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Issue 214

BLACK FLAG

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE

NEVER FORGET



NEVER FORGIVE

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**For a social system
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repression. To establish
a share in the general
prosperity for all - the
breaking down of racial,
religious, national and
sex barriers - and to
fight for the life of one
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editorial

the possible

Being a revolutionary anarchist can sometimes seem daunting. With all the attacks facing us from bosses, the State and other forms of authority, it can appear that a free society is a long way away. But in this issue there are a number of articles which show that the way we organise can be achieved in the here and now, and that in itself can open up new possibilities for resistance, creativity and self-organisation.

This can be on a small scale, as the example of the IWW in New Milton shows. One person was able to make a difference. This doesn't mean that the five workers who joined the IWW will immediately or automatically become revolutionaries, but it will give them a sense of what can be done when you organise collectively in a libertarian way.

We speak to a Liverpool docker about the struggle of the wharfies in Australia - his message is clear "Each individual can change things, and collectively we can do more". The dockers are considering transforming their paper, The Dockers Charter, into a paper for a rank and file union movement. We hope they do, not because we see that as an end in itself, but because such a forum, run by a group as universally respected as the dockers, would open up more possibilities.

We interview Newham Monitoring Project, a grassroots group who have done practical work against racist and police attacks for nearly 20 years. They used to be funded, but it was withdrawn last year. Despite that they carry on and the lessons we can learn from them are many, and relevant to much we do as anarchists.

And to Bradford - a lot of work well done, a lot of barriers broken down and communications established. But there is more to it than a weekend of celebration and discussion for 250 or so activists. One of the contentions of authoritarian socialists like the SWP is that you need a centralised Party to "learn the lessons of the past". What events like May Day 98 in Bradford prove is that you don't, and that forums which respect differences can be more constructive than anything that ever happens at *Marxism*.

Now who wants to organise next year's?

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**plus news, views and reviews from anarchists at home
and internationally**

DEADLINE FOR #215 Sept 1st 1998

bradford

The May Day Celebrations in Bradford this year included not only a march and bands but a 3-day conference organised by anarchists from around the country.

May Day 98 grew out of the desire for change and self analysis that has been making itself felt in the movement for about a year. The main priorities of the conferences were not to produce any orderly proposals or achieve on-paper unity, but to talk to each other without sectarian barriers, to look honestly at our failures and to use our collective imagination as to the way ahead. To achieve this the conference was structured into groups of fifteen to twenty people and participants were split up from their mates to encourage a wider circulation of ideas and to stop cliques from dominating discussions.

The groups had four main themes for discussion, which were: away from the margins, all worked up, land ecology and the environment and dreamtime. Some groups stuck to this, others ignored it and just talked about what they wanted. Topics

of note ranged from a discussion of space travel in one group to a big argument about whether we can have cups of tea after the revolution in another (If there's no tea I quit now! But we will eradicate lemsip.)

The conference was attended by about 250 people, a quarter women. There had been plans to have a women-only group, but most women felt this would mean the other groups were very male dominated. So instead there was one men only group (not self-selecting and some men weren't too happy about it) so that there were at least a third women in the other groups.

Some felt the conference would have been more productive if it had been more



focused, but overall people were positive and felt inspired, especially by the friendliness and lack of backbiting. For me the conference was summed up by the feedback session on the last day, where instead of the usual dismal bureaucracy the room was buzzing, people were laughing, joking and hurling affectionate insults at the speakers. I left for once with faith in our movement, and hope for the future.

asylum seekers update

Only 29 NF stood alongside organ grinder Jack Straw and his monkey Mike O'Brien in the increasingly dirty campaign against asylum seekers. This was the most the new NF could manage to turn out in Dover at the end of February. Straw couldn't make it but he sent along most of Kent's finest in solidarity. Shuffling along the sea front surrounded by cops is not exactly walking tall but it did provide the police intelligence units with a lot of camera practice on anti-fascists. Straw and O'Brien meanwhile are facing up to the facts that detention and harassment will not deter either people fleeing persecution or British people from standing by them. Most of us understand that people do not flee across whole continents attracted by New Labour's New Deal. In Slovakia, for example, the far right operate with impunity and even encouragement and co-operation from the authorities. A militant opposition is slowly emerging. Meanwhile, some Roma families have fled what even the US state department and the UN recognise as persecution. Straw and O'Brien have used detention and the asylum laws to try and railroad the Roma back to Slovakia. In some cases detention was too

much and many returned to Slovakia or the Czech republic but for some who have stayed, luck and legal representation has meant that they will be able to stay here. 4 key appeals were allowed by an Immigration Adjudicator who ruled that the Home Office decision was against the UK's obligations as a signatory of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. O'Brien and Straw were too gutless to appeal these decisions but still maintain their same racist diatribe against the Slovak Roma.

This is not the end of the matter. Many Roma will still lose their appeals and be deported. The appeals system is a lottery.

Most adjudicators are merely rich bigots with time on their hands. Many Roma, and other refugees, continue to face racism, harassment or ill-treatment from the police here. Ibrahima Sey and Shiji Lapite fled Gambia and Nigeria only to be killed by cops here. For the Roma, refugee status may be inappropriate anyway as it makes travel even more difficult. For all asylum seekers and all of us it is state borders, a system that dictates who can and can't live where, which confine us. Fighting alongside refugees is part of a fight against racism, nationalism and state power.

below: hidden behind the lines of police are a sad bunch of bigots on a trip to the seaside



Gandalf, A Never Ending Story

By Noel Molland, the eco-journalist
who writes with conviction

On the 27th March, the "Gandalf Three" were released from prison, on Bail, pending appeal. Though it is quite common for people to be released on Bail pending trial, it is almost unheard of that people are released on Bail pending Appeal after their conviction. So why has this come about?

According to the solicitor, Tim Greene who is acting for the Gandalf Three, in an early indication from the Appeal Court it would appear that the appeal judge thinks there are grounds to Appeal the Conviction, but not really the sentence, i.e. the Gandalf Three might have wrongly been found guilty. But if the appeal court was to uphold the guilty verdict, then a three year sentence is the right punishment, which would mean the instant return to prison for the Gandalf Three. The reason there is a strong reason to appeal the conviction is because of the legal precedent set by the Shoreham Four and their appeal.

In 1996, during the anti-live exports protests, the Campaign Against Live Freight group in Shoreham were accused of conspiring together to cause criminal damage. Six of them were arrested, found guilty of conspiracy to commit criminal damage, and four were sent to prison. Now the crucial point for their appeal was their charge was conspiracy to commit *criminal damage*.

The Shoreham Six were charged with their offence under the 1977 Criminal Damage Act (CDA) Section 1:1. This section has within it the offences of criminal damage, arson, criminal damage with reckless endangerment of life, arson with reckless endangerment of life, criminal damage with intent to endanger life and arson with intent to endanger life.

The Appeal Court decided that because Section 1:1 of the CDA is so unspecific, it is the police and prosecution who have to be specific as to what the nature of the charge is when the defendant is charged. Because the police elected with the Shoreham Six to charge them with straightforward Criminal Damage that was what had to be proved.

At the trial the prosecution, despite the charges being criminal damage, talked about arson. They showed evidence of damage by arson and they blamed the



Shoreham defendants for this damage or for conspiring to cause it. Therefore when the jury found them guilty it is unclear if they were found guilty of causing criminal damage or of causing arson.

Under English law the prosecution have to prove the specific charge. If they cannot prove the specific charge then the defendant is not guilty. Because it was unclear in the case of the Shoreham Six, the Court of Appeal decided to quash the convictions of three of the four defendants (the fourth had admitted damaging lorries, but not arson, and his sentence was reduced).

In the Gandalf Trial originally the defendants were all charged with conspiracy to incite criminal damage contrary to Section 1:1 and 1:3 of the CDA. Again, as in Shoreham, the specific charge was criminal damage. Like in the Shoreham case, the Prosecution talked about more than just criminal damage. They talked about arson. They even talked about Justice Department mousetrap/razorblade devices and letter bombs which aren't covered by the CDA.

