

★ Liberation ★

PAPER OF THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION

20p

**DEMONSTRATE
AGAINST APARTHEID**
LONDON SATURDAY 28 JUNE
RALLY HYDE PARK 11-12
ACF members and support-
ers assemble 11am outside
Odeon cinema, Oxford St.

JUNE 1986 NUMBER ONE

SOLIDARITY CAN SMASH APARTHEID

The media has made great play of the recent Tokyo summit. Certainly it was an impressive affair - the political leaders of the world's greatest industrial powers gathering together in order to reach joint decisions. And their mutual opposition to what they called "state-sponsored terrorism" naturally shows them to be sane, rational and humane ... or does it?

The seven politicians in Tokyo discussed the issue of terrorism at some length and named several governments as responsible for encouraging and financing terrorist activity, particularly those of Libya and Syria. But they ignored the state terrorism carried out by other governments; governments whose terrorist activities coincide with the interests of the major capitalist states.

Foremost among these state terrorists must be the apartheid regime in South Africa. Under increasing pressure to dismantle a system founded on the most extreme and ugly racism, the Botha regime repeatedly unleashes an army and police force noted for their brutality upon the mass of the South African population. The true number of black people murdered by these uniformed terrorists will probably never be known, although the figure undoubtedly runs into thousands.

Apartheid terrorism was not condemned by the Tokyo summit because the racist state is a key link in the chain of world capitalism.



The voice of black resistance is louder than ever but solidarity is still vital.

In an increasingly rickety world economy, the super-exploitation of South Africa's black population means super-profits and assured security for the thousands of companies that invest in apartheid. And at the same time, apartheid itself depends on that investment for survival.

In the final analysis, only the mass action of the black working class, based upon their workplaces and communities, can finally destroy the revolting edifice that is the South African state. The rising power of the new black unions and the increasing strength of the township organisations are step along that road.

But we still have a vital part to play in the same struggle. Apartheid lives on a diet of international capital and a huge proportion of that capital flows from Britain. Our actions have the potential to cut off the supply and undermine the racist state.

Our solidarity can smash apartheid. We must step up the pressure NOW.

A British Chernobyl? TURN TO PAGE 2

comment

A British Chernobyl?

