

# BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has once again hit the headlines with the recent cyclone. Over 125,000 people have lost their lives and 10 million people are homeless. Cyclones are not new to Bangladesh; there were 37 such cyclones between 1960-1981 with 386,200 killed. In 1974, Bangladesh was at the centre of media attention when famine killed an unofficially estimated 1 million people.

These events, helped by the presentation in the media, lead people to believe that Bangladesh is naturally prone to such disasters. Many in the West have grown accustomed to see large death figures associated with Bangladesh and either ignore it or put the relief agencies into operation yet again and appeal for aid for the "poor victims". However Bangladesh is not, in fact, the only country in the world to experience cyclones. The U.S.A., Caribbean and the Pacific all have regular storms which are a feature of the tropics. The difference is in the amount of lives lost. The Philippines had 39 cyclones between 1960 and 1981 but had only 5,650 dead. In Darwin, Australia only 49 people died in a similar cyclone to the one in Bangladesh.

## Poor

The Philippines has a longer coastline than Bangladesh, but it is well-protected by reefs, mangroves and trees. Bangladesh's coastline is not so protected because of deforestation and erosion. Poor peasants have chopped down the trees both on the plains and up in the Himalayas in their desperation to make a living in a system where much of their crop is given to absentee landlords.

The result is an exposed flood plain that is defenceless against cyclones coming in from the ocean and floods descending from the mountains. The peasants do not have the means to build elaborate flood protec-

tion devices and do not want to leave the cyclone-prone areas because there is nothing for them anywhere else.

## Cyclone

The Philippines and Australia are countries with a more highly developed infrastructure. The Philippines have better communications, an early warning system and a community help organisation. In Darwin, the emergency service was able to evacuate almost the entire population before the cyclone hit. Therefore the richer the country, the better able it is to save lives. The same applies when examining who actually dies within a country. In general, the poorer the people, the more likely they are to be the victims.

In La Paz, Mexico most of the 1976 cyclone victims lived in the shanty towns outside the city. Poor people are less likely to have protection, to be warned or evacuated in the event of an emergency.

## Usual

The usual appeals have been made for relief aid. The rich pat themselves on the back because of their great "generosity". But there are several questions to be asked in relation to this relief aid. Firstly, the media gives the impression that disaster victims are helplessly waiting for the West to come to their aid. In fact, local people quickly organise themselves, to help each other survive and to rebuild. It is the victims who do most of the work and who bear the expense. Aid agencies often do not know the local conditions and provide totally inappropriate aid.

For example, pork sausages were sent to the Moslem Kurds, tea, tissues and tampons were provided by one British charity, and the EEC once sent powdered milk to a place where cows were plentiful but where there was no water.

## Protection

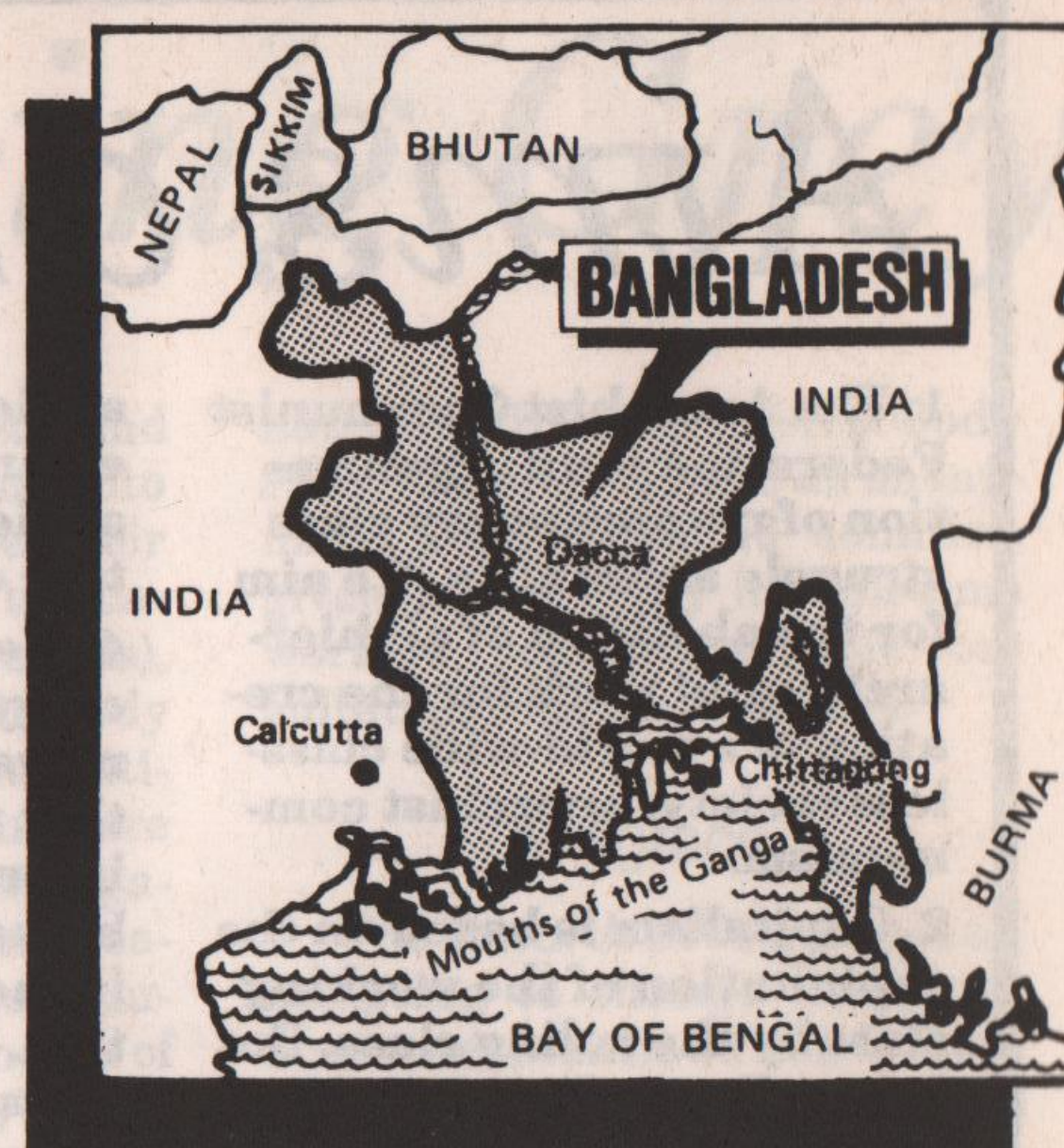
In the same period a not so pro-American leftist government in Bangladesh clashed with the USA over food and in the year preceding the 1974 famine, food aid dropped by 83%. The USA insisted that Bangladesh stop exporting jute to Cuba and allow for more private sector investment. While negotiations were going on, people were dying in famines and floods. The government of Bangladesh soon gave in to the US demands.

Saudi Arabia is providing \$100 million of the \$137 million in aid so far collected for Bangladesh. Their "generosity" was justified in terms of helping their "Moslem brothers". If the cyclone had hit Buddhist Thailand, the \$100 million would not have been forthcoming.

## Natural

Natural disasters like cyclones, earthquakes and volcano eruptions are not something that people can do away with. However, death and hardship could be avoided if protection of the environment and of the mass of the people were a priority. However the system that dominates the globe is able to mobilise vast resources for war and destruction but is unable to make more than a token effort to save thousands of people from death. It has no interest in doing so. In the Gulf War, oil and strategic and economic interests were worth both billions of dollars and thousands of lives.

The people dead in Bangladesh have no such value to the world's rulers. It is easy to dismiss what happened in Bangladesh as another natural disaster but the only real disaster is capitalism and we are all its victims.



# ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

# DESPAIR...



# OR REVOLT!

Magazine of the  
Anarchist Communist Federation

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COUNCIL TAX  
POLICE  
PITS  
GREENS  
SURVIVALISM  
ANC  
BANGLADESH  
KURDISTAN  
IRAQ  
INTERVIEW





# 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.)

Due to summer break, the next issue will be out in early October. The deadlines are August 13th for features and reviews, and September 4th for letters and news.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:

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

## Who We Are...

## Help Organise! to grow

WE FEEL THAT *Organise!* has an important role to play in the growth of revolutionary activity and ideas in these exciting times. We know from rising sales that many of our readers feel the same.

But we need your support to help keep the furnace burning.

Sell *Organise!*

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

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

### Feedback

*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.

The ACF promotes the building of a strong and active anarchist movement in Britain and internationally and has contact with like-minded anarchists overseas.

For all contact write to:  
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## ACE pamphlets

Due to the massive demand for our excellent pamphlets, they are currently all out of print.

We hope to bring new titles out in the near future as well as re-prints of some of our out of print titles.

Details will be in the October issue of *Organise!*

## PRESS FUND

THE PRESS FUND exists so you can contribute to the everyday running and production costs of *Organise!* Money is always needed for printing, postage, layout materials and a host of other things. We also want to see *Organise!* produced more frequently, with more pages and with a greater print run. Money is also needed to finance more pamphlets.

Thanks to all those who contributed to the Press Fund this issue: 70 pounds – Gillingham; 50 pence – Cardiff; 50 pounds – East London; 10 pounds – Nottingham.

Meanwhile, if there are any socially aware millionaire revolutionaries about ...