So, again as in the Shoreham trial, it is unclear whether the Jury found the Gandalf Three guilty of conspiring to incite criminal damage, conspiring to incite arson or conspiring to incite grievous bodily harm (GBH being the result of any Justice Department postal device).

So that is the grounds for the Gandalf Three's main appeal. It is unclear what exactly they were found guilty of and as if to accept that this is a possible ground for appeal, as soon as the Shoreham Appeal verdict was known, the charges against Robin Webb and Paul Rogers (the remaining two Gandalf Three defendants to be tried) was amended to include the word arson. So Robin and Paul will stand trial charged that "they, along with Saxon Burchnell-Wood, Stephen Booth and Noel Molland, conspired together to incite persons unknown to commit criminal damage and arson."

The trial of Robin Webb and Paul Rogers is due to start May 11th. No date has been set, as yet, for the Appeal of the other three.

Black Flag comment: It follows from our publishing this report that we continue to support the Gandalf defendants in this case. What is at stake here is the very real threat to anyone reporting on direct action, which remains true however much we might disagree with their specific ideas.

However, we think Stephen Booth's misanthropic rantings in the Spring 98 *Green Anarchist* are execrable, and call on supporters of *GA* to publicly condemn them. There is no place within any movement fighting for freedom for the likes of the Taliban and the murderous Aum cult, or their apologists.

Close Campsfield!

The case against the Campsfield Nine dramatically collapsed in June. The 9 asylum seekers, all from West Africa, had been accused of participating in a riot at the private prison for those whose only crime is to flee repressive regimes armed and aided by Britain.

Minister for Racist Immigration Practices Mike O'Brien has renewed the contract of Group 4, the private security company who run the centre, for 3 years despite a highly critical inspection report of Campsfield. Among the main points of the report were that detainees don't know why

they are there, they have nothing to do, and Group 4 don't have a clue.

The trial of the Campsfield 9 was shown video footage of Group 4 thugs (or should that be guards?) destroying the centre library and beating up inmates. The report's author Sir David Ramsbotham that the regime at Campsfield is probably illegal.

Anarchists were among those who picketed the Crown Prosecution Service over the Campsfield 9 in April. It is to be hoped after this victory that the wretched place will be closed for good.

Source: CARF, BM 8784, London WC1N 3XX

Wobblies get dividends

We recently heard that the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) had established a job shop in Hampshire, and took the opportunity to interview Ray Carr, the IWW delegate involved.

BF: Can you tell us where the IWW has organised?

RC: I work at the Co-op Retail Services in New Milton. There are 30 workers in all, 6 are now IWWs and USDAW (reformist shop workers union) have about the same.

BF: The Co-op traditionally had a special cosy relationship with the USDAW, who survived from the checkoff of union subs from there. Was this a factor?

RC: It was part of the reason, but although USDAW are very into social partnership, the majority of its members these days are in companies like Tesco.

BF: The IWW is explicitly anti-capitalist, was this an issue for the other workers

who joined?

RC: The whole issue took off when management proposed to open the store till 10pm. Myself and one USDAW member opposed it and after speaking to the other workers there, there was 100% opposition.

We organised by putting in a collective grievance and holding a meeting. At the meeting it was agreed that nobody would sign new contracts, which we expected they might try to impose on us, and that if any pressure was put on an individual, the others would support them. I took both IWW and USDAW membership forms to the meeting. As things carried on, there was the danger that USDAW (who had done nothing) would take the credit and get members. I explained about the IWW, the major factors in people joining were the low dues, the fact that there are no paid officials and the internal democracy. Five people joined, making a branch of 6 including myself.

BF: What was management's response?

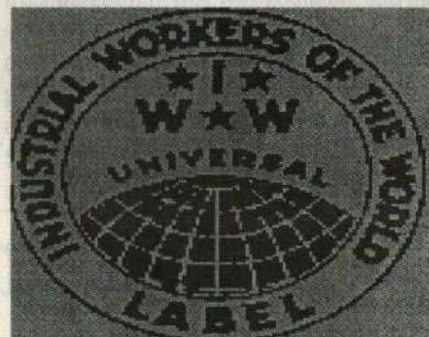
RC: On the 10pm opening issue we had one meeting with the Human Resources Manager. We told him that the grievance could only be called off by the whole workforce, as it was the meeting of all the workers there who had decided on it. The issue has not been mentioned since.

BF: Do you see more members joining?

RC: I see it as an ongoing campaign, not just in the co-op but in the retail industry generally.

BF: What help could our readers give to support what you're doing?

RC: The best way to help is to promote a different type of unionism as I've outlined above, which is what we all should be doing.



LabourNet threatened



Biwater, a British multinational, is trying to suppress public debate about privatisation in South Africa on the internet. GreenNet, the Internet service provider for LabourNet and SangoNet, the provider for the South African newspaper, the Weekly Mail and Guardian, have both been threatened with legal action.

In April, Biwater lawyers demanded that LabourNet remove a press release issued by the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), which is spearheading the fight against utility privatization. The union refers to reports in the Weekly Mail and Guardian about Biwater's role in the arms for aid scheme in the 1980's.

Because of the peculiarities of British libel law, both sites pulled the document from their domestic web sites, but maintain links to it on servers in other countries. The site has been mirrored and the Public Services International has made an exten-

sive report on Biwater available on its website, and similarly encourages its reposting to other websites.

Biwater regularly confronts the media. In November 97, it threatened to cancel its proposed investment in a South African pipe factory if South African television, SABC, did not apologise for criticising water privatization and Biwater's track record as a water company. Biwater has also won retractions from The Independent and Private Eye for apparently inaccurate reports on Biwater's overseas projects, its relationship with arms deals and its donations to the Conservative Party. In an effort to avoid legal repercussions, both newspapers retracted their stories, issued apologies and paid stiff fines.

For more info go to
<http://www.labournet.org.uk/>



body shop - hypocrites!

This year sees the 50th Anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Eager to cash in and flog their right-on image, the Body Shop have got together with Amnesty International to celebrate this.

But if anyone takes a look at the UNDHR, they will see one of the clauses is about the right to join a trade union. And guess which retail chain bans its workers from joining unions? Yep, it's Anita Roddick's Body Shop. And why do they do this? Because, according to Roddick, workers only need a union where the boss is bad, and she isn't. Got that? Whatever happened to workers deciding whether their boss is crap or not?

The Solidarity Federation have been leafleting outside Body Shops up and down the country. Contact SolFed at PO Box 29, SWPDO, Manchester M15 5HW for more info. London Greenpeace are running a parallel campaign. Write to them c/o 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1

Trade Union Recognition

As the government, bosses and bureaucrats tussle over legal recognition of unions, we look behind the rhetoric

Recognition of trade unions by employers was initially sought and fought for by working people to ensure that proper collective bargaining took place and collective agreements were observed. This was a step towards securing reasonable pay and working conditions, and could only be gained if workers were united and determined to get it.

The recent debate about whether legislation should be passed to allow employees to vote on whether they want to have a trade union recognised by their employer has little to do with these struggles of an earlier era apart from the recurrence of some of the terms.

In the 1990s trade unions have become massive and bureaucratic bodies with interests and agendas of their own quite distinct from those of their members. So the extent to which they represent and pursue the interests of their members is often slight and coincidental. So, any decision by Blair as to how the legislation on trade union recognition should be framed will have but little impact on working people at large and the problems and difficulties they face.

There are elements in the discussion that we should think about. For instance the argument about whether it is acceptable to require a level of support from among the whole of a workforce is an idea that has a history and a number of resonances. But there is one very particular consequence. The proposed level at the time of writing is 40%. No agreement to recognise a trade union in a place of work could be enforced unless at least 40% of the total of employees in that workplace had voted for it. Very few MPs obtained as much as 40% from the whole of their electorate. No post war government has ever got that much support. Such a system applied to Parliament would return only half a dozen MPs. But let us leave such pleasant fantasies and get back to trade union recognition.