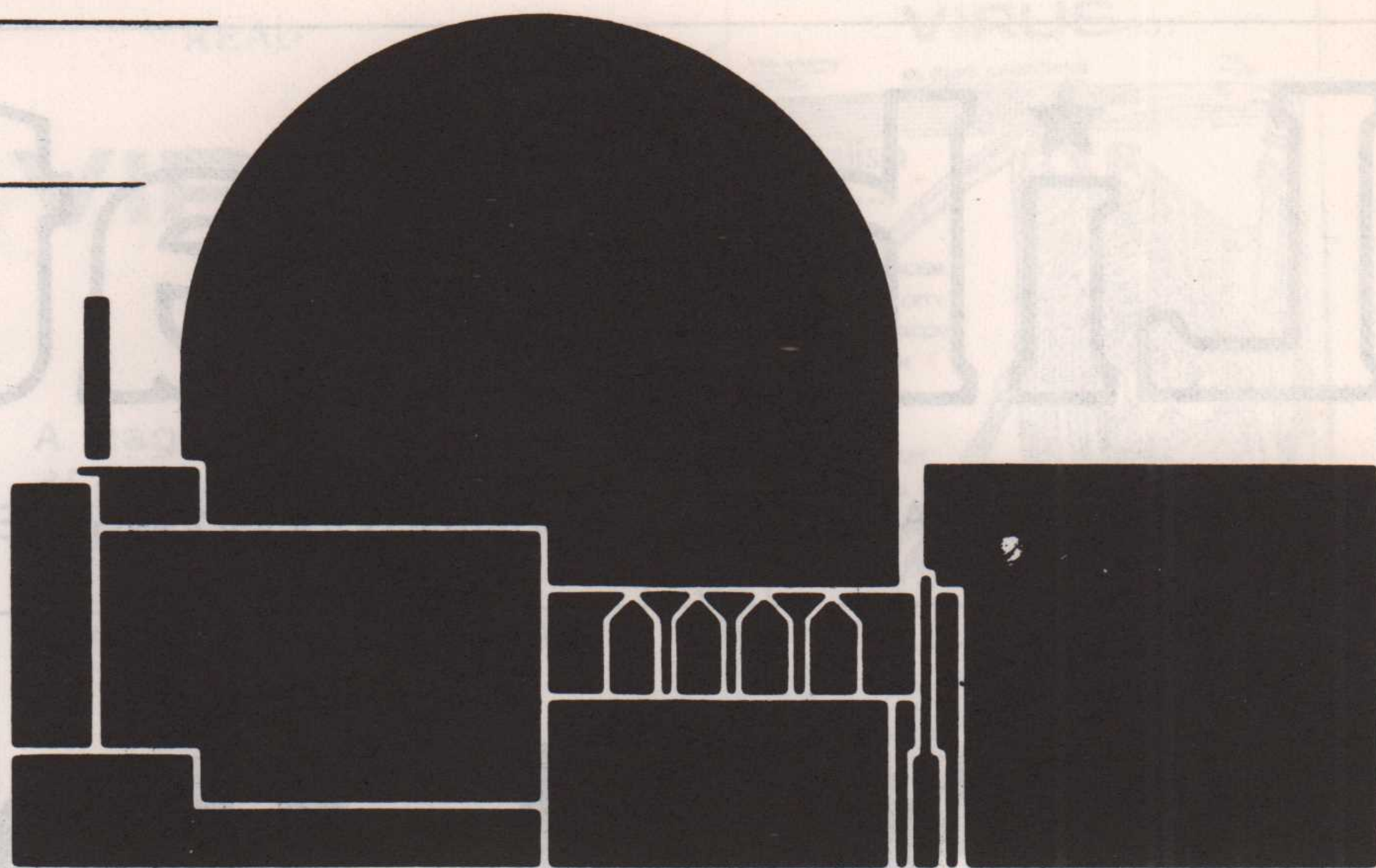
As reports came in detailing the horrific results of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, the Tories and the nuclear industry bosses were rallying round to reassure the rest of us.

The Chernobyl disaster left a cloud of radioactive dust stretching from Tokyo to Glasgow. In Western Europe alone, more than 8,000 people may die of cancer as a direct consequence of the accident. Yet Thatcher's response was to sneer at "backward Russian technology". Meanwhile the vice-chair of the Highland Regional Council, John Robertson, attempted a political stunt by drinking a jar of rainwater collected near the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant at Dounreay, in Caithness. And all in the hope of deflecting the public reaction against the government's commitment to nuclear power.

All the public statements were at pains to stress that nuclear plants in Britain are far safer than the Chernobyl reactor. But just over a week after the accident it was revealed that there had been a fire in the nuclear power station at Heysham and that an attempt has been

made to cover up the leakage of radioactive gas from the Dungeness power station in Kent. Added to the appalling safety record of the Sellafield reprocessing plant, these incidents show the reassurances of the Tories and the nuclear bosses for what they really are - a pack of lies.

This should come as no great shock to most people. The presence of the nuclear industry in Britain has spawned another industry devoted to covering up the dangers. The National Radiation Protection Board (NRPB) is supposed to be independent of both the government and the nuclear industry. The reality is rather different. In Scotland, the NRPB, along with other authorities, announced that there was no need for concern following the Chernobyl accident, as radiation levels were well below the danger threshold. But when Cookridge Hospital in Leeds was asked, it turned out that the safe limit was less than half the amount stated by the NRPB. And following the news announcement on 11 May that milk was "safe to drink", a scientist was unofficially



quoted as saying, "It clogs the drains up so badly it's cheaper to drink it."

Could there be a British Chernobyl? The safety record at British nuclear plants doesn't inspire any confidence. The grave concern of many engineers and construction workers at nuclear sites speaks for itself. Many plants are ageing and increasingly dangerous. It is clearly only a matter of time before such a catastrophe occurs.