## Organise! Back Issues



Back issues of *Organise!* (from issue 14 to issue 22 inclusive) are still available, from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virus*. They cost 40p & sae each and include:

- *Organise!* 17: Anarchy in the Eastern bloc; Cambodia; Militant and the poll tax.
- *Organise!* 18: Eastern Europe; ambulance crews; Gerry Healy's death.
- *Organise!* 19: Poll tax and prison riots; Mandela myth; ecology and class.
- *Organise!* 20: Class struggle in Ireland; Romania; poll tax update.
- *Organise!* 21: Gulf war; Russia in crisis; Brixton.
- *Organise!* 22: Recession; poll tax; warfare state; Commune; Asia.

## A Fairer Tax?

The defeat of the poll tax was quite rightly seen as a victory for the anti-poll tax movement and for the working class. However, the victory will be short-lived. We may have got rid of the poll tax but we haven't got rid of taxes in general, or the system that makes ordinary working class people pay for whatever "benefits" they may get from the welfare state.

This year's poll tax has been cut by 140 pounds to defuse the issue before getting rid of the poll tax altogether. However, the 140 pounds had to be made up from somewhere else and it certainly wasn't the rich who would pay. Instead, VAT was put up by 2.5%. Taxes on spending are well-known for being "regressive" meaning that they hit the people on the lowest incomes the hardest since it is this group that spends a greater proportion of its income. The rich put more of their money into investments or can go abroad to shop if it suits them. So, although we are supposedly 140 pounds better off, the increase in prices resulting from VAT increases and the increase on cigarettes, alcohol and petrol will soon do away with any gains. In addition, many didn't actually pay the poll tax, but it's difficult to create a mass movement that would stop paying VAT.

The proposals for changes in local taxation are in the planning stages but it's not obvious that ordinary working class people will be much better off. The tax will combine the previous rates system with the idea that everyone should pay something. People with higher valued property will pay more than those in low valued property or council property. The poll tax element has been maintained in that the tax will also be based on the number of adults living in the property so that people living alone will pay less.

On the surface this seems "fairer" but then as with the reduction in the poll tax this year, the money has to be got from somewhere.

### RICH

Since it won't come from the rich, it's more of a battle between who in the working class and the lower middle class will bear the burden of taxation. As anarchist-communists we must therefore be very wary about getting involved in debates about which tax is "fairer". Anything that puts more money in the hands of working class people at the expense of the rich is to be welcomed, but this is rarely the case. The anti-poll tax movement may have put a stop to



a direct assault on the working class but it has not led to any redistribution of income from rich to poor.

If income tax is raised on the rich, they have their tax havens and creative accountants. If companies are taxed, they just raise the prices we have to pay. If landlords are taxed, they raise rents. And if taxes aren't increased they cut services that working class people rely on.

### SOCIETY

As long as society is controlled by a ruling class which has power to twist anything to their advantage, we will be paying taxes to support their system. If the State does provide anything remotely useful like the health service, they make sure we pay out a large part

of our miserable wages for it.

Taxes have been around as long as class society. Their main purpose has always been to extract the fruits of labour from working people. For the benefit of the privileged. In Egypt, it was the common people that were forced to build the pyramids. In the Middle Ages it was the peasants who had to give some of their labour and produce to the lord in return for "protection".

Today we pay a whole range of taxes that supports the royal family, war and the military, the police and courts and a lot of bureaucrats who sit around thinking of new ways to get money out of us.

Yes, we have got rid of the poll tax, but we are still being ripped off. There is no such thing as a fair tax.

## THE LONG ARM OF THE STATE

The Guildford 4 and the Birmingham 6 have been released. The police involved in these cases are being disciplined – or not, as the case maybe – and there have been calls for the disciplining of the Chief justice, Lane. We all know, or should do, that the 4, the 6, the Maguires, the Winchester 3, the Tottenham 3 and a host of others were imprisoned to satisfy the vampirish needs of the governmental system.

It needs external and internal threats to keep themselves in power. The carefully sustained and continually updated threat of the Criminal, the Terrorist, the Red, the Anarchist achieves a specific set of aims:

- 'National Unity' can be achieved against the uncivilised barbarians, the Argy,

the Muslim, the Irish

- new repressive laws and codes of practice can be brought in and continually justified as with the Prevention of Terrorism Act
- the forces of law and order can be justified
- people are force fed reasons to feel attacked, crime is laid at the door of "outsiders" people "higher in the social hierarchy have those "lower" down to take any blame.

Our beloved boys and girls in blue can run around shooting young children, shooting women in their own home, literally frightening others to death, drowning people in Huddersfield, strangling them in Wolverhampton, shooting them in Hackney police station, framing them left right and centre.

The West Midlands Police Serious Crimes Squad has been under investigation – what shock, what horror that people could think ill of our lovely coppers! The allegations have been for example:

- Inspector Paul Matthews. Forced to resign for disobeying orders (there's an oddity) Involved in framing Martin Foran, an anarchist activist, on robbery charges in 1985. The person robbed has always stated that it could not have been him.
- Detective Superintendent John Brown. Negligent. He loses notes, tortures defendants to extract confessions – by holding plastic bags over their heads – fabricates evidence, we are informed.
- Detective Sergeant Michael

Hornby. Subject of complaints. We are told he planted a shotgun on one defendant. Three trials collapsed in which he was involved.

- Detective Superintendent James Kelly. Reprimanded on 4 counts of discreditable conduct. Involved in the Birmingham 6 case, where he used assault to gain a confession.

### Shaky evidence

We have witnessed so many of these cases for years. Hundreds of cases during the Miners Strike, like the Orgreave rioters were



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# LESSONS OF POLL TAX VICTORY



Steve Nally and Tommy Sheridan in their working clothes, review the latest edition of *Militant*.

The poll tax has been beaten but limps along for the time being certain of its expiry. Now seems a reasonable time to analyse the impact of the poll tax and evaluate the lessons which flow from it.

First of all, whatever the alternatives that will come into operation, it must be accepted that the defeat of the tax marks a major victory for the working class. It was introduced as yet one more attack on the working class of Britain, shifting, as it did, the main burden of locally raised taxation from the rich and the middle class to the less well off. Some sections within the working class were

particularly badly hit, low paid workers, housewives, and many black people.

It was these people who most solidly resisted payment. They did so partly from an understanding of the nature of the poll tax, but mainly on the principle of "Can't Pay, Won't Pay". They simply refused to be impoverished further. What is more, by non-payment of any local tax, millions of working class people were actually better off in terms of their disposable income. With the exception of committed leftists most of those in the professional strata, despite any professed radical

## CONTINUING THE STRUGGLE

The poll tax has been beaten. Thatcher has gone down with the sinking ship. This is a victory for the millions of working class people who stood up and defied the tax. The first major victory after a decade of defeats. This is an excellent morale boost and a confidence builder for us all – a small taste of the changes we can achieve through mass political action. However we have only won a battle – not the war. We still have two more years of poll tax bills landing on our doormats, we will still be summonsed to court, still have to battle with bailiffs.

The ruling class strategy to split the movement was simple. Attack it. Political witch-hunting and criminalisation of those who fought back against the police at Trafalgar Square was to be used. Raids and jail sentences to intimidate and isolate the activists. The wedge of "law and order" to split the movement: ordinary citizens against violent extremists. Despite disgusting statements from Steve Nally and Tommy Sheridan, the anti-poll tax movement did not split. Millions of people in England and Wales followed the example of one million non-payers in Scotland and refused to pay.

With the tax beaten the mass involvement in the campaign has reduced. What is left is a small organised core of activists and millions of people who have lost all interest in the poll tax altogether.

They won't pay, return forms or even turn up to court but neither will they return to the streets and fight on this issue as they did a year ago. What we need now is an honest political debate within the shrinking number of committed activists, otherwise we'll just become an unpaid, overworked, over-stretched welfare service for the thousands facing bailiffs and ultimately jail. That we need to continue the fight until there is a complete amnesty for all non-payers and amnesty and release for those criminalised and imprisoned on anti-poll tax demonstrations is obvious. But we must see this as part of a much wider class struggle. What the anti-poll tax struggle has taught us is the power of autonomous grass roots organisation in the community and the workplace. It's 1:0 to us with the poll tax but we have to go much, much further yet.

## LONG ARM OF THE STATE

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thrown out of court because of shaky evidence. The government response was to bring in the Public Order Act to make it easier to convict.

The Hillsborough disaster was a huge own goal. The attempt to blame drunken hooligans by the police and the Sun for deaths caused by police incompetence was typical. The verdicts of accidental death were a further cover-up.

With monotonous and nauseating regularity police and courts conspire to punish victims of racist violence. To defend yourself against attack successfully it seems you have to be white, male and middle class – or a copper. The shoot-to-kill policy in Northern Ireland is still shrouded in mystery. The fiasco of the Wap-

ping cops, with their union bleating about the time taken to prosecute them, the now permanent Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, the Criminal Justice Bill are all further attempts by the rulers to permanently criminalise anyone it wishes.

Why do we let this go on? We suffer under harsher and harsher laws. We are fed a continuous stream of hysterical fairy stories by the media. We allow the police to kick us, shoot us, drown us, maim us, strangle us, frame us. We allow the courts to apply any prejudice they feel, the reactionary, racist, public school judge is all there is. Governments sit happily talking of rotten apples and find more justifications for harsher policing.

Enough!

views, overwhelmingly paid up.

Another important feature of the movement was its mass and generalised character. As the huge demonstrations showed, virtually every town and village in Britain had its anti-poll tax group. People who had never been to a political meeting in their lives turned up at hastily organised public meetings. Although, by and large, active support for local campaigns was not deep or consistent, people were willing to part with cash in order to maintain local activity. Despite the demonstrations, pickets, etc, the opposition retained a strongly individualised character. Each household decided independently whether or not to pay with little reference to outside developments. Even so, literally millions decided to risk the courts and not pay. It was this mass non-payment which finally scuppered the tax.