It is clearly a cheek for MPs to say what levels of support are needed to legitimise any proposal. And aside from this the trade union organisations are keen to get legislation that gives them the best chance of winning votes for recognition. This might be a means through which they can get back into the industries where their support has declined, mainly because trade union mem-

bership never stopped anyone from losing a job when a company was on the skids.

Indeed union activism was often the factor that picked someone out to be made redundant.

The employers' organisations are opposed to recognition presumably because they are living in a 1950s time warp and believe that the trade union recognition means trade union activism which means that working people will again be campaigning and struggling with militancy and effectiveness for improved conditions and wages. I reckon that trade union recognition works as much in the interests of the employer as it does in the interest of the worker. Where trade unions are recognised the whole system of negotiations and deals works within a pattern that is acceptable to and often largely imposed by the employer. The significant industrial battles carried out by workers in the past decade have been conducted in spite of rather than with the active support of national trade union leaderships. The Liverpool dockers' campaign is the outstanding recent example of this.

But trade unions can be useful. I have always belonged to the trade union appropriate to my job. Indeed I have been an active lay officer for over 25 years and re-

gard trade union work in my workplace - defending people on disciplinary charges, accompanying members in meetings with managers, negotiating local conditions of service - as being useful work.

But on the big issues the inertia of the large organisations and the hostility of highly paid trade union professionals to troublesome members mean that workers fight these battles outside the main organisations they have formed for the purpose.

Therefore I take the unorthodox view among trade union activists that recognition of trade unions by employers cannot have much impact on working people and that their most important campaigns will continue to be fought autonomously and using such external resources as they can recruit to their aid.

The success of these campaigns will depend on the levels of this support and the effectiveness and imagination with which it is used. Highly paid suits in top trade union jobs will make no helpful contribution here. They are more interested in influencing legislation on trade union membership and thereby extending their membership and income and the areas in which they can negotiate deals on behalf of their members and with the minimum contribution from the members as to what sort of deals they want.



Anarcho-Quiz Questions

1. In 1904, the French psychologist Alfred Binet was asked to devise a way of measuring which children needed special help in French schools. He rejected the view that his test could identify the cause of those special needs, and was particularly scathing of those teachers who used an assessment of irremediable stupidity as an excuse to avoid the "special effort that such students require". What happened to his tests when they were imported into the English speaking world?
2. In what way might the British royal family be descended from elves?
3. There are two individuals whom some claim are anarchists who have been commemorated on British stamps. Who are they and for what were they commemorated?
4. Which fictional character, with far more claim to anarchism, and whose creator is an anarchist, was featured on a British stamp in 1990?
5. Why do the grammarians in the anarchist movement get annoyed when younger comrades write about celebrating Mayday?

answers on page 21

DANISH STRIKE FAILS TO BRING HOME THE BACON

About 400,000 private sector workers in Denmark went on indefinite strike on the 27th April against a background of employers making big profits and workers having shown "restraint" for the last few years. Employers had refused to accept any demand that would increase company costs, despite the fact that the economy is booming and workers wanted more time off.

The unions declared their willingness to re-enter negotiations but this offer was rejected. The employers locked out more workers in retail and distribution. By the third day of the strike the stock exchange fell by around kr34 bn. (about £3b) and foreign investors were getting jittery. The Social Democrat government warned that if the strike went on longer than 10 days they would be forced to intervene.

As in the big strike of 1985, there was a national meeting of shop stewards in Odense to decide on the future of the strike. The meeting agreed the formation of national and local co-ordinating committees to organise the running of the strike. This

was also in response to the union leaders who were talking about opening negotiations where the demands of the strike could be watered down.

The strike remained solid and the employers started to complain about a "workers' dictatorship" as they had to ask permission from the unions for any movements they wanted to make. The unions only allowed things to happen on the basis of emergency. One could not get petrol or get off some of the islands, without permission from the trade unions.

During the strike there was a unionisation campaign with workers going to non-organised workplaces to recruit them.

On May 7th a special law dictating the terms of the "contracts" of the sectors affected by the strike (and lockout) was passed, thus making all further industrial action illegal. The striking workers returned to work the following Monday, though some held stop-work meetings and went home for the day. The new law gives between one and three extra days leave, de-

pending on service, but it also cuts back on the employers' contributions to pension funds and abolishes a special tax paid by employers to cover some of the governments expenses for pay during sick leaves.

According to the government, the terms of the special law will not cost the employers any more than the agreement which was rejected by the workers and started the strike. We spoke to a Danish union activist attending the march for Social Justice in London and asked him about the end of the strike. His view was that Danish workers were too 'comfortable' to find the will to continue in defiance of the law. His union, the Scaffolders club of the general union, had instead used their anger and frustration to good effect in the local contract bargaining that was going on, and had signed new agreements with several previously non-unionised firms, usually after pickets. Other groups of workers have decided to stop their financial support for the Social Democratic party as a protest, such as the Copenhagen airport workers.

Greek workers show us how it's done...



Workers for the state owned Ionian bank, protesting against the Socialist government's privatisation programme, stormed a shareholders meeting and lynched the governor of the bank - stripping him to his underwear. Haris Stamatopoulos had his clothes torn off by furious employees as shareholders met to vote on its sale. Television showed Mr Stamatopoulos fleeing the meeting in terror, desperately holding onto his underwear as union members shredded his suit. At the same time workers, who had been on strike for six weeks, trashed the meeting hall, overturning tables, ripping up annual reports and showing any shareholders foolhardy enough not to flee, the error of their judgement.

The Socialists are trying to introduce 'flexible working hours' and to 'trim' public sector deficits in an 18 month austerity drive. The six week strike has wreaked havoc on the financial sector, Olympic Airways are set to strike and dockers have closed harbours in Pireaus and Salonika to commercial traffic. The head of the greek confederation of workers warned that "this action will go on until the government understands that Greeks can no longer go along with economic austerity".

war on the

On 7th April Patrick's Stevedoring sacked more than 2000 Australian wharfies (dockers). The dispute has been a long time coming, and the preparations made for it by the government and employers are reminiscent of the 1984/5 Miners Strike.

As well as the employers preparing in advance, the government sent soldiers to Dubai to be trained as potential scab dockers. The Maritime Union of Australia threw its weight behind the struggle, and the wharfies have definitely benefited from the Liverpool dockers' experiences. There have been mass community pickets at the docks, well supported by other unions & community groups with a visible anarchist presence. Melbourne Food Not Bombs became Food Not Scabs and served food on the picket lines. Daily updates are carried on the War on the Wharfies web page, run independently by an anarchist.

The blockades and lockout stretched the country's export capacity. Goods rotted on the wharves (although medical supplies were allowed out for hospitals under MUA supervision in Sydney), and when Toyota announced it was laying off all its 2500 workers in Melbourne, the car workers replied by endorsing the wharfies blockade and asking them to keep it up!

International solidarity has been very important. The *Columbus Canada* was loaded by scabs in Melbourne. When it got to Los Angeles, the dockers there (organised in the ILWU) refused to unload it. They were backed up by a community picket. (The ILWU and supporters of the Liverpool dockers are still facing legal action from the marine picket of the *Neptune Jade*). The *Columbus Canada* was held up for several days until ship owners struck a deal with the ILWU to unload cargo that had not been loaded by scabs in Australia. The *Columbus Canada* returned to Australia where its contents was unloaded and then reloaded by MUA members so it could sail and be handled in overseas ports again, much to the dismay of the scab-herders and the Government. Originally they claimed there wouldn't be international support so their media have been critical of the Minister for Workplace Relations Peter Reith and his leader, Prime Minister John Howard. Supporters of the wharfies adopted a tactic from the good old days, when the IWW controlled many ports, telegraphing (well, e-mailing) ships' move-

ments to workers in destination ports. Dockers in Japan, who are also under attack by the bosses, have refused to unload any scab cargo. The Papua New Guinea dockers union put two 24 hour bans on the scab ships, and ships have been diverted from militant ports in India.