Yet the government has made cuts in the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, the body responsible for maintaining a check on safety at nuclear sites and the Central Electricity Generating Board has been putting off nuclear repairs to save cash.

There have, of course, been some encouraging trends in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. In Britain, as elsewhere, there has been a great upsurge of hostility to the nuclear industry. The response of those organisations most capable of turning that mass

feeling into concrete opposition, on the other hand, has been pathetic.

The Labour Party has prevaricated throughout and has only committed itself to halting Britain's nuclear programme. No mention has been made of shutting down the existing reactors. And in view of Labour's past record in government, we cannot really expect them to hold to the limited promises they have made. CND, steadfastly maintaining its stance as a "single-issue" campaign, has effectively remained silent on the question of the catastrophe and its supporters appear to be in a state of paralysis.

So where does this leave us? It is obvious that the apparent political giants are merely seven-stone weaklings, when it comes to organising a challenge to the state's nuclear mania. But we don't need Charles Atlas to provide us with a solution. Instead we need a democratic, committed, fighting socialist movement. In a word, we need anarchism.

This Britain...

Tory Councillors, as we all know, are decent people. That is why Rochester councillor, Eddie Brennan, is a landlord, providing housing for those less fortunate than himself...

John and Trina Johnstone, both unemployed and with two children, pay Cllr Brennan £45 a week for the privilege of living in one of his basement flats. They have had to paint the walls themselves to cover black mould. When they moved in, the ceiling was in such a bad state that most of their food was covered by plaster dust. Their 15-month-old son has to sleep in a cupboard because the flat is too tiny to hold a bed for him.

Brennan commented: "Why don't this couple go somewhere else if they are not happy?" But then, he's probably never tried looking for accommodation while unemployed. He also described their complaints as "the height of irresponsibility".



Brennan and Shrapnell

Meanwhile another Medway Towns landlord, Michael Shrapnell, wants to set up an action group to protect local landlords and landladies from their tenants. Shrapnell believes that Medway is turning into a "parasites' paradise". Perhaps he should meet Eddie Brennan.

"It's no accident that in Britain the aristocracy - and not just the titles but the people who own Britain - are the worst perverts. I can give you an example: when I left school in 1968, I got a temporary job for a week at the Royal Agricultural Show near Coventry, cleaning the toilets. There are different toilets for each class and I and this other guy had to do the male toilets.

"The ordinary toilets, no problem. But as soon as you got to the ones for the millionaire farmers and Lord this or that, you could guarantee - we even caught one guy doing it who was a Lord... They would sit perched above the cistern so that all their faeces would go all down the wall and across the floor.

"It was disgusting and really bizarre... and the female toilets were the same. And some of the little old ladies who cleaned them had worked for these people as chamber maids and they said they do it in their own houses too, because there's always somebody like us to clean it up."

Genesis P Orridge of the band *Psychic TV*, interviewed in *New Musical Express*

First the Westland affair. Then Chernobyl. And now another crisis to set our rulers reeling.

A certain exclusive St James' club has just employed its first female member of staff ever. But staff have always been called George, whatever their real name. So the arrival of a woman set a problem for the club membership. What were they going to call her?

Heads were scratched. Letters were written. Weeks passed before a solution was found. They would call her "Georgina".

All of which says a great deal about public school education and the fact that these people frequently make decisions affecting us all.

And the name of the club? Pratts.

Murdoch's mercenaries

As everyone knows, Britain now possesses its very own riot police. We've seen them at work during the miners' strike, the urban uprisings and at Wapping. Incidentally, they're called riot police because when they go into action, they beat people up and cause general mayhem. Armed with truncheons and protected with helmets and shields, the riot police have for months been protecting Rupert Murdoch's right to sack his workforce and publish his poisonous rags.

Now you would think that spending evenings on the picket lines, rather than down the pub, would piss the police off. You would be wrong. The police support Murdoch up to the hilt because he is backed by

Thatcher. She pays these pin-head brained pigs a small fortune every month and Thatcher supports Murdoch because he sings her praises and shoves out the reactionary shit that she loves. And our gentle bobbies in turn get their excitement from reading Murdoch's praises in *The Sun* and ogling at the "page 3 girls". Cosy arrangement, isn't it?

