'victims' of society (so (s)he can enlighten us and lead the powerless to a better life, perhaps?). I'm sorry to inform you that many of us work in the sex industry because the pay is better than most of the other jobs we might be forced to do. Credit us at least with the intelligence to be able to choose where, when and

how we sell our bodies to capital. Please do not stack your words of empowerment on top of all the shit we already bear. This is a 'real choice', made by real people, every day.

2. Perhaps your dealings with prostitutes have always been to use us as sexual tools; you cannot envisage respect and fair exchange in anything you do.

3. To say that pornography is racist and implies that coloured people are 'animalistic' says more, I think, about you than the subject matter.

4. Why do you admit that the

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Continued from back page

way so as to make life worthwhile, secure and free.

In capitalist society there are huge differences in wealth and power, so it is very likely that its victims turn to violence and robbery in ways which are similar to the working of capitalism itself. Anarchist communism in contrast is based upon social justice, equality, freedom and the abolition of money. Given these circumstances many of the preconditions which give rise to crime and, consequently, punishment, will disappear. Similarly, the abolition of the concept of victimless crime will remove a whole category of acts from the realm of wider social involvement.

The classical anarchist approach to the problem of anti-social behaviour is to remove them from the community and put them out of harm's way —

in other words exile. How feasible this approach would be in the modern world is debatable. Why should one community have to cope with the social rejects of another? On the other hand why should a community have to put up with the anti-social actions of certain individuals? The issue of self-defence arises here, for surely every community has the right and responsibility to protect itself from internal and external threats.

It would be foolish to argue that anarchist communist society would implicitly mean the abolition of anti-social behaviour. Another anarchist approach to punishment is to empower the 'medical model'. In other words, wrongdoers are not bad but maybe mad. A danger with this attitude, despite its well-meaning approach is that different behav-

iour might be deemed to be unacceptably bad and a suitable case for treatment. In capitalist societies like Britain so-called 'secure' hospitals are no better than prisons. Perhaps they are worse.

There are no simple solutions to the problems posed by serial rapists and killers etc. However, two, hopefully not incompatible principles will apply, namely the justification of individual and communal self-defence and protection on one hand, and the freedom of the individual on the other. A caring approach, applied in a humanitarian and non-harmful way must in the end be the basis of an anarchist communist alternative to punishment.



distribution of porn has absolutely no bearing on the incidence of rape — and then insinuate a sentence later that it does!

Middle class feminists tried for twenty years to find a link (and have been — and still are — aided by big business, government and CIA donations and grants). They failed. Miserably. To see this myth repeated in a magazine that agitates for human liberation is appalling.

Since the majority of working class women have left the feminist movement — in disgust — to the fate of its would-be middle class leaders, only careerists, college lecturers, the state (and now, it seems, *Organise!*) still peddle this pseudo-sociological claptrap.

5. It seems your reading has been as limited as your social life as you infer (fifth paragraph) that all pornography is produced by capitalists. I would refer you to *Eidos* magazine for starters. And this is as good a point as any to ask that, since you provide space and monetary appeals in your magazine to those who would burn and destroy magazines (letter from Bristol Women Against Pornography, same issue), perhaps you will allow me the space to inform your readers of work with the British State wish to ban and burn also: *Eidos* magazine's editor Brenda Tatelbaum intends to come to Britain to challenge Customs over its arbitrarily enforced powers of seizure and would like donations towards the cost of travel and offers of overnight accommodation.

Eidos covers all aspects of sexual liberation in every issue of its (huge) newspaper, as well as one of the best review sections of internationally-produced radical and subversive literature around. I'd suggest the best way to show your support — and see what's going on in the sex industry to mash up capitalism — is to send off \$18 for the latest issue, to *Eidos*, PO Box 96, Boston, MA 02137-0096, USA.

6. I'd also like to ask: do you tend to beat up everyone who disagrees with your moral standards? And suppress all culture that you don't own? And make us all get married

and do it only in the missionary position? Maybe you should rename yourselves Red Action and go out and relive your days of schoolyard bullying — you are, after all doing the state's dirty work.