The role of local anti-poll tax groups was important. By simply having a public presence outside town halls or in the shopping areas, the local groups provided a focus for continued non-payment, encouragement, information, propaganda and advice. Unfortunately, in some areas the local groups became battlegrounds between competing Marxist-Leninist groups. *Militant*, the SWP and other Trotskyist groups used the movement to gain recruits, increase influence and sell papers. They manipulated, as far as they could, the movement for their own sectarian ends. Fortunately the movement was, when the occasion demanded it, big and independent enough to ignore them. The riot of March 31, 1990 was an example of this.

### Street Politics

The riot has been discussed in *Organise* no. 19 (back copies available) so I will not dwell on it here. However, a few comments are in order. Despite all the manoeuvring and denunciations by *Militant* robots like Steve Nally, the riot proved to be a turning point in the campaign. The demonstration was enormous but more importantly it was angry. And this anger erupted in the near insurrectionary events of March 31. The pound wobbled on the international money markets, the country was stunned and Thatcher for the first time looked vulnerable. For her, the riot marked the beginning of the end.

It is fitting that it should have been a riot and a poll tax riot at that that contributed to Thatcher's downfall. It was to contain spontaneous working class anger that the government had introduced its heavily repressive Public Order Act in 1986. As such it proved to be a failure, but as a means of exacting revenge it has worked well. On the basis of the flimsiest police

## Just the Pits

SINCE THE 1984-85 miners strike British Coal has shut literally dozens of pits. At the time it was feared that "rationalisation" would mean the closure of seventy pits, this figure has long since been passed. Huge coal fields such as South Wales are now more or less extinct, only the scars on the landscape remain.

Interestingly, although supply has decreased, demand has not. This has meant increasing imports which come from places as diverse as Columbia and South Africa. Increasingly, coal is coming in from Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. What all these countries have in common are

evidence many people have been imprisoned, especially through the magistrates courts.

### Labouring under Tories

Since Thatcher's removal by an increasingly nervous and unsure Tory parliamentary party, the poll tax continued to haunt them. Given that millions of people have got out of the habit of tamely paying local taxes, any new tax is unacceptable. The continued attachment to the poll tax of many Tory M.P.s also caused many problems in the new leadership.

The Labour Party has played its usual role throughout. Wedded to the constitution and legality, the party at all levels urged payment of the tax. It out-Toried the Tories in its condemnation of the anti-poll tax movement. Roy Hattersley played a particularly despicable role in his calls for imprisonment of poll tax rioters. Meanwhile Kinnock in his "Toy Town revolutionaries" speech tried to show just what a good little boy he is. Ironically, Labour may lose far more than the Tories over the poll tax. Not only have millions of Labour voters disregarded the Party's advice and not paid but also many have disappeared from the electoral rolls. Finally, Labour's alternative to the tax is likely to be as unpopular as any.

### Political Shift

There was a significant political shift as a result of the poll tax. The working class, dismissed by many as conservative and passive, has shown that it has the will to fight. Millions of "law-abiding" working class people are now resisting the law. Direct action outside of town halls and in Trafalgar Square has brought results and the parties of the ruling class, Tory, Labour and Liberal Democrat, are in disarray.

much abused workers. British miners have always been one of the most militant sections of industry and have achieved relatively good wage rates and safety conditions through their struggles. Although still a dangerous job their comrades in other nations receive very little money and are lucky if there are any safety measures. This allows their bosses to sell it at very low prices, making it economical to ship halfway round the world. It has also been a useful means for the British Government to prop up the economies of friendly regimes such as South Africa.

### Community

The closure of a pit can have substantial repercussions. When they were first opened towns developed around them. Slum conditions usually resulted from the pit owners slapping up housing at the lowest possible costs and then charging extortionate rent. Over the years community struggle improved their living conditions and other businesses moved into the area to supply the needs of the miners' families and also the colliery. When a pit is shut the whole town goes very quickly into recession, many businesses will either close or move taking any hope of alternative work with them. Once the dole queue is long enough the Government opens a business park allowing new industries to open up at very little cost. Most are hi-tech and labour intensive, they are in a position of total economic power and can force down the wages of their employees to a bare minimum. This is even assuming miners can retrain into totally different jobs. As often as not the new industries also bring in the workforce, still paying them a bare minimum on the basis that there are plenty of unemployed people in the area prepared to do the job.

### Votes

As ecological crisis looms it is generally accepted the future of power generation is in renewables and coal's days are numbered. However, don't be fooled by the Government, their motives had nothing to do with environmental protection. In 1984 environmentalists were still seen as "annoying hippies" by the Government, there was certainly no votes in it. Their current excuse is that imported coal has less sulphur in it which they are obliged to reduce to help prevent acid rain caused partly by sulphur dioxide. This is a lie. When the agreement was reached the Government only agreed to fit Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) systems to six power



stations by 2003. If fitted to all power stations they would have reduced sulphur emissions by 90% which experts consider would be the required amount, and would have allowed the use of British coal. However, the programme has now been scrapped altogether as costs were too great to be borne by the newly privatised generating companies. Their figures only agreed to hold emissions at 1988 levels by 2003 – fifteen years to achieve nothing. They believed they could control the public by using low sulphur coal and increasing nuclear power which unfortunately for them and fortunately for us now lies in tatters. And is it really ecologically sound to ship a commodity halfway round the world that you have in abundance under your feet.

### Offensive

The miners strike was purely about smashing a militant section of the working class. As early as 1980 a leaked Government document was proposing massive increases in nuclear power to stave off strike action by miners or transport workers, and of course when the strike came, power stations were readily stocked with coal for months. The ruling class were allowed to go on the offensive and have been running rampage on the mining industry ever since. When closure comes now, many miners welcome it, fed up of a shit job and being treated like shit by bosses.

The industry has virtually been stripped to its most profitable bare minimum and will inevitably be privatised soon. Miners need to regroup quickly and organise for this new onslaught. Also other workers must learn the lessons. Transport workers still haven't felt the full force of the state ranged against them, but there is evidence that the Tories are manoeuvring for them and workers are increasingly angry at years of abuse. If this develops into confrontation let's make sure this is not another isolated struggle, but that the State feels the full force of Class War!



# MOHAWKS CONFRONT THE STATE

Last August in Canada, some four thousand troops and fourteen hundred armoured vehicles of the Canadian Army confronted native Mohawk people of the Kanesatake reservation in Oka, Quebec.

The events leading up to the crisis in Oka started on 9th March, 1990 when the municipality of Oka village declared an official lifting of a moratorium on golf course expansion. The golf course in question, along with threatened condominium construction was to extend across areas of forest known to the Mohawks as "The Pines" – land that has always been occupied by the Mohawk people. When the Canadian government realised that the Mohawks were prepared to stand determinedly for their right to their home, the Army was hurriedly called in and the tear gas, concussion grenades and automatic weapons of the provincial police were replaced with the razor wire, trenches and heavily armed troops and tanks of the Army, which invaded Oka on 20th August.