You can see why the police get so enthusiastic down on the picket lines. The average weekly wage for a constable at April 1985 was £309. This compares with £169 for ambulance staff and £26-50 for YTS "trainees". It's all a matter of priorities and muscle doesn't come cheap.

Where We Stand

We believe that:

1. Capitalism and other social systems, in which wealth and power are the property of a ruling class/elite, must be destroyed.
2. Reformist and statist solutions will necessarily fail and therefore revolution is the only possible means of achieving anarchist-communism. How far such a revolution will be peaceful depends upon the degree to which the ruling class clings on to power through violence and state repression.
3. Genuine liberation can only come about through the self activity of the great mass of the population. We regard parliament, representative democracy and political vanguardism as being obstacles to a self-managed society. Institutions and organisations which attempt to mediate in the fight against domination cannot succeed. Trade unionism, as it is presently constituted, plays an important part in maintaining class exploitation, insofar as it regulates and justifies it through collective bargaining and bureaucratic structures. Nevertheless, it is important to work within the trade union movement, in order to build up a rank-and-file workers' movement which encourages workers' control of struggle and cuts across sectional boundaries.
4. Workers and other oppressed sections of society will, in times of revolutionary upheaval, create their own democratic institutions, whether they be based on the workplace or the community. To this end we encourage the creation of organs of struggle based on the rank and file, independent of political parties.
5. Pure spontaneity is unlikely to be sufficient to overthrow entrenched class domination. Anarchists must indicate the libertarian alternative to class societies, participate as anarchists in struggle and organise on a federative basis to assist in the revolutionary process.
6. Capitalism is international and needs to be fought internationally. We therefore try to maintain contact with as many anarchist-communists as possible in overseas countries as the preliminary stage to the creation of an anarchist international.
7. We do not simply seek the abolition of class differences, for inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, age, sexuality and gender. Personal relationships are now often based on domination and submission. We seek not only an economic revolution but a social and cultural revolution as well, involving a thorough-going change in attitudes and organisation of everyday lives to free us in our social and personal interactions.
8. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.



For details of the ACF send this form to the National Secretary, ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Name.....

Address.....

local groups

MEDWAY: Meet alternate Wednesdays at 'The Rendezvous', Watts St (off Ordnance St), Chatham, 7.30 pm
25 June: 1936 the Spanish Revolution.

LONDON: Meet alternate Tuesdays. Write c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, E1 7QX

Other groups and individuals exist in Canterbury, York, Salford, Lancaster, Crawley, Luton and Broadstairs.

notices

Will any comrades attending the Glastonbury CND Festival please contact the paper?