*Yours in disgust
DL, London.*

Organise! Oh dear, oh dear. It's sad to see that irrational insult hurling isn't restricted to the knee-jerk anti-porn tendency. Firstly, the pages of *Organise!* regularly carry articles meant to open up debate, rather than simply reflect ACF policy. The articles on pornography and the sex industry in number 37 were the opinion of the individual author as was the reply to JW in *Organise!* 38.

For the record, the bottom line for the ACF is total opposition to all forms of state censorship. We have no desire to give the state any more power than it presently enjoys and experience shows that the first victims of censorship are invariably those 'on the margins' or who represent a threat to 'conventional' morality. Therefore people like *Eidos* get hit rather than Paul Raymond, for example.

Over and above our opposition to state censorship the ACF does not take a position (missionary or otherwise) on the question of pornography. Needless to say we support sexworkers' self-organisation just as we support the self-organisation of all workers.

Sexworkers are engaged in alienated labour as much as any other group of workers working for wages/salary/money and the 'choice' to be exploited slaving in a sweatshop, slaving in an air-conditioned office or slaving in a strip-joint is a 'choice' imposed by capital, ie no real choice at all.

Your suggestion that a 'fair exchange' can exist (point two) is, we think, a dangerous illusion.

Rather than a 'fair day's work for a fair day's pay', surely we need to fight for the abolition of the entire market/wages/exchange system. That, however, implies a communist perspective, something which many involved in the porn debate, being essentially liberals, aren't likely to defend.

Scapegoats

Following on from the acquittal of cops for the death of Joy Gardner, came the news that they would not face disciplinary charges from their superiors.

Surprise! surprise! (Remember how the judge at the trial told the jury not to concern themselves about race or politics?) Yet another insult to black people in this country, to be followed by many more. The questioning of the commitment of Test cricketers Devon Malcolm and Philip DeFreitas. The allegation by Police Commissioner Condon that 80% of muggings were committed by young black men, for which no evidence was offered.

Condon is attempting to please the racists in the Metropolitan Police Force who were affrighted that any of their officers could even be brought to trial for tying up a black woman and wrapping tape around her face while she suffocated.

Pattern

On a larger scale, this is just part of a pattern where those at the lowest levels of

society are scapegoated for all the wrongs of this society. The crisis brings out all the evils of racism and nationalism.

In France and Italy, the threat of Islam is summoned up to justify crack-downs and raids and to strengthen the ramparts of Fortress Europe. The old cry of 'Women back to the home!' is raised and single mothers are targetted as scapegoats. Another easy target 'Dole and social security scroungers' is taken out of mothballs.

Against this we continue to argue for the unity of all the working class against these attacks.

cided to set up his own newsletter *In Fact*. The paper published a suppressed study in 1939 on tobacco: 'Tobacco Smoking and Longevity', and Seldes often crossed swords with the tobacco industry, as well as taking on the American Legion's strike-breaking activities and Lindbergh's fascist sympathies. The paper was witch-hunted out of existence in 1950. Seldes is the father of independent radical journalism in America. He will also be remembered for reminiscences in the film 'Reds'.

Cold, cold heart

CEDRIC BROWN, chief executive of British Gas, is paid an enormous salary. Recently, salivating over quarterly profits of £605 million, he said: "Hopefully, we'll soon be getting some nice cold winters. That's what we'd like."

For him, cold winters mean huge profits for him and his top staff and the shareholders — as well as 8% VAT for the Treasury. For the old and the poor, cold winters mean rising bills they cannot afford. It means more deaths from hypothermia, in a country which has the highest death rate from this cause already. It sums up what this sick society is all about — the callous greed of the boss class.

Obituary

We note the death of George Seldes, American radical journalist at the age of 104.

Born in 1890 in an anarchist colony set up by his father in New Jersey, Seldes got a job as a journalist. One of his first jobs was to report on the rape of a saleswoman by the son of a department store owner. The story was never used, and the space was used to sell the store more ads under the threat of blackmail.

Recalling this 80 years later, Seldes' voice still shook with anger. Working in Italy, he was able to gather enough material on Mussolini to write a hard-hitting biography *Sawdust Caesar*.