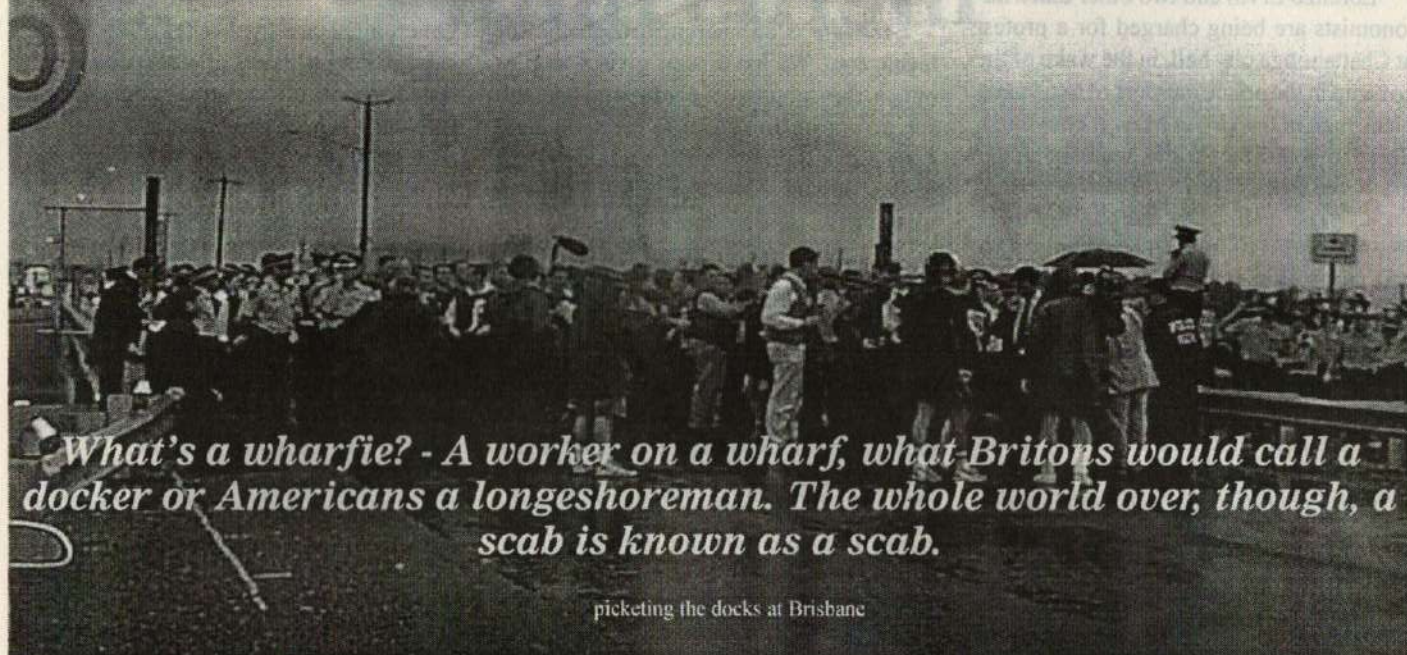
Under tremendous pressure from the labour movement, the High Court ruled that the sacked wharfies be re-employed in the affected ports. Some interpreted this as the end of the dispute, with the MUA winning, but that won't happen until those sacked have their jobs back. In some ports the work had been sub-contracted and employers have had to re-hire the MUA men in order to get the work done. Patricks have shut down their operations in Adelaide, Newcastle and Tasmania and tried to blacklist some of the sacked men. The employers have gone back on the offensive by trying to outlaw solidarity action (see interview opposite for more info) though this is likely to be toothless. The fact remains that the employers' big push may not have come to anything, but Patricks and the other stevedoring companies will now try to whittle away at the wharfies conditions. The backbone for the struggle was the Alliance, the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, Australian Manufacturing (food & metal) Workers Union and the Electrical Trades Union with the MUA launched May 1st, 1997. The Howard regime's Workplace Relations Act was seen as an attack on all hard won conditions and wages so the 'injury to one is an injury to all' style alliance was to support any union's members attacked. The MUA was first and it got the support of the others in the alliance, and from there, other unions affiliated with Victorian Trades Hall who organised a 24 hour stoppage of 100,000 on the streets of Melbourne (and large stoppages and rallies in several regional centres) on May 6th. The local radio 3CR did regular live cross talkback from the picket line and a mass phone tree mobilised hundreds and eventually thousands at Easter. Community artists, known to authoritarians as "uncontrollable elements" put huge rocks on railway lines at the main entrance and went out seeking scab trucks etc. The officials of the major unions and various

ALP politicians all made appearances or faced being ignored with no prospect of re-election. After 15 years of Accord (between bosses, ALP government and unions), declining union membership, and probably a long term in Opposition, they had to be seen and heard or face a more radical challenge to their leadership. Some 2000 CFMEU building workers walked off city sites to march to the docks where a crowd of 5,000 faced several hundred cops. Eventually the building workers let the cops withdraw (they were sandwiched in and the crowd were determined that no scabs would come in) after an hour of haranguing.

Not to be outdone the Victorian Police Association used the maritime dispute to seek a 17% wage increase and improvements and threatened to put bans on policing major sports and other events. The Victorian Premier, Jeff Kennett, was nearly knocked out when supporters at a soccer game tore up the seats and hurled them onto the pitch, where Jeff and the club officials were awarding the trophy. Without the cops presence poor Jeff might have become a political football himself. So the cops got what they wanted. In other states, like Queensland they arrested 140 and in WA they regularly battled with wharfies and their supporters. The VPA has applied for (and been accepted) affiliation to the Victorian Trades Hall Council, first time since the losing 1923 police strikers were sacked and joined in with the labour movement. The current lot are talking of marching on the official Trades Hall organised Melbourne May Day on nearest Sunday in 1999! As this is written MUA members are back all over Oz. Some have taken redundancy. The National Farmers Federation company P&C has gone broke and the 300 scabs have ironically been screaming unfair dismissal and wits have pointed out well you should have a union and not do other unionists out of work anyway! On-going legal battles between the MUA and its allies against the Government and Patricks bosses may see the case whereby the Government's role in the Dubai training SAS/mercenaries union-busting scheme would be resolved or dropped. So while not a revolutionary win, they are barely back to where they started, it stopped the

for up to date info, go to
<http://www.users.bigpond.com/Takver/soapbox/index.htm>

wharfies!



picketing the docks at Brisbane

union-busting.

This in turn has made others confident they can fight back. The Alliance will be tested again, as the building workers and mineworkers are being set up for their battles with the City Link Freeways & CRA-RTZ respectively.

interview

At the recent Social Justice March in London, we spoke to Bob Ritchie, former Liverpool docker, about the War on the Wharfies and any lessons to be drawn from it.

BF: The Liverpool dockers coined the term "the world is our picket line!" and survived as long as you did by tremendous international support. What have you been able to do to help the wharfies?

BR: There were Liverpool dockers out there before the attack on the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). What's happened there is a carbon copy of what happened to us in 1989, deregulation. The same thing is happening in Japan. The ship owners and stevedoring companies are looking to Australia as part of a move for a global attack on dock industries.

I was in Japan to hear Jane Kelsey, a professor from New Zealand, talk about what had happened with trade union laws there. It was if the UK trade union laws had been exported.

Capitalism is global, and there's no reason why workers can't be global. The problem with many Trade Unions is that the bureaucrats at the top aren't prepared to fight. As one of our lads said at a meeting recently, there's a cancer slowly spreading over the world, and the only thing we have to fight with is each other.

BF: What's your opinion of the MUA?