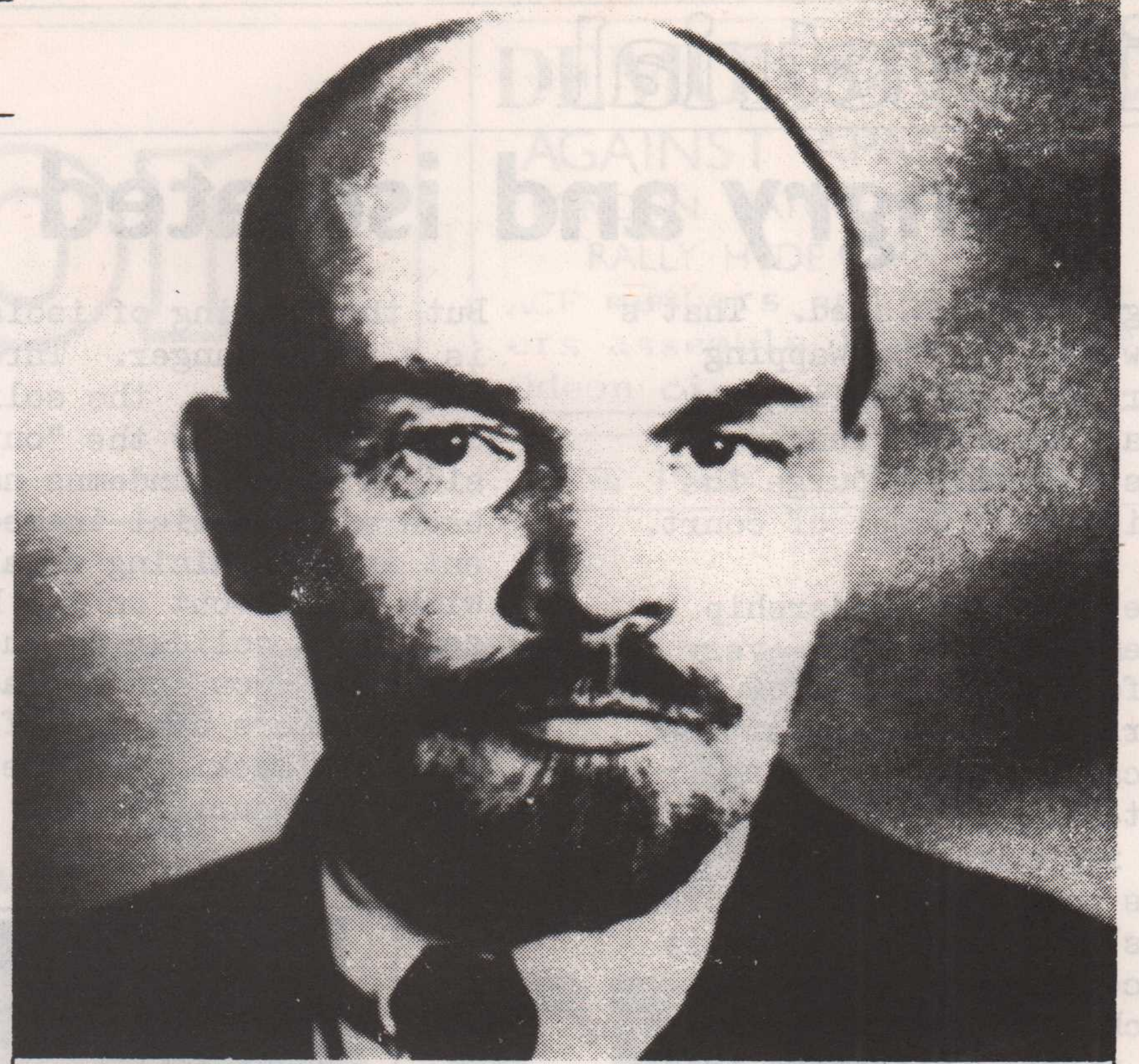
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The Two Communisms

On the face of it you'd think that communism would be irresistible to the vast majority of the population. After all, communism is supposed to mean that everyone enjoys a very high standard of living in a system of freedom, fairness and equality. In reality, of course, the word 'communism', in the minds of most working people, is more likely to be equated with totalitarianism, prison camps, low living standards and shoddy goods. The slogan, "If you like communism so much, why don't you go to Russia?" has been heard by everyone many, many times. Communism is a dirty word and not simply because of ruling class propaganda.

Communism, which was once an ideal of the oppressed, has been hi-jacked by the Marxists and, in its Leninist form, has meant the replacement of one (capitalist) ruling class by another (bureaucratic) one. The Soviet system, as promoted by a succession of bureaucrats, is class rule in a far more oppressive form than, say, European capitalism. Stalinism is not, as the Trotskyists argue, the unfortunate outcome of a certain sequence of events - civil war after the October revolution of 1917, capitalist intervention and encirclement, the isolation of the Russian state etc. It directly springs from Marxism itself. The Soviet system, with all of its evils has been reproduced many times over from Cuba to Korea with only minor variations.

That Marxist communism would inevitably lead to oppression was predicted by the anarchist, Bakunin, decades before the Russian or any other Marxist revolution took place. Marxism with its strongly authoritarian elements would give rise to new, more deadly, forms of oppression rather than abolish it, Bakunin declared. Of course, he was right. In the Communist Manifesto, written by Marx and Engels in 1847, there was a demand for the centralisation and state ownership and control of the factories, communications networks etc and the creation of "industrial armies" of workers. Just over 70 years later, Trotsky and Lenin put these ideas into practice and enslaved the population of the largest country in the world. Trotsky, echoing Marx, called for military discipline in the factories



Is this really the true face of communism?

and industrial conscription. Lenin, meanwhile, who thought that socialism should copy capitalist forms and practices, openly argued for the creation of 'state capitalism' in Russia.