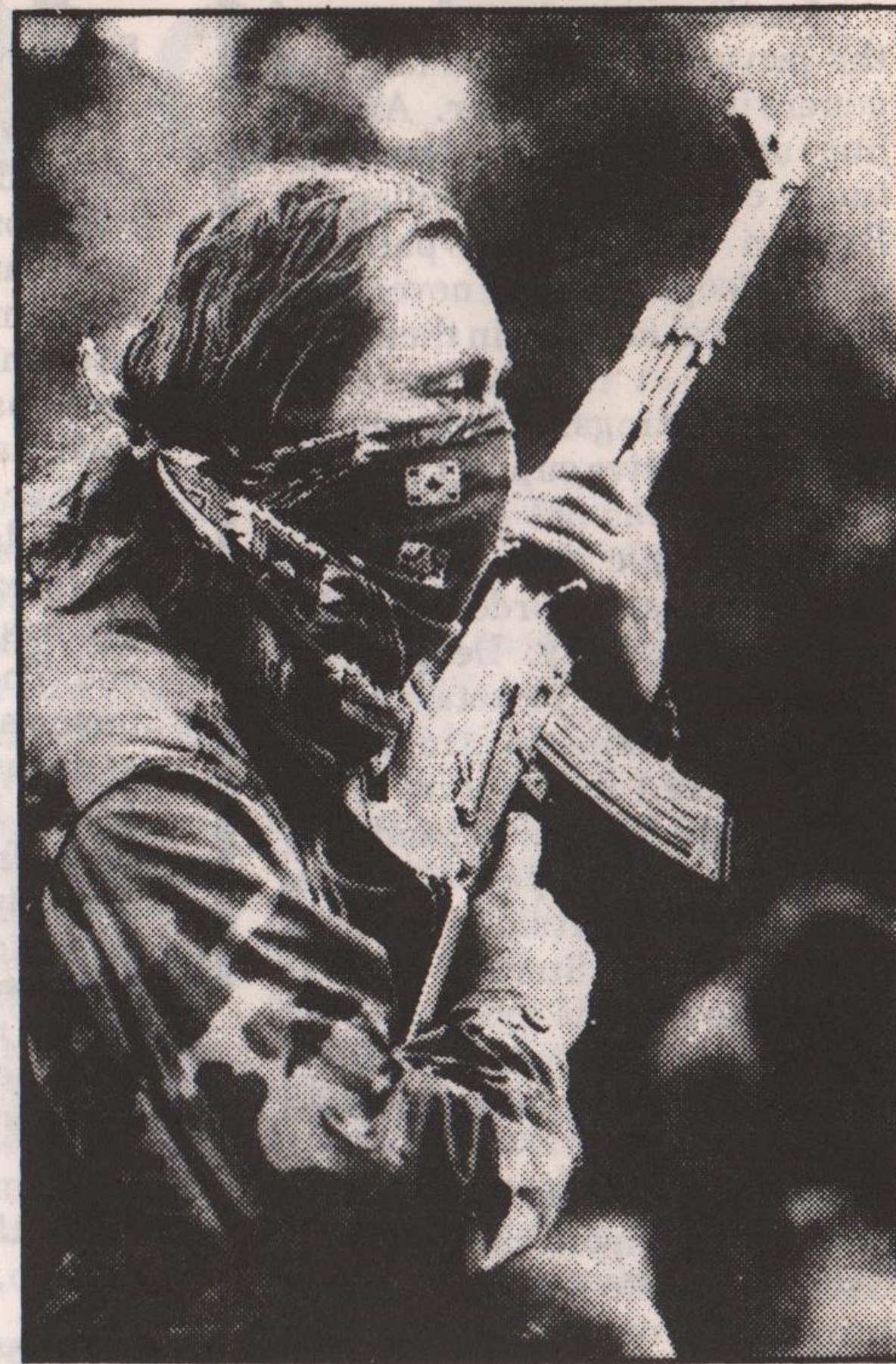
## SOLIDARITY

Such a stand against the system was naturally condemned by the Canadian government officials, namely Robert Bourassa (Premier of Quebec) and Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister). However the Mohawks of Kanesatake did not fight alone – on the contrary, North America's native populations shook with indignation at the government's military stance against the Mohawks. Those Mohawks living on the nearby reservations of Kahnawake and Akwesane (Akwesane is in New York

State, United States, and is spread across the US/Canada border) joined the struggle at Kanesatake in large numbers. Ojibwas blocked Canadian National Railway tracks (running through their reserves) stopping traffic for 5 days at Longlac and White River, Ontario – and on an Oneida reserve, a hydro-electric cable tower collapsed after an explosion. All of this was held in identification with the Mohawks cause and demonstrations and petitions continued throughout the year until finally after an incredible standoff of 78 days, Mohawks left their strongholds and walked into Oka Village as a defiant act of protest. They were then "contained" by Canadian soldiers with bayonets and eventually taken in busloads to a Farnham military base south of Montreal – men, women and children – all to face the hospitality of a hardly compassionate system.

## RESISTANCE

Protests like these often ending in bloodshed, have been carried out all over America on countless occasions and they continue just as frequently today, well after the "end to Indian resistance" with the last tribes penned up in reservations. In 1969, Native Americans occupied the island of Alcatraz for two years to draw international attention to their plight. In 1971, members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) organised a march on Washington where they occupied and destroyed offices at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and in 1973 the famous occupation of Wounded Knee Village (where a mas-



sacre of 350 Sioux was carried out by U.S. soldiers and were consequently surrounded for 72 days by the police and military.

Whether it be against nuclear plants, hydro-electric dams, uranium mining, casinos and drug/alcohol dealing – all of which have been established on Indian reservations throughout North America against both the will of the Indians and most of the neighbouring white community – American Indians and their white supporters have fought strong and hard, and will continue to do so as long as the international system of vicious capitalism operates which shrouds all our lives. This system is in contradiction to what Indian societies have to offer. Although the North American tribes all possess widely differing cultures, rich in all aspects but peculiar to each individual community – they share a common philosophy regarding existence that helps and encourages those of us who fight against a terrible system. We can learn from these philosophies whose starting point is the perspective that reveres the land and all fellow beings (human and animal alike) the mountains, rivers, trees and sky. The mass destruction of people when greed and profit have become priorities must be inevitable unless there is a continual fight against capitalism. The principles behind traditional Native American living can only spur on that fight – principles that were known before corrupt and ugly class systems took hold.

"The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us.

contd. p. 7



# Ecology and Survivalism

**THE TERM "SURVIVALISM" usually refers to people going out into the wilds and living through a nuclear war or similar catastrophe by using their survival skills. However, in recent years the term has taken on a new meaning.**

Survivalism is capitalism's response to the growth in concern and awareness of environmental issues. Ecology, once seen as a marginal concern, has, at the level of appearances, been taken to the heart of capitalism. Why is this?

The present ecological crisis is the inheritance of centuries of tyranny and exploitation in which the mass of humanity, as workers, peasants, slaves and soldiers, have been used by a small elite as mere tools in the accumulation of wealth. In the



process the eco-systems of the planet have been torn apart to meet the demands of a system based on the endless pursuit of profit and power in which natural resources are simply there to be exploited. Used as commodities they are bought, sold and used up.

## Undermine

A growing awareness of ecology seen from this perspective could have the potential to undermine the acceptance of a society founded upon hierarchy and exploitation. This is why capitalism needs to be seen to be embracing ecological ideas. In doing so it is able to redefine the ecological problem in terms which pose no threat to its existence and actually increase its strength.

Through the media, consumerism and politics, the ecological problem is phrased as one of survival within the capitalist system rather than a transcendence of that system. In the rhetoric of survivalism we are all responsible, regardless of class, race or gender, for environmental problems and must all "do our bit for the environment".

Operating in a similar way to nationalism, survivalism masks social differences in an attempt to create a false social unity in the pursuit of shared interests. Through the media we are constantly sent the message that it is our unquestionable duty to be Green. We all have a role to play to ensure the survival of the planet. And what is that role for the working class? The same old shit – work, consume and vote.

## Commodity

For the consumer, ecology itself has been turned into a commodity to be bought from the supermarket shelf. As a marketing tool it makes offers of "10% More!" or "Buy 2 get 1 free!" pale in comparison to the prospect of saving the planet by buying "Ozone Friendly" hairspray.

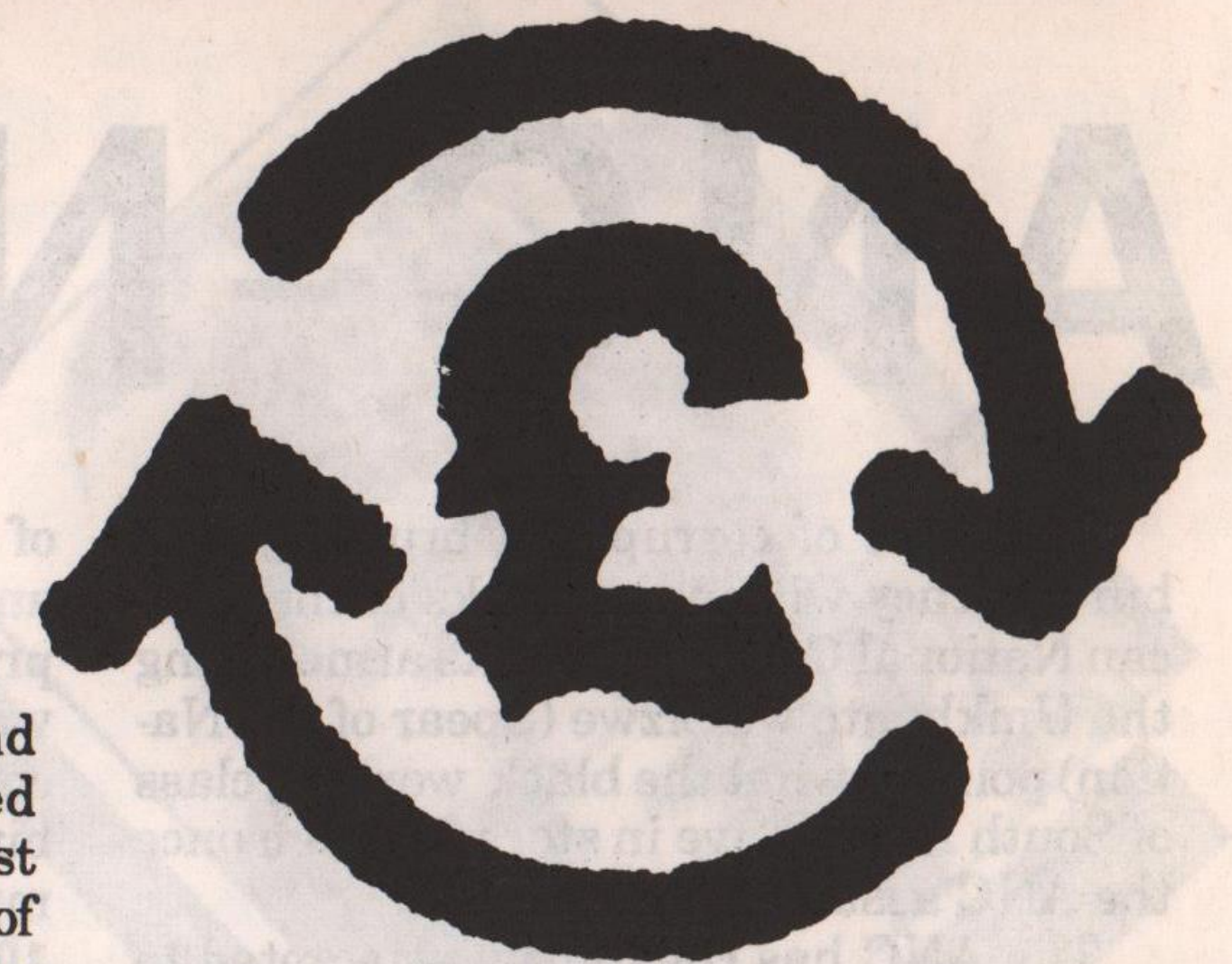
At the next general election we can look forward to the spectacle of the major parties trying to prove how Green they are, how the environment is safe only in their hands. It is a sick joke that the same parties will also be arguing that they will be best at competing with other industrialised nations and increasing productivity. There are even those within the Green Party who welcome this Green window-dressing since, they argue, they force the other parties to adopt environmental policies to avoid losing voters to the Green Party.