BR: They've been absolutely superb, and even the ITF (International Transport Federation which groups transport unions internationally) in the Pacific Rim have been good, though we couldn't get that kind of response from them for us in Europe. Another thing is that the MUA haven't risen to the intimidation, neither did we. When you see how prepared the police are, like in the recent Reclaim the Streets in Birmingham, you see how one sided a picket line could be.

BF: The MUA has been taken to court over the boycotts happening internationally. What's your opinion of this?

BR: It's nothing to do with the MUA, I would have thought if there was a legal case it would be against the American unions showing solidarity. It's an out and out attack to smash a well organised union by any means.

BF: Could the ITF be attacked?

BR: The ITF should be leading the way. If they had been taken to court here, their head office is in London. They could have moved it to a country not covered by English law. They could move every week if

needs be. They need to show more backbone, if you look what happened to the shipping industry, where thousands of jobs were lost.

BF: Do you think it's likely that anti-boycott and secondary action clauses will be put into world trade agreements?

BR: They will possibly use these, we can be sure they'll attack in any way they can. They are out to smash organised workers in any way they can. The whole system is against the working class.

I think the days of mass picketing are over - different ways and directions need to be found, such as what we did in targeting directors' homes and trying to shame them. We need to keep control ourselves - all the while our dispute was unofficial we were OK. If it had been official Morris would probably have forced a deal on us within a few weeks. What we need is officials who are elected, not appointed. They should be accountable, and only paid an average wage, it's disgraceful that they're on £40,000 plus a year.

BF: Will the wharfies win?

BR: Yes. It will be very difficult, but they have the will to win and the international support.

BF: What can anyone reading this do?

BR: Anything! The world is our oyster, and if there's a will anything can be done, though at times it may not look that way. Each individual can change things and collectively we can do more.

chattanooga three

Lorenzo Ervin and two other black autonomists are being charged for a protest at Chattanooga city hall, in the wake of the coverup in the police murders of two young black men in the city in May. If convicted, Lorenzo could face a life sentence under the "three strikes" law.

The attempt to railroad the three activists failed on the original date (June 17th) because they filed a motion demanding that the charges be dismissed, making legal arguments and demanding attorneys be appointed. The defence attorneys told them that the case against them is weak, but this is redneck country and they are in a police court.

Lorenzo stated "We will only win this case on appeal, not in trial court in Chattanooga."

The case is a clear frame-up and the defendants could do with as much noise on their behalf as we can make to get the charges dismissed. Write to the US Embassy or send a fax or e-mail to the Chattanooga officials listed below:

Bill Cox,
Hamilton County States Attorney
600 Market St.
Chattanooga, TN. 37402
(1) 423 209-7400
(1) 423209-7574 (fax)

Jon Kinsey, Mayor
City Hall
101 E. 11th St.
Chattanooga, TN. 37402
(1) 423 757-5152
e-mail: mayor@mail.Chattanooga.gov

Yusuf Hakeem
City Councilperson
Hakeem_Yusuf@mail.Chattanooga.gov

Aussie cops censor anarchist mag

Activate is an anarchist magazine for teenagers. We have been giving copies out in the suburbs of Sydney to try and spread our ideas. We have received legal advice that nothing in the magazine goes against any law. Besides this, we believe we have the right to state our ideas.

At Penrith station, three cops turned up when we were giving them out. They interrogated one teenager for the 'crime' of having been given a copy of *Activate* and illegally confiscated his copy.

At Liverpool station, there were three more. They blocked the entrance to the station, and interrogated every teenager that tried to go into it. At Parramatta, six police came. They told us to stop giving *Activate* out and leave, or we'd be arrested!

It's worth noting that the Australian

government are hypocrites. When anarchists, along with lots of other people, protested against the racist politician Pauline Hanson, the government criticised the protestors, accusing them of being against freedom of speech!

More important than the law, we believe we have the right to free speech. We have continued to distribute *Activate*, and we will do so whatever the government says. We are asking for your support. Please let people know what is going on, and send messages of support to us. Also, you might want to buy a copy of *Activate*.

We can be contacted at *Activate*, PO Box 503, Newtown NSW 2042, Australia e-mail: copsaretops@hotmail.com *Activate* costs US\$2.50 US in the Americas, or £3 elsewhere.

update on the anarchist trial in italy

The trial is now in a phase of technical evidence and what's being analysed is the episode of the so-called "Prenestino Car-bomb", which exploded in 1989 killing comrade Luigi De Blasi. There have been many police and forensic investigations to determine the quality, quantity and destructive potential of the explosive used, as well as the motives and identities of those involved.

Both top forensic scientists and professors from the university came to testify. The prosecution's theory was that this car-bomb must have been to avenge some kidnappers killed by police on the hard shoulder a few days previously in Rome. And therefore De Blasi must have done it. The expert pro-

fessors agreed that this was the identity of the bomber.

The next hearing is set for of July, practically a month and a half away from the last, showing that there's an interest in spinning out this trial, to make sure it is unobserved, the atmosphere of conflict that developed in the first few hearings does not develop.

One last piece of news is that Lovecchio, who arrived in Rome a few weeks ago after being extradited from the Netherlands, found herself jailed in Rebibbia and is now under house arrest.

for more info <http://www.nexus.it/tmcrew>

Italian Activist Internet Server Seized!

On Saturday 27th June the server of Islands in the Net (*Isole nella Rete*, an Italian non-profit association that offers space to social centres, free radio and collectives within the movement) was seized by the Postal Police in Bologna for posting allegedly defamatory material.

The server at <http://www.ecn.org> is now down, its web pages are no longer available online and the e-mail shut down. The preventative seizure was made after claims that a travel agency in Milan had been defamed. A transcribed flyer (that had been widely distributed in the real world) had

been posted by an Italian collective. It claimed that Turban Italia Srl, a travel agency in Milan, had strong financial links with former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, and called for a boycott of the agency in solidarity with Kurdish people persecuted by the Turkish government.

Although the seizure order does not mention anybody or formally charge anyone with defamation, the judge clearly holds *Islands in the Net* liable for the content of anything it hosts.

The shutdown hit hundreds of users but as we went to press it appeared that the

server had been liberated. A backup server was also planned.

For more info and the latest news:

<http://strano.net/news>
<http://geocities.com/Hollywood/Set/2184/inr.html>
<http://www.comune.roma.it/COMUNE/bbs/avana/inr/>
<http://www.zzz.it/~lutom/inr>
<http://www4.iol.it/decoder/inr>
<http://www.altern.org/ecn>
mailing list hackmeeting@kyuzz.org
'subscribe hackmeeting' in the body message

a short history of Polish anarchism

An anarchist movement of Narodnik (Russian anti-capitalist democratic activists of the late 19th century) and Anarchist ideas from Russia and Western Europe came into existence at the turn of the 19th century. The ideas were by no means uniform, from the uncompromising and controversial Nechaev, gallant Bakunin, anarcho-communist Kropotkin to Leo Tolstoy, promoter of a pacifist christian negation of statehood.

The first and most significant anarchistic group in pre-independence Poland originated in 1903 in Bialystok and consisted largely of Jewish people. In the next years some similar centres came into being in Nieznow, Warsaw, Lodz, Siedlce, Czestochowa, Kielce and a couple of other towns. What particularly intensified activity in all centres was news from the Russian Revolution; Bloody Sunday in St Petersburg. These groups took part in terrorist activity as well as propoganda actions such as attempts on police officers' and factory owners' lives. There were also bank robberies to gain funds. Nowadays the majority of us anarchists entirely reject such methods but to understand the motivation to act in this way it is important to realise the level of cruelty and despotism of the tsar's authority. For example in Warsaw, on Governor-general Saklow's order, 16 young anarchists, (about 18 years old) were murdered by the authorities and their bodies thrown into the Vistula. Shots at demonstrating workers were not uncommon either.

At the same time material popularising the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism came pouring in. Adherents of this kind of anarchism repudiated terrorism claiming it did not contribute to an increase in society's consciousness, but on the contrary averted it from anarchism and caused disarray in the movement. That is why anarcho-syndicalists encouraged other anarchists towards propagandistic activity and joining trade unions.