Marxism talks the language of freedom (well, sometimes) but by its actions, uses centralised power to dominate the working class. Marxism has, in the popular mind, become associated with communism. But there is another 'communism' which avoids the obsession with power, parties, leaderships and bureaucrats. There is anarchist communism.

We anarchist communists believe that the working classes of the world can and must free themselves from capitalism by their own hands. We reject the idea that intellectuals or self-appointed leaders 'know better'; they don't. We, as anarchists, assist in the struggle against capitalism but do not try to take it over. Of course we have views and we try to get them accepted by the working class but we don't seek positions of leadership. We are part of the working class and participate in its actions.

Anarchist or Libertarian communism has faith in the working class and its ability to create a classless society, free of oppression. We don't argue, as the Marxists do, for an intermediary stage of the so-called 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. All dictatorships deny freedom and override individual rights. The Marxist dictatorships of the proletariat have proved themselves to be, as Bakunin predicted, mere dictatorships of political parties. No, we demand full and immediate workers' and community control over our lives. We realise that centralised power inevitably degenerates into tyranny and offer instead the prospect of free federations of workers' power in which decisions flow from

the ordinary citizens, through their organisations which are subject to direct democracy.

Our 'communism is based upon principle. The Marxists take on or discard 'principles' at will to suit their immediate interests. We respect the rights of individuals, groups and minorities - to the Marxists this is individualism. We also demand full economic, social and political equality which the Marxists consider to be utopian. And we base our perspective on class unity on an international scale - the Marxists have only ever cynically used internationalism to pursue their own ends.

This year marks the anniversary of the Spanish Revolution of 1936, in which, briefly, the possibilities of anarchist communism were partly realised. Especially regarding Catalonia, the most industrialised area of Spain, the anarchist workers took over their workplaces from their bosses and collectivised agriculture. The rich were removed from their positions as exploiters and genuine direct democracy was introduced. Workers control of industry meant the closing down of inefficient and dangerous workplaces and a superior system of agricultural production was introduced. The power of religion and superstition was erased and male domination was challenged in one of the most male chauvinistic countries of the world. Although ultimately, free communism was destroyed by a combination of fascist terror and Stalinist treachery, the example of anarchist Spain marks the most far reaching and liberating revolution ever achieved.

The world has come to know the reality of Marxist communism. The time has come to try the libertarian alternative.

industrial

Angry and isolated

Angry and isolated. That's how many of the Wapping strikers are feeling now that the SOGAT leadership has decided to purge the union's contempt of court.

The national leadership seems to be making every effort to back out of the strike. The clearest indication of this is their interest in Murdoch's offer of redundancy payments plus his cast-off printing presses. If such an offer is accepted, of course, Murdoch will have won everything he wants. Effective trade unionism will have been excluded from the Wapping plant. And the way will be open for other Fleet Street employers to follow his example.

There is a current of feeling among the printworkers that the strike will effectively have to be started again. This would mean clearing out the old committees, changing tactics and bringing in strikers to run the dispute themselves. The idea of bringing out the rest of Fleet Street is also spreading and Brenda Dean's position is being challenged. If even one part of this is put into practice, it will be an important step forward by the strikers.

But the feeling of isolation is a grave danger. Throughout the strike, the solidarity shown by the "outsiders" Dean condemns has been an essential ingredient in maintaining morale. With a sell-out on the horizon, that solidarity must be built upon and spread, if the strikers are to defeat the backtracking of the union bureaucrats.

Round the unions

AEU - A VICTORY FOR THE RIGHT

The new president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Bill Jordan, is different from his right-wing predecessor only in being younger.