Apart from the fact that leaving the environment to governments and multinational corporations is "like leaving a child batterer to look after the nursery", voting for Green policies to be carried out by the state is a thoroughly disempowering act which does a lot to bolster the strength of the state and little, if anything, to protect the environment.

The basic purpose of survivalism is to hide the social, political and historical causes of the ecological problem and to incorporate environmental awareness into its own economic logic.

## Explicit

As anarchists, in our propaganda, we should make explicit the real causes of the environmental problems we face. How-



ever, we should not argue solely on the basis that revolutionary change is the only alternative to ecological disaster but also talk of what action people can take here and now.

We should also make it clear that for us survival in itself is not enough. We aim for the complete transcendence of capitalist society and all forms of domination and exploitation and for a society in which production is geared toward genuine need and produce freely distributed. In such a society we would be free of the alienating boredom and drudgery of work, competition and consumerism.

# MOHAWKS contd.

If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters: the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony – all belong to the same family.

All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground they spit upon themselves. Continue to contaminate your bed and you will one night suffocate in your own waste".

Chief Seattle, Suquamish tribe, Washington 1854.



# ANC-New Bosses

The level of corruption, brutality and bureaucracy within the ranks of the African National Congress and its armed wing the Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) point to what the black working class of South Africa have in store for them once the ANC assumes power.

The ANC has constantly attempted to monopolise the struggle against the apartheid regime since the fifties, seeking to marginalise and belittle its rivals, the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO). Its mixture of old-style African nationalist politics with a good dose of Stalinism from the ranks of the South African Communist Party make a most unappetising cocktail for the poor and dispossessed.

## Young

Many young working class blacks identified with the armed struggle of the ANC against the Boer regime. This was particularly so after the Soweto uprising of 1976, when many high school students and apprentices fled into exile to join Umkhonto.

But instead of armed struggle against the Afrikaaner state, units of these young people were employed as auxiliaries by nationalist groups in other countries, in particular in ZAPU's struggle against the white Rhodesian regime, where heavy casualties were inflicted on them. It is also alleged that they were used against the rival nationalist organisation ZANU, which was not a Soviet client.

Those who survived the campaign complained that their equipment was inadequate, their AK47 rifles having no firing pins and their grenades no detonator fuses. And they could not help comparing their conditions and their equipment with the lifestyles of ANC leaders who were making money smuggling mandrax to South Africa and selling prestige cars in Zambia delivered by car thieves from Johannesburg. This indignation against the leadership reached its climax when Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC, ordered all the "1976" militants to be trained in East Germany before being sent to help the MPLA regime in Angola against its UNITA rival.

## Bleeding

These units, the 16 June Brigade, named after the first day of the Soweto uprising, were told by Tambo that "we have to bleed a little for the Angolans" - "we" that is "you". Eventually dissatisfaction came to a head with the mutiny in the Umkhonto camps in early 1984 in Angola. Fighting broke out, the Umkhonto militants demanded an end to fighting UNITA, and transfer of all their forces to fighting the South African regime. They also demanded the immediate suspension

of the ANC security apparatus, as well as an investigation of its activities and of the prison camp Quatro, known as "Buchwald". At the advice of Chris Hani, the commissar of Umkhonto, and also a Politburo member of the South African Communist Party, they formed a committee of 10 to present their grievances to the ANC leadership. This committee negotiated the surrender of arms of both the mutineers and of Mbokodo, the security apparatus that had been trained by the KGB.

## Surrender

After the surrender a detachment led by Hani and Joe Modise, an Umkhonto commander and seen as one of those involved in corrupt financial ventures, swept into the camp at Viana and began arresting those involved in the mutiny. One of those arrested, an Umkhonto veteran, Mwezi Twala, was shot in the back. He recovered and was sent to a labour camp in Angola, where during the course of detention he witnessed the torture and murder of hundreds of Umkhonto mili-

itants. He is now among those in hiding in South Africa who have borne witness against these atrocities, and have put their stories on videos which are being distributed in the townships.

## Mandela United

What went on in the military camps and prisons of the ANC is directly related to the necklace killings used by the ANC in South Africa, first of all in the 1984-6 uprising, against informers and police agents, but now increasingly against opposition groups like AZAPO. And it is directly related to the recent trial of Winnie Mandela and her Mandela United Football Team. This group of thugs acted in exactly the same way as the Mbokodo. They used Winnie Mandela's house in Soweto as a base to police the township, and among their activities was the torture and murder of 14 year old Stompie Moeketsi Seipei, a township activist. Among the things that Stompie was accused of were homosexual relations with a white clergyman. South African homosexuals have taken note of

# in Waiting

these attitudes within the ANC. The Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) noted that Winnie Mandela's defence said that youths had not been kidnapped by her thugs but had been taken to her house to be protected from sexual abuse by the clergyman. In a letter to the National Executive Committee of the ANC they drew attention to the disturbing level of homophobia raised by the defence and stated that the ANC had failed to respond to it, even though it was supposedly committed to gay and lesbian rights in a draft bill of rights.

## Derided

Leaders of the Mass Democratic Movement publicly expressed their disquiet at Winnie Mandela's "obvious complicity" in the kidnaps and murder. Her house in Soweto is a palatial residence. Her daughter Zinzi is derided in Soweto as a "kugel" an insulting term applied to the wealthy, well-dressed young white women of the Johannesburg suburbs. Township dwellers have burnt down her previous

luxurious home in disgust. Many in the townships have no illusions in Winnie Mandela, similarly many of those grassroots activists in the workplaces and townships are aware of the sell-outs engineered by Nelson Mandela and by Joe Slovo, General Secretary of the SACP.

The Afrikaaner regime shows blatant hypocrisy in putting Winnie Mandela on trial when it has so much blood on its own hands. This should not distract us from the fact that what is taking place in the ANC bodes ill for the South African working class. Already we have had the exposure of the purges carried out in Namibia by SWAPO against dissidents in its own ranks, some of whom were imprisoned in pits. The new SWAPO government has now appointed several leading South African policemen, including the ex-chief of poise in the Ovambo region, to head its own secret police. Similarly Dirk Coetzee, head of the South African government's assassination team has been welcomed into the ANC. Modise and Hani are seeking the integration of certain Umkhonto members into the South African army and police.

## Fix

The ANC and SACP apparatuses are preparing to "fix" the set-up in South Africa with sections of the white ruling class, in particular the industrialists like AngloAmerican which dominates the private sector and owns 70% of the country's mining capital. In the past the ANC denounced AngloAmerican as the enemy. Now they are sitting down, all smiles, at the same table, to discuss the future.

The ANC is a government in waiting. Those in its political and military command structures are preparing to take up positions of privilege in a "new" South Africa, in alliance with the developing black capitalists, small businessmen and professionals. The SACP has already coopted the leaderships of the black unions, previously independent. One of these, Moses Mayekiso, darling of British Trotskyists like the SWP, is now a SACP member. These union leaderships will engineer the "new deal" for the sake of capitalist profitability. This future profitability will mean the crushing of workplace and township self-organisation and militancy. As a pamphlet on the ANC mutiny noted: "The ANC prison system combined the worst of South African and of Russian conditions fused together, and it is this new social type-as a refine-



ment and augmentation of each-that is now offered to the people of South Africa as the symbol of freedom".

## Denounce

We anarchist communists will always grasp the hand of the oppressed, will always denounce all those who exploit and butcher the working masses, whether they govern now or are governments and ruling classes in waiting. We do not have any starry-eyed illusions in thinking that any nationalist or national liberation organisation can bring a juster society, even if they cloak it in so-called socialist rhetoric. Remember the Khmer Rouge, feted by many in the European extreme left. Remember the blind eyes turned on the barbarism of Stalinism, by those in the West, both intellectuals and workers, who somehow thought that communism had been achieved in Eastern Europe and China. We are deeply saddened by the way noble young working class people, the class of 76, have been used and abused by the ANC apparatus. We will continue to argue for a just, genuine communist system, that is, anarchist communism.

(The pamphlet mentioned above, *Mutiny in the ANC, 1984*, as told by five of the mutineers can be obtained at £1.50 from Bill McElroy, 17 Tudor House, Tudor Grove, London E.9 7QS)





# Imperialism and the Kurds

WHEN THE RULING class starts showing "solidarity with oppressed people" to the extent that their plight reaches the front page of the *Daily Mail*, we as anarchist-communists should smell a rat. Humanitarianism is not part of the ruling class' ideology – remember their humanitarian concern for the "people of Kuwait" and what that led to?

The concern of the ruling class for the Kurdish people proves a number of things. Firstly, that the propaganda war against Iraq is not yet over. The ruling class selectively choose to care about the Kurds because they can be identified as separate from other Iraqis, meanwhile the whole of Iraq is under martial law, the whole Iraqi population lives in fear for their lives.

Imperialism has often used a cover of "concern for oppressed people" to hide their real goals. Care for Jews after World War Two led to the establishment of a permanent imperialist base in the Middle East (Zionist Israel) at the expense of the Palestinians. Imperialists again and again use "oppressed people" as an excuse to wage wars. Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait for the Palestinians. The Allies invaded Kuwait and Iraq for the Kuwaitis – but the expansionist aims of imperialism are always laid bare.