The best known theoreticians of Polish anarchism were Edward Abramowski, Wacław Machajski and the anarcho-syndicalists Dr Józef Zieliński and Augustyn Wróblewski.

Edward Abramowski claimed to be a non-state socialist. However it should be

noted that the word "socialism" at that time did not have such a limited meaning as it has nowadays and a majority of groups of liberation, leftist groups and struggles for independence identified with it. Abramowski presented his views in works such as "Ethics and Revolution", "Republic of Friends" and "A Public Collusion Against Government". (An alternative to the state system was, in his opinion, free associations of producers and mutual services federated in bigger co-operatives.) Only these support real freedom, and give welfare, order, justice and brotherhood to the individual. Furthermore they are organised from the grassroots, spontaneously without compulsion. Existing associates should form, on a specified territory, a free commune without authority and police. However the lack of the supposedly indispensable machinery of repression does not mean chaos at all. The reverse happens - it releases repressed energy and makes people want to create the surrounding reality and to find themselves in it. An example of a big growth of social consciousness in the days of Solidarity and then the repression of 81/2, is evidence of an enormous potential in people who have realised that they can change something in their life and surroundings at last. But let's return to Abramowski's theories. An unquestionable authority of those days, Tolstoy, had a considerable influence on his views. Following him he advocated non-payment of taxes and refusing to join the army. At the same time as being against the church as an institution he referred to Jesus' sermons which in his opinion denied statehood and

authority. In "A public collusion against government" he gave some instructions about how people should struggle with the Tsar for their own national maintenance. It certainly did not mean promoting another dictatorship which statehood is. Abramowski was also (as every anarchist) opposed to national socialism. He prophetically warned "The politics of modern socialism is a politics of strengthening and extending national authority that tends not towards setting people free but towards authorising everything which only they themselves can authorise."

Another popular Polish anarchist was Wacław Machajski, born in 1876, originator of a new current, called machajewszczyzm. Originally he was a patriotic activist in the PPS party but gradually he came to anti-intelligentsia views. He claimed that all the greatest evil that surrounds people comes from ideas and ideologies of intellectuals. Although the consequence of that attitude was the setting aside, not only of democracy and socialism, but anarchism as well, his ideology was closely related to our movement. Foretelling the constraints that follow socialism he predicted the arrival of a slavish system in which bureaucratic machinery set up by intelligentsia would constrain the ordinary worker.

During the interwar period syndicalist ideas had repercussions in the Union of Trade Unions (ZZZ in Polish), which was 130,000 strong and active from 1931-1939. The ZZZ applied to join the IWA. During the war the ZZZ and other organisations formed the Polish Syndicalist Union (in

continued over



a scene from the May 1988 strike

reclaim the streets!

On 20th June Reclaim the Streets staged two street parties in North and South London.



An orange flare signaled to the gathered thousand's the start of the street party in Brixton. Having turned up in relatively small force, the police seemed content to stand back and let it happen. Perhaps this had something to do with the sensitive nature of the locale!

Although the main police CCTV had been skillfully covered-up, by an activist shimmying up the pole and placing a plastic bag over it, the CCTV unit on McMuck's frenetically swivelled around filming anything it could. McMoney were also forced to shut their toilets as the celebrants took the piss big style. For hours a largish swathe of Brixton's streets were given over to fun, jollity and car free space as the RTS red, black and green 'flag' on

top of McMuck fluttered in the coolingbreeze, making their (McMuck's) Union Jack look grey tattered and from a bygone age. Of course the usual PC Plod 'snatch-squad' lurking about in Brixton tube station made a determined effort to ruin someone's day by arresting people getting on the trains to go home.

Meanwhile another street party was in full swing in Tottenham, closing down every single road junction at some point during the day between Euston and Seven Sisters as 2,000 made their way to the party. Euston tube was closed, so 1500 people left for Kings Cross and a pig was overheard saying "We're doomed!" Greater London Radio advised people not to enter north-east London as Reclaim the Streets had taken control of it! 5,000 people well and truly reclaimed Tottenham High Road to 3 sound-systems which entered and left the party without being pulled.

Critical Mass cyclists initially took the site whilst party-goers following multi-coloured flags came forth in their thousands to celebrate the reclamation of what is rightfully theirs, "Freedom is there for the taking...so let's take it!" Local people joined in the festivities as the High Road was taken over with music, laughter, performance, football and kids playing.

At the end of the day two cars used for barricades were set alight and the police baton charged the remaining people making 11 arrests for public order offences. The police were totally out-witted all day.

*Shamelessly borrowed from Schnews,
PO Box 2600 Brighton BN2 2DX*

For an alternative viewpoint, see the letters page!

global street parties

In Birmingham, after 70,000 called for the leaders of the world's most industrialised nations (the G8) to cancel the third world debt, a 10,000 strong Reclaim The Streets (RTS) party brought the Bullring to a standstill. This was part of a week of protests in April called the Global Street Party! parties took place in 37 different cities, here are some of their stories.

Toronto, Canada, saw hundreds of people take over a major street, but soon after the party kicked off police tried to spoil the fun, pushing people over and bursting balloons with knives. A part of the crowd left, the rest tried to keep going and were met with more police violence. Four were arrested for 'unlawful assembly'.

In Tel Aviv, over 500 people joined Is-

rael's first RTS. The organisers asked for police permission, but as the crowd got bigger they ended up choosing their route as they pleased.

In Brisbane there were a lot of arrests as Queensland's traditionally heavy-handed intolerant police towed away the soundsystem. Further south in Sydney, about 3,000 celebrated with three different stages (rock, techno and reggae - something to learn from here, perhaps?).

More than 3000 showed for the Prague party but the police created what turned out to be the biggest riots for the last four years. Three McDonald's were destroyed and 64 people nicked, but all were later released without charge except nine who remain in custody facing hooliganism charges.

polish ZSP which actively fought against fascists. However it was not isolated from other formations and cooperated with the National Army (AK) and the People's Army (AL). An illegal newsheet, the Syndicalist, was published and ZSP detachments took part in the Warsaw Uprising.

Anarchistic ideas reappeared after the war as the Alternative Societies movement and the Sigma club which originated in the early 80s. Other groups like the Autonomous Anarchistic Federation of Lublin, Freedom and Peace, Intercity Anarchistic Federation and Orange Alternative shot up like mushrooms after that. They were all active against the communist system however as distinct from Solidarity they defended themselves with irony and humour and refusing to join the army than more traditional methods. A lot of the radical ecological activists came from these movements. Some still exist and there are new ones as well such as Social Activity Membership in Slupsk. Anarchist ideas in the workers movement found a lot of support. A group of the Anarchist Federation published a paper "Works" in Nova Huta.

An inspiration to that kind of activity was often the original Solidarity which had a lot of syndicalist features in its programme. "The only possible way to change the actual situation is to set up authentic workers' autonomies which would make the employees the real master of a factory. Our association demands a restoration of the autonomous nature of the co-operative. It is necessary to pass a new bill which will protect from administrative interference." This was passed by the National Deputies conference of NSZZ (Solidarity) in 1981. Their current programme is much less radical and far from the original.

It should be said that Polish anarchist history is not as impressive as the Spanish, Italian or Russian (this is according to the Polish authors of this piece). A strong desire for its own statehood after years of slavery is strong in Polish society. As always this situation gave independence to only a minority, to the majority only new chains. I hope the future will not bring the sadomasochistic cult of the headman to Polish society but instead the triumph of freedom and autonomy.

Long Live Anarchy!

Poles released

We reported in BF 213 that some anarchists were amongst several Poles kidnapped in Chechnya. We are pleased to report that all those kidnapped have now been released.



What is anarcho-syndicalism?