Returning from Spain after the Civil War, he was so disgusted by the American establishment press that he de-

ACF pamphlets in Serbo-Croat

Thanks to the efforts of comrades in Yugoslavia we now have translations of our pamphlets *As We See It* and *The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation* available in Serbo-Croat.

If you know anybody who speaks Serbo-Croat in Britain, or you have contacts in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Slovenia or Macedonia where Serbo-Croat is understood then why not send them copies. They are available for 50p plus post from the London ACF address c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1.

Similarly we have a Greek translation of *As We See It*. If you can circulate this among the Greek-speaking population here, or you have contacts in Greece or Cyprus, then why not send for a copy? 50p plus post from London address. (A Portuguese translation of our *Aims and Principles* is also available for 20p plus postage).

ORGANISE!

ORGANISE! IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF). *Organise!* is a quarterly theoretical journal published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals.

All articles in the magazine are by ACF members unless signed. Some reflect ACF policy and others open up debate in undiscussed areas, helping us to develop our ideas further.

Please feel welcome to contribute articles to *Organise!* as long as they don't conflict with our Aims and Principles we will publish them. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all.)

Deadlines for next issue are 2nd September for features and reviews, and 9th September for letters and news. All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:

ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Sell *Organise!*

ALTHOUGH OUR SALES are rising, we need to keep boosting circulation, so try and take a bundle to sell to friends and workmates. By selling *Organise!* you can help our ideas to reach more and more people.

Write for *Organise!* You can help to make *Organise!* yours by writing letters and articles.

Subscribe to *Organise!* Why not take out a sub to *Or-*

ganise! Better still take out a supporters' sub. Get your friends to subscribe or treat them to a sub.

Organise! will improve through a two-way process of criticism and feedback, and will better reflect the reality of struggle through readers communicating with us. Please write in with your ideas.

Please send all feedback, contributions for *Organise!*, requests for papers and Press Fund money (payable to ACF) to the London address.

Organise! back issues

BACK ISSUES OF *Organise!* (from issues 19-35) are still available from the London address. They cost 20p each plus SAE:

- Issues 25, 30, 32, 33 and 36 are sold out.
- Issue 26: Women and revolution; Direct action.
- Issue 27: LA riots; Yugoslavia; Malcolm X.
- Issue 28: Recession; Detective fiction.

- Issue 29: Debate on the unions; Italian workers organise.
- Issue 31: Somalia; Travellers; Natural laws.
- Issue 35: Rwanda; Italy; Carmageddon; Poetry and revolution.
- Issue 37: Pornography debate; Booze, cigs and dope; Moral panics.
- Issue 38: Militarism; Overpopulation myth; Cuba; Sport.

Alternatively send us a fiver and we'll send you one of everything plus whatever else we can find lying around.

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WANT TO JOIN THE ACF? WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

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I would like more information about the Anarchist Communist Federation

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Anarchist Communist Federation

THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION is an organisation of class struggle anarchists.

We have members and groups throughout Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales. Please write to the national address if you want to be put in contact.

Press Fund

An encouraging response to our last Press Appeal. £60 from Sheffield; £168 from East London; £50 Northumberland; £75 Central London; £20 Greece; £6 Bognor.

Thanks to all your generous donations this *Organise!* has a colour cover. But we still need money to make sure *Organise!* keeps coming out, our pamphlet publishing venture

carries on, and our new posters and stickers appear. And we can have a colour cover every issue, not just one off. So rush us any sum, no matter how large or how small, to us. Everything will be gratefully received. Send us cheques, POs, IMOs, stamps, diamond necklaces, gold doubloons! You can even send us a standing order to our account. ALL donations to London address.

London ACF: Open Discussion Meetings

First Thursday of every month, 8pm at Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont St, London WC1. Nearest tube: Russell Square.

August 3rd: Criminal Justice Act — What Next?

Sept 7th: What's Wrong with Unions?

Oct 5th: Counter Culture or Culture of Resistance

IMPORTANT! The new national address for the ACF is: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX. This is the same address as correspondence for *Organise!* and for ACF (London).