"Oppressed people" have also been regularly used to fight wars; armed, supported and then dropped by ruling classes when their own imperialist aims are satisfied. For example, in 1972 the Kurds were

armed by the USA to fight Iraq for the Shah of Iran, in 1975 their cause was dropped, supplies cut off and 35,000 died in Iraq.

At the start of the Kurdish and Shi'a uprisings in Iraq it was obvious the world's ruling class did not want them to succeed, the Iranian and Turkish borders remained closed stopping supplies vital to the insurrectionaries. At present it is obvious that the Allies, Turkey and Iran would rather see a weak Ba'athist Iraq than a Kurdish state. However, that is not to say that an independent "Kurdistan" could not arise out of the present crisis, the amount of coverage their "plight" is being allowed to have suggests this.

## Learning Lessons

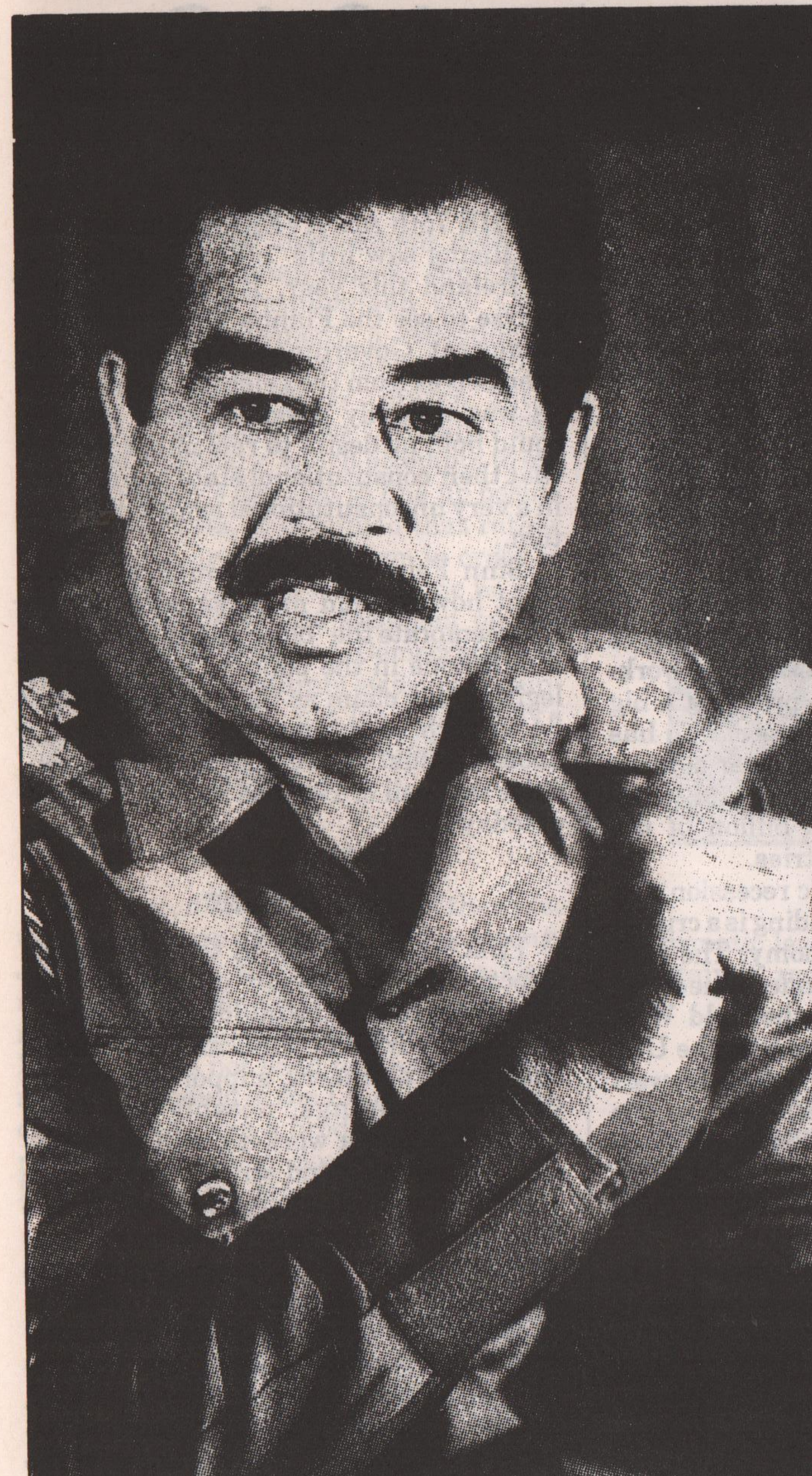
But Kurdish working people should know better than to ask the Allies and the world ruling class for assistance, their own history, and the history of imperialism in the region should convince them of that. If a Kurdish state is allowed to grow in the Middle East it will be on imperialism's terms, as an imperialist base between Syria, Iran and Iraq three of the most powerful and potentially unruly Middle Eastern states, and of course, next to the ever loyal servant of the West; Turkey. This "success" for Kurdish national liberation will not be celebrated by anarchist communists.

As anarchist-communists we should not ignore the plight of the Kurds, but we should not succumb to the pathetic Kurdish fetishism of the left. We recognise that all the working peoples of the Middle East are oppressed, in Iraq, in Lebanon, in Egypt...the creation of a new state, further dividing the Middle Eastern masses will not solve a thing.

## National Liberation

The failure of the Kurdish revolt against Saddam Hussein illustrates the inevitable political and military flaws in national liberation struggles. Despite the rhetoric, the revolt remained purely national, no attempt was made to push into non-Kurdish areas of Iraq to challenge Saddam Hussein's power there. The struggle was not generalized, Arabs living in the new "Free Kurdistan" were kicked out by the Peshmergas and sent south – anyone speaking Arabic rather than Kurdish was under immediate suspicion of being a Ba'athist spy.

The Kurdish leaders seemed happy to simply wait for the United Nations to recognise their state and despite their military and strategic strength they left Sad-



dam Hussein time to reorganise, re-group and crush them.

Now they seem to be coming to an agreement with Saddam where they will share power with him and where the Peshmerga guerillas will disarm and be merged with the Iraqi army.

## Class Country

The Kurdish leaders are not interested in the well-being of the mass of the Kurdish people, the workers and peasants. They wish to construct a Kurdish state and to improve the power and bargaining strength of their own class, the bourgeoisie. They will use the Peshmergas as their police, to crush any sign of discontent amongst the Kurdish masses. In talking about a deal with Saddam, they show they are prepared to aid and indeed to be incorporated into the Iraqi state set-up of the military and national bourgeoisie and that they are part of the same class, the class of rulers and oppressors.

# INTERVIEW WITH IRAQI EXILE

**ORGANISE! What are the main political groups in Iraq?**

The Kurdish Democratic Party were set up as a feudal party in 1946. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) are a nationalistic party who have support among Kurds, especially in Sulaymanyah and Arbil; they claim to be building a party based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. They started a guerilla armed struggle in 1961 to crush the unity of the Arab-Kurdish working class struggle in Iraq officially "represented" by the Communist Party.

The Communist Party is traditionally the strongest party. Stalinist from the beginning, it is "anti-imperialist", for social reforms such as land for peasants, better wages for workers and more participation for women. It has large support especially in Baghdad, Arbil, Kirkuk, and the south of Iraq. In the 1958 uprising they successfully channelled the people's demands for a purge of the police and armed forces and weapons for popular armed struggle. The CP told them to tone down their demands and support the "progressive" provisional government of Abdul Karim Kasim. There was a revolution in the streets but the government was left untouched: the military and bureaucratic machine was left untouched. In the 1963 coup many active CP members and leftwingers were slaughtered. As in Allende's Chile the CP fostered illusions in a "radical" government rather than working class self-organisation, with the same bloody consequences. This is the price people always have to pay for following Marxist-Leninist parties.

**ORGANISE! What about the Kurds and the present revolt.**

It is a mistake to talk of the "Kurds", as nationalist mystification – there is a Kurdish working class and a Kurdish ruling class – another flag, another seat in the United Nations is not progress. The ruling class want the working class to be divided nationalistically as Kurds, Arabs etc. People should have their own evolving culture – language, music, literature, etc. – but not use it to suppress other cultures and races through building nationalism and the State around it. During the Iran-Iraq and Gulf Wars, Iraqi soldiers fought other Arabs, this is contrary to the Arab nationalist ideology of the ruling Ba'athist Party. As a result Ba'athist ideology has collapsed, leaving a vacuum which the opposition parties are eager to fill. The Iraqi bourgeoisie are siding with the revolt for their own advantage: the economy has been crippled by the war and international sanctions, and the working class and poor don't have money to buy things. The Ba'athists can't revive the economy, so, like the U.S. they want to remove Saddam without breaking up the Iraqi state. Unfortunately most people still believe in the "need" for leaders and parties, even during uprisings.

**ORGANISE! What is the role and influence of religion?**

60% of the population are Shi'ite: it is the dominant religion in Iran, which Sad-



# INTERVIEW WITH IRAQI EXILE

dam uses to say that the revolt in the south was made by outsiders. The rest of Iraq is Sunni, including the Kurds. There are also 1 million Christians. Most of the high-ups in the military and government are Sunni, which is the dominant religion of Islam covering Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan. Sadun Hamadi, a Shi'ite, was made Prime Minister after the Gulf War to placate Shi'ite people. The government uses religion to divide and rule. The media worldwide have characterised the revolt in the south as religious – Shi'ite versus Sunni and in the north as nationalistic, Kurds versus Arabs.