Jordan was a full-time official in the Midlands for ten years and prides himself on being a "moderate". In other words, he supports anti-union laws, is in favour of taking cash for postal ballots and would like to see a rerun of the Social Contract of the 70s, when union leaders joined bosses and the Labour government in hammering workers' living standards. Needless to say, he has had the support of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley.



Bill Jordan

Yet Jordan won the presidential postal ballot by a fairly narrow margin, with only 55.5 percent of the vote against the 44.5 percent in favour of the Broad Left candidate, John Tocher. And only 27.5 percent of the union membership bothered to vote. Jordan's victory was largely dependent on rank-and-file passivity.

That passivity must be broken if the right's victory is to be reversed. The task is important. Jordan has made no secret of his intentions to smash union militants and to merge with the EETPU. As president he threatens even the limited democracy that the AEU retains.



Agree? Disagree? Then write to Liberation, c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1.

READ VIRUS

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Marching towards a sell-out?

BETA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

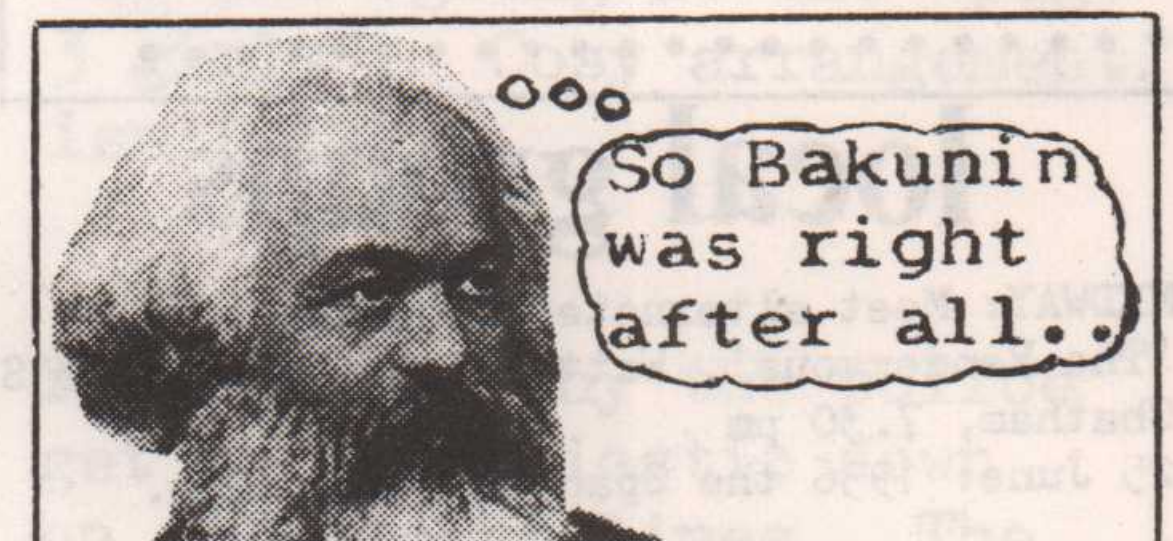
On 18 - 21 April this year, the Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance held its annual conference in Blackpool. I was not allowed to attend - one General Secretary being phobic about my influence - but reports have reached me that most of the debates were reruns of last year's.

However, one item was startlingly new: the platform commenced proceedings by stating that many of the policies up for debate were out of order, since the NEC (a small group of Joint General Secretaries arse lickers) is the supreme body administering the union not conference.

Much time was wasted in procedural debate on whether conference should hear the union solicitor's view on this (there being two contradictory rules - one saying conference is the supreme policy making body, the other that the NEC runs the union. Guess which John Williams, solicitor, backed!).

The result of all this wrangling was that very little time remained for policy discussion - the platform's revenge for last year's defeats.

A motion calling for the Joint General Secretaries' resignation, however, did have plenty of time but what with a very highly emotional outburst from one JGS, biased chairing and much personal abuse of the proposer, who as portrayed as a mad intellectual from the loony left, it failed. Many delegates returned home vowing that next year it will succeed. One branch secretary is counting the days: "Tony Hearn has only 360 days left and falling...."



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