The article "What is anarcho-syndicalism?" in BF 211 provoked quite a bit of response from all over the world. Here Kieran Casey, outgoing International Secretary of the SAC, (the Swedish workers central organisation, a syndicalist union which left the IWA in the 50s), puts his personal views on the subject. As ever, we would welcome responses from, anyone, whether part of the IWA or not.

An open letter to all members of the IWA

The 1997 Spring issue of Black Flag (BF) carried an ambitious article written under the pseudonym "Peter Principle" (PP) titled "What is anarcho-syndicalism?". One of the main threads running through the piece was the threats to anarcho-syndicalism posed by what he termed anarchist vanguardism on the one hand and libertarian reformism on the other. It also contained an in depth analysis and criticism of the IWA and of certain decisions of its 20th congress held in Madrid December 1996. The effort to deal critically with the subject deserves much respect and praise. Although BF is not a house journal of the IWA or any of its sections there are obvious close couplings as shown in the text and it is the nearest thing to open in-house criticism, by that I mean the greater house where IWA, like the SAC, is also a dweller. It must be mentioned that syndicalism in Sweden is synonymous with revolutionary syndicalism. There are few who deny that our roots share the same soil as anarchism, which in itself is at face value deceptively simple and difficult to define.

The article also contained judgements and sweeping conclusions regarding the SAC that I felt needed to be clarified. But I also felt that it wasn't enough just to refute misconceptions about the SAC but what was, and still is, needed is an effort to start a dialogue that will hopefully lead to an end of tensions and the beginning of co-operation between all syndicalist organisations, both inside and outside the IWA.

Peter Principle's article can serve as a starting point and I hope this contribution will carry it forward despite my present personal frustration with our collective legacy.

But first some thoughts on Black Flag itself. I remember BF as a spitting, irreverent, puerile rag. An anarchist paper "with an attitude," smug, muckraking and a spreader of malicious gossip and lies about the SAC and anybody else who fell foul of its editors. BF itself was part of the eternal problem of rampant sectarianism.

Without Borders

I had moved to Sweden early in the

80's, joined the Malmö LS (Lokala Samorganisation) of SAC and, years later, met with two members of BF at the SAC's 1990 international meeting "Without Borders" in Stockholm. I had recently become more involved in international questions and together with comrades in the Southern District of SAC had started our own international committee. The legacy of SAC-IWA problems was something we saw as crucial to resolve if syndicalism was to grow internationally. One of the BF observers (who was also an active member in Direct Action Movement - DAM) was invited to the podium. What he had to say had a subtle but significant effect on many of us in the SAC, not least those of us from the south. He started by offering an apology, not for the shit that BF used to spread but for the fact that he had come loaded with prejudice and preconceptions that he sought to verify. His apology was met with honest applause and he confessed if not to a change of attitude but at least to a nuanced picture of the SAC. In light of the concern we had for the future of international syndicalism we felt it was a quiet but non the less significant change that presented itself. Afterwards in the coffee-break I fell into conversation with an elderly Englishman who also started to apologise for having said things that he now regretted. Bewildered I had to ask him who he was, Albert Meltzer was the reply and the penny dropped. Here he was, the man behind the poisoned pen. Our conversation finished with him promising to set the record straight in the next issue of BF. This I felt was concrete progress and that now there was some hope of moving international relations forward. Nothing ever came of it though as BF's next issue came three years later. I suppose though Albert did make some amends in his autobiography where he has favourable things to say about us.

A door opens....and closes

Another opportunity to bridge the gap was when the SAC received a letter from Pepe Jimenez, the IWA secretary, early in 1994. Here, in my opinion, the SAC fumbled the ball.

The letter came to SAC's international committee asking them to explain the form of SAC's involvement with the unemployment benefit scheme, if we employed "officials" and our view of the background when SAC and IWA parted ways in the 50's.

The committee was puzzled and even suspicious as they had answered time and time again those same questions from the Spanish camp and wondered if it was yet another stage of a slander campaign. I felt more inclined to interpret his letter as an effort to raise the (IWA's) discussion on the SAC to a factual and objective level and that this offered an opportunity to move things forward. I had been elected as International secretary at our 1994 congress and by the time I, as international secretary, answered his letter and signalled our wish to bridge the gap the moment had passed. Pepe was no longer in the arena and the new people were rabid anti-SAC. (Although I never received an acknowledgement of my reply some individuals in the Solidarity Federation (SF) later referred to it, terming it "inadequate", but then nothing short of sackcloth and ashes would do for some).

During my work as international secretary in the SAC (late summer 94 to summer 98) I have written to counteract some of the wildest allegations published in the CNT paper, some so absurd that I was even embarrassed on their behalf. Not one of my letters was ever even acknowledged let alone published. A formal greeting to the IWA Madrid congress was never mentioned, this contained a clear wish that the IWA congress should drop the prohibition against contact with the SAC and that we were open to deal with any and all issues of contention with any appointed body of the IWA congress. I strongly suspect the CNT and the IWA have a special wastepaper basket with our logo on it.

As I understand it though, the IWA congress decided to appoint a commission to "investigate" the SAC. Well no matter what the wording it would offer an opportunity to create some forum for dialogue. An invitation to the SAC's congress (June 1998)

offered the chance to come and see us at work, talk to SAC activists and get a first hand impression but again it seems that this is not a high priority.

Same old attitude?

Peter Principle at least tones down the former "in your face" style that used to be the hallmark of the BF but the stripes are hard to wash out all the same.

While he doesn't define "libertarian reformism" in the beginning of the article he later states and I quote "...the SAC now firmly established as a reformist union dispensing welfare to workers of behalf of the state in the Swedish mould". He further states that "...SAC's pluralist political policy leads it to seek international relations with any union or political group who will deal with it and plead innocence when it causes offence". Such sweeping statements insinuate a refined and fiendish nature.

PP "strongly suspects" that if the SAC had offered assistance to only one side in the Spanish conflict i.e. those who eventually retained the initials CNT then "the original dispute would have been regarded as an irrelevance". This flatters neither the SAC or the CNT, as if the real problems can be resolved by the buying and selling of favours and graces. The problems are, at bottom, differences in ideological and applied syndicalist praxis and not a question of who is friends with who.

Neutrality

The SAC's position on the split in Spain is one of neutrality, we hold that they both should join together. In the present bitter circumstances this seems unlikely and from a quick perusal of "cnt" and "rojo y negro" (the paper of the CGT) it is the former that acts as the mud-slinger, based on simple observation.

When Franco left the scene and hundreds of thousands of potential members of CNT rallied in Barcelona, the SAC was one of the first to take the entire contents of its Spanish solidarity fund down to Spain to aid in the reconstruction of the union, a fact conveniently forgotten.

When after the de-facto split we were approached for a loan to aid organisation in the workplace by the "renewers" it was granted after much discussion in the SAC. One of the provisos being that a loan would also be made available to the other group if the need arose. It didn't change our policy of neutrality. I will admit that it muddled

the waters as PP states, no less than the actions of others in this whole sad story. PP's labelling CNT-R as the "the phoney, reformist organisation is equally ludicrous as the definition as the other group as being entirely "Leninists"

If you get close to dog-fight you invariably get bitten and there are few who haven't been scarred by these events.

The Spanish conflict casts its shadow on syndicalism internationally as PP rightly points out but the negative effect is greatest on the domestic front. The split in the syndicalist movement into CGT-CNT followed by further breakaways and exclusions have caused tens upon tens of thousands of potential members to shun the arena altogether. The growth of the CGT must be ascribed to their pragmatism and organisation and not superciliously written off as "reformism and class collaboration". The diminishing numbers and shrinking workplace presence of the CNT cannot be continually blamed upon enemies, saboteurs, the police or alleged international conspiracies instigated by the SAC. Of course the Spanish establishment has no wish to see a strong syndicalist organisation in its midst and it would be naive to ignore its capacity and willingness to upset its efforts to re-consolidate. But the CNT's/IWA's degree of fear, conspiracy theorising and what can only be termed as outright paranoia is out of all reasonable proportion and is in itself the greatest hindrance to organisational development.

Beep and Drive

It must be remembered that one of the bones of contention between the IWA and the SAC in the 50's was the ban on tactical freedom which the SAC did not accept and still holds to be an important element in any true con-federal agreement. The system of works councils are unknown here in Sweden (the reformist unions partake in compromising bodies though) and the SAC lacks a coherent analysis of this growing European phenomena. The Swedish establishment has its own recipe to include and disarm or exclude and demonise militant workers. To counteract rank and file militancy in the 70's and the diminishing con-

trol the reformist unions had over its membership new labour legislation was introduced, the classical bone to the hungry dog trick. The bosses were now obliged to inform before introducing major changes and hiring and firing procedures were regulated granting more job security to waged workers. The SAC were not alone in calling this the Beep and Drive legislation. Previously the bosses just drove over you now they had to beep the horn first. The introduction of legislation covering labour relations caused a shift in the role and work of the SAC officials, the so called ombudsmen, away from studies, agitation etc. to concentrate more on giving legal expertise.

Anyway what I am getting at is that the SAC by using negotiations and legal paragraphs to push for better wages and conditions can hardly be accused of class collaboration. It is an accusation that should be reserved for just class collaboration and not as a fancy slogan to sling around willy-nilly. Relying on legislation is often the only alternative when you are a single syndicalist in a work-place. Furthermore because of our numerical weakness and the lack of our own structures for mutual aid, the state often offers some defence against the arbitrariness of the bosses, this is for the whole of the working class. This is not said as a defence for the existence of the state apparatus, it remains the evil twin of capitalism. The preoccupation in some IWA circles of classical anarchist anti-state actions clouds the fact that it is capitalism at the workplace that we as syndicalists have chosen first and foremost to combat. The abolition of the State as we know it will come about subsequently as we build our own institutions to distribute wealth and welfare

Goals and tactics, offence and defence

Quite simply is it not so that if we are numerically strong, well organised and motivated we can gain ground with or without legislation, based on our own strength. When we are weaker we are forced into defensive manoeuvres that are covered by a different set of rules.

The SAC has an ultimate revolutionary goal, to change society through work-



ers taking over the means of production. Or as it reads in our declaration of principles the "SAC, is a syndicalist workers movement whose goal is the realisation of libertarian socialism in which the means of production are the property of all, and are administered by the workers, thereby creating the conditions for a classless society". Noble, modest but clearly revolutionary.

We do not reject reforms as such and this stance cannot be construed so as to define the SAC as inherently reformist as PP argues. Rather we are inherently revolutionary but on the defensive. As soon as SAC sections establish themselves in a workplace they have constantly shown a degree of militancy and, even more important, a flair for imaginative combative actions, that often attract more timid workmates to their ranks. I also challenge any section of the IWA to claim that they have a higher degree of democratic culture and transparency than the SAC, no matter what their size. All employees and elected functionaries enjoy the same wages and their roles and responsibilities are clearly mandated and all are answerable to the congress. We don't have any privileged garnishing, golden handshakes or informal hierarchies. In fact a mention of SAC activity in a job application is definitely no advantage. That said the SAC is not a perfect organisation, much always needs to be done, that is part and parcel of the project. This sounds unnecessarily self-righteous but is not meant as such, it's just an ill concealed pride in an organisation that the world would be a poorer place if it didn't exist.

McCarthyism

The growth from small propaganda groups to gaining a foothold in the workplace is the most important and long-awaited event for IWA sections in modern times. It is something to be welcomed. The behaviour of the IWA regarding the CNT-F and USI-It is unfathomable. PP would agree that the IWA is it's own worst enemy pure and simple. An internal atmosphere of fear that can only be called a form of McCarthyism is rampant and destroying the democratic processes and inner culture that is a prerequisite for any solidarity organisation. It is the greatest tragedy since the crushing of syndicalism by the fascists. It is vital that the IWA sets its house in order and joins the upswing for revolutionary syndicalism where it is sorely needed and not locked up in an ivory tower of politically correct theories.

The SAC itself has its own set of prob-

lems, a passive membership or rather members that choose to be active in other ways in other areas of society, or are busy with daily union chores that are far from the romantic utopia we all long for. Mauled by or excluded from the mainstream press and dogged by a slowly diminishing membership. This in itself increases the burdens on those who are active.

Some relevant points

The terrain between the SAC and the IWA is littered with twisted theories that prevent us from coming to grasp with the real problems facing revolutionary syndicalism in a changing world.

Let me try and make clear SAC's position regarding the relationship to the IWA.

Firstly we do not seek to form a new International. This is reaffirmed time and time again at our congresses.

Secondly, the SAC does not lie still but actively seek co-operation with libertarian socialist, direct democratic or otherwise fighting trade unions which work independently of political parties, nothing at all odd in this, at best we serve as a good example and this only strengthens syndicalism. We are especially concerned with having good relations with ideologically related organisations. There is no conspiracy behind this wish but a firm belief that if revolutionary syndicalism is to have a future we must all learn to deal with our problems and differences in an open and mature fashion. This is a precondition for all co-operation.

The SAC does not propose itself to be the perfect workers organisation and we continually seek to improve the democratic structure so that it might serve as a tool in the shaping of a future libertarian socialist society. We do not propose to dictate our way upon others nor do we engage in defaming our libertarian sister organisations.

There is the clear risk that sooner or later the continued false allegations, like a self-fulfilling prophesy, will force the SAC membership to write off the IWA further paralysing the future of syndicalism. let us tackle the points at issue in an open fashion.

Dialogue

The vacuum between the IWA and the SAC serves as a hot bed for malicious rumours. This vacuum is our common and at present greatest enemy. It prevents dialogue and the mutual enrichment of all.

We all have a responsibility as individuals, as groups and as organisations, to actively work for some kind of normalisation

in communications that will allow us to eliminate false conflicts and allow us to clearly define and deal with what just might be real differences.

There is no one true path, no single formula, dogma or model which limits our struggle for emancipation. The very idea of practical and direct action includes the possibility of wrong steps. The dynamism and pragmatism of revolutionary syndicalism leads to the possibility of learning from our mistakes and of course from our successes. Let us create a forum for dialogue and eliminate malicious rumours. Let us make a serious effort to resolve our more real and difficult problems and show that both we can both meet this challenge and shake this stone from our backs and get on with the work of changing society. For this end I am always ready.

Yours in solidarity

Kieran Casey

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February in Zagreb

The 20th February was a day of protest against the social policy of the Croatian government. The protest was called by trade unions, but the Zagreb City authorities banned the gathering. Police from all Croatia blocked all routes to the square half an hour before the meeting. Columns of workers came to the police cordons and tried to break through. The demo was estimated from 20 to 40 thousand, and one participant said that it seemed that those day there was a great revolt against the government, and that there is a level of solidarity between the people which was pretty forgotten by these times.

In the crowd were some BBB (bad blue boys), fans of *croatia* football club (formerly *Dinamo Zagreb*). *Dinamo* was one of the most important slogans during the protest, because the fans don't like the new name. It's a symbol of resistance to the president and government, in a way.

Taken from *Zaginflat* #12, June 1998.

ZAP/ARK; Gajeva 55, 10000 Zagreb,
Croatia

email: zap_zg@zamir-zg.ztn.apc.org

Let Them Wear Versace

On the 14th May 1998 just over three percent of the world's population rose in open revolt against the business interests of a single family. They took to the streets of one of the biggest cities on earth and devastated it. The sacking of Jakarta by its poor, swiftly followed by similar actions across Indonesia, has demonstrated the unprecedented class divisions now appearing on a global scale. The levels of social and economic polarisation currently prevailing on Earth are approaching a critical point. Two hostile classes will eventually face each other, a monopolist, oligarchic bourgeoisie battenning on a massive and desperate proletariat beneath it. No conceivable situation could illustrate this better than Indonesia. There