## ORGANISE! What is the make-up of the Iraqi economy?

Iraq is rich in agriculture., there are 2 big rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, and the land is very fertile. Prior to Genghis Khan's murderous regime it supported a population of 40 million people – current population is 16 million. Now most people are concentrated in cities. The agricultural economy has been almost totally destroyed in favour of oil, 90% of the national income. In the 1950s Iraq had an agricultural surplus and exported food. Now virtually all food requirements need to be imported. Oil is swapped for arms, food and machinery. The countryside no longer exists – in the 1980s 4,000 villages were razed to the ground and the popula-

tion were forced to go to the cities where there were few jobs. As a result many joined the "security" forces or government guerilla mercenaries through economic conscription.

## ORGANISE! What were the causes of the Gulf War?

The Iraqi army is very powerful due to its historical role in repressing the working class and poor. It has provided a big market for arms manufacturers. Iraq has been the world's largest importer of arms over the last five years, 1984-1988, accounting for over 9%-\$16 billion of the \$174 billion spent by countries.

The worldwide economic recession was also a cause – military spending is a crucial part of the American economy. The Gulf War revamped a sector undermined and threatened by the end of the Cold War. There is increasing evidence that the U.S. planned the war months before Kuwait was a twinkle in Saddam's eye. In the summer of 1990 detailed war plans were drawn up by the U.S. military and Bush advised a meeting of top U.S. businessmen to delay investing in the area.

The Gulf War commemorations – like all others – are to remind poor people all over the world what the future will hold. They are to glorify war and the nation state rather than the bitter reality that poor people live and die as slaves.



# 1916 –

THE 75th ANNIVERSARY of the Easter Rising saw little "official" celebration in Ireland this year. It's no surprise of course to see the Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrat Government try to distance themselves from the celebrations as much as was decently possible. After all they could hold no desire to remember the fact that their constitutional state has its roots in a very unconstitutional armed insurrection.

Sinn Fein and the Republican Movement however did mobilise nationally to commemorate the "blood sacrifice" of 1916, a milestone in the political heritage they legitimately claim as their own. But what do anarchist communists have to say about all this? Do we, like Sinn Fein, consider the "call of 1916" to be the challenge of today?

## Insurgents

First we must look at the nature and objectives of the Easter insurgents. The rising was led by the middle class nationalists of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Irish Volunteers, supported by some smaller groupings, notably the Irish Citizens Army, a workers' militia originally formed to defend strikers in struggle with Dublin's intransigent bosses in the 1913 lock-out, a struggle which, not surprisingly, received no support from the Nationalist movement.

Their aim, stated in their "proclamation" to the people of Ireland, was the creation of a "sovereign independent state", an Irish republic. The proclamation declared the right of the Irish people to the ownership of Ireland and resolved to "pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation". Civil and religious liberty, equal rights and opportunities for all citizens! Pretty much the slogans of all bourgeois republican revolutions since 1789.

## Capitalism

But are we just being too cynical perhaps? No. Just look at the actions of the First Dail, Sinn Fein's colours were exposed in their determination to create and maintain an independent sovereign Irish capitalism and to defend the power of the native boss class, as we shall show later.

Of today's IRA claim to be "the same now as then" – we agree. The rebels of 1916 represented not the proletarian movement but the petit-bourgeoisie. Then as now the foot soldiers of this republican movement are working class.

## Connolly

But what of the presence of the Irish Citizen Army and the socialist James Con-

# A Myth Exploded

nolly? Didn't their involvement give the uprising a proletarian aspect? Sinn Fein have certainly emphasised the Connolly/I.C.A. involvement, a reflection of their socialist pretensions. *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (March 28th) features an article 'James Connolly – The Practical Visionary' which attempts to explain Connolly's decision to line up beside the Nationalists. It is argued that rather than abandoning his socialism in order to join the uprising, this was a tactic he employed in order to put socialism on the agenda in the proposed Democratic Republic. There is certainly evidence to support this argument, not least Connolly's advice that the I.C.A. hold onto their guns in the event of victory.

## Weakness

However, if this was his belief then history has proven him wrong, very wrong. Just before his barbaric execution Connolly is reported to have said "The socialists will never understand why I am here". Indeed, we do not need to scapegoat Connolly, his leading of the I.C.A. into a cross-class alliance was a product of the weaknesses of the Irish Socialist Movement. Not least its tendency to be swayed by



Irish Citizen Army

charismatic leaders but also its failure to maintain a revolutionary class perspective.

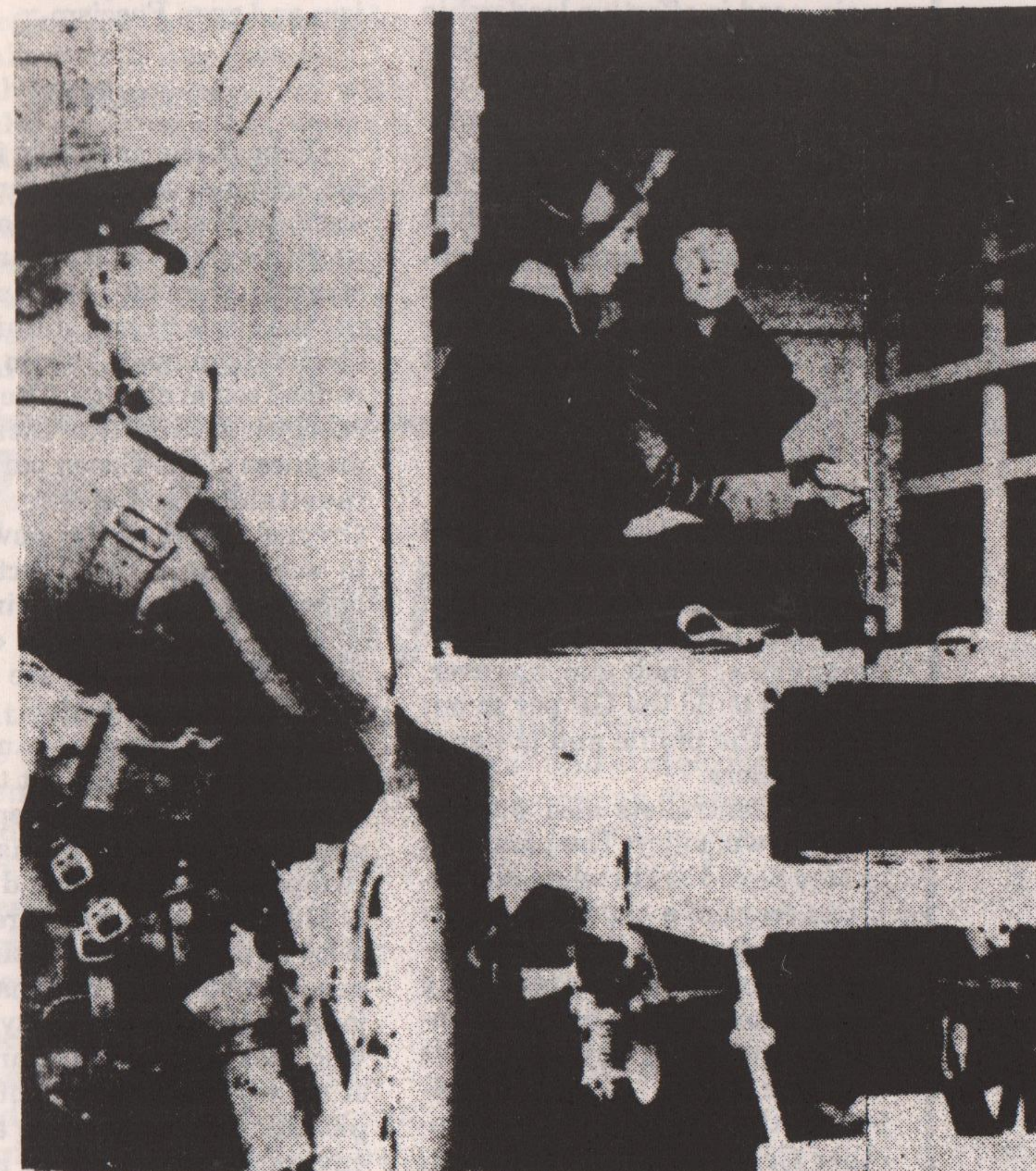
## Soviets

Rather than Easter 1916, anarchist communists look to the class struggle which swept Ireland from 1916-22 for in-

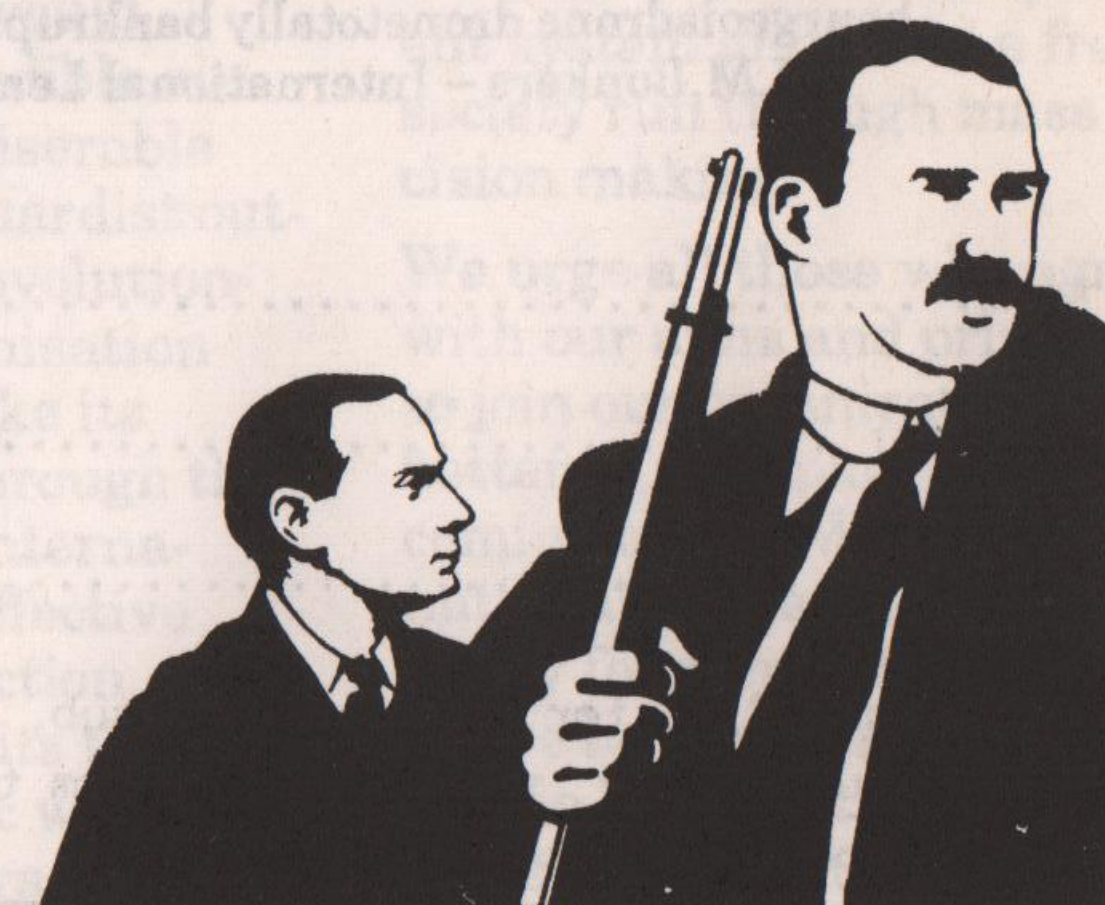
spiration. The same *An Phoblacht* article talks approvingly of this revolutionary wave, usually ignored by republicans and revisionists alike. This period of immense struggle saw the seizure of land, general strikes in many localities, soviets formed in Limerick and Cork, workers taking control of their workplaces and raising the red flag of socialism across the south. The article fails to mention, however, the role of the I.R.A. in smashing the Quarterstown Mills Soviet occupation, or the Sinn Fein land courts handing land seized in Co. Wexford back to the big land owners, or of the heroine of 1916 the Countess Markiewicz' warnings against "the imminence of social revolution". It wouldn't sit too well with their socialism we fear.

## Revolution

But it's just that kind of social revolution that must be fought for in Ireland, north and south, today. A fight against all bosses, foreign or native and all states, no matter what flag flies above their prisons. The challenge of 1916 must be to learn that the working class has no allies, in any section of the boss class, no matter how radical their rhetoric. Let's rise to that challenge – the fight for a free communist Ireland!



MARKIEWICZ being taken to jail





# AT THE FOOT OF THE WALL

THIS is the title of a proposed book by Abel Paz, author of the classic *Durruti: The People Armed* about his prison experiences (1942-1952) under the Spanish dictatorship.

Abel is still alive and well and living in Barcelona. He has no money to publish the book but feels strongly that it should be done...to fight back against the blanket of lies that now covers that time and as a duty to all those who didn't survive and died for these ideas.

Donations however small are vital. Send them to:

Diego Camacho Banco Banesto Cta.N. 1237-271 c./Providencia 64 08012 Barcelona.

Correspondence to: Abel Paz c./Verdi 109 3-2 08012 Barcelona. Telephone 2183269

# Green Turning Grey

**PARADISE REFERRED BACK:** A Radical Look at the Green Party is a pamphlet by two Green Party activists, Larry O'Hara and Gary Matthews, who describe themselves as "radicals, green socialists... of a kind".

It takes the last Green Party conference (1990) as a starting point to show that there is a fundamental split between the *Towards 2000* faction who are grouped around a petition calling for leadership, professionalism and the prioritisation of electoralism and a (regretably) incoherent and disunited group of left radicals and decentralists. The authors see themselves as part of the latter group and the pamphlet aims to provide a critique of the policies and practice of the *Towards 2000* group.

## Legality

According to the pamphlet, the Constitution proposed by the *Towards 2000* group has no reference to local groups and totally negates grassroots democracy. It contains a new and strong emphasis on legality and honorary membership in order "to capture

the guilt-ridden capitalists and the big business donations into the Party". At conference their tactics were "a mixture of the Labour Right (control of apparatus), *Militant* (organisation in the body of the hall) and the Mafia (intimidation). Their opponents are smeared as "wreckers/negative/Reds" and the need for creative conflict is buried by continuous calls for consensus. (Shades of TUC/Labour Conferences, "unity, brothers, unity")

## Traditional

*Towards 2000* argue that that Greens should become a traditional governing party. The authors reply, "but surely politics encompasses far more - lifestyles, the framing of societal goals, armed and unarmed struggle, revolution, industrial conflicts, riots and ecological issues themselves." The idea "that winning elections in itself would lead to effective control of the state... is a fairy tale. Not only is the debilitating effect of parliamentarianism on social radicalism well-documented, the one radical Left government that persevered (Allende's Chile in 1970-73) ended in a bloody military coup."

Allied to this is *Towards 2000's* argument that the party's main need is effective leadership and their opposition to the ideas of rotation, decentralisation and direct and immediate accountability. The leadership argue that they must be supported because time is short. The pamphlet stresses, "not a moral argument this. Variants of an appeal to a transcendental 'other' have long been the hallmark of arrogant authoritarians."

## Power

The Centralists are prepared to "fritter away 10-15 years... in concentrating on the sectarian project of building up the Green Party alone." Their aim, however, "is not to build the GP per se but enhance the profile and power of their leaders."

The Centralists also want to water down policy. The pamphlet quotes Sara Parkin when she belittles fears of a capital flight on the first day of a Green government, "Nothing we are saying needs a government health warning and a Green government is not to be feared." (*Guardian* 6-4-90) At the 1990 Conference another Centralist, Jean Lambert, alluded to positive developments in NATO and business circles. Direct collaboration with "green capitalists" has already begun:

not only Elkington/Ark/Body Shop ventures but also an anonymous 100,000 pound donation given to the Party for full-time workers, accepted without consultation with the members.

## Disgrace

The *Towards 2000* group is attempting to change the party structure. Matthews and O'Hara say, "What a disgrace - instead of changing society, energy is to be directed into changing the GP itself to fit in with the existing society they allegedly want to transform. A more telling commentary on gutless collaboration with grey politics it would be hard to find."

The pamphlet questions the usefulness of having "the big idea" which overrides everything else. For the Greens it's ecology whereas for others it may be class or feminism. Although many Green ideas are from the socialist-anarchist tradition (in terms of decentralisation, federation, distrust of leaders, rotation of delegates) they reject the roots of these ideas "while simultaneously..." colonising certain socialists like William Morris and Chico Mendes as Greens really. "Greens aspire to be 'beyond left and right, thus leaving themselves open to green Capitalism, Authoritarianism and even Fascism."

## Inadequate

Though the pamphlet is a useful critique of the Green Party and sees the importance of extra-parliamentary activity and class struggle, they still end up squaring the circle by maintaining that electoralism has a role to play in radical social change. They fail to recognize that the increasing greyness of the Green party is an inevitable consequence of the Greens' desire to win power and to work within the structures of bourgeois democracy. Direct action and mass struggles controlled by those involved are at odds with Party organisation.

However, those in Anarchist organisations have a lot to learn from this pamphlet. Despite the green current within Anarchism (Kropotkin, Mumford and recently Murray Bookchin) there is still a lot of thinking and acting that needs to be done. But instead of joining the Green Party, those who seek a total transformation of society with the end of all exploitation of both people and the environment should be in class struggle anarchist organisations, ensuring that ecological issues are at the forefront of their political agenda.

# 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 nature 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 on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

# Join us!

With the crisis of Leninism, the continuing disillusionment with the Labour Party and the increasing parliamentary greyness of the greens, revolutionary anarchist ideas are more relevant and necessary.

There has been increasing interest in anarchist ideas and growth in groups recently since the anti-poll tax battles outside the town halls and the Trafalgar Square victory. Similarly, the growth of the anarchist movement in countries like

Poland, Germany, Greece and Bulgaria have attracted attention. Many people are now searching for a set of ideas that challenges the present obscene system of exploitation and does not think that outside the market and state controlled economies there are no alternatives. We urge all those who are seriously seeking a revolutionary alternative to consider the ideas of anarchist communism and to join us in the fight for a just, sane and free society.

## Building

There has been an increase in the number of those who describe themselves as class struggle anarchists. Unfortun-

nately, many do not look beyond their own back-yard. They think that the building of a local group is sufficient and fail to see the need for an effective united organisation on a national level, one that would reverse the trend of isolation and dispersed practice, one that would begin to offer a credible alternative to the miserable hierarchical vanguardist outfits that pose as revolutionary. Such an organisation would begin to make its presence known through the establishment of international links, and effective propaganda and action, whilst developing its theory in a lively dynamic way in interaction with practice. We don't claim to be that or-

ganisation, but we have that goal in mind.

The ACF works towards a social revolution, not to seize power itself, but participating in a revolutionary process as working class people, to assist the class as a whole to destroy the present system and build a free society run through mass decision making.

We urge all those who agree with our aims and principles to join our organisation, the better to take part in this coming about. Write to our national address for details. Apply for membership now. We've been on the defensive for too long - let's build a mass movement that goes on the attack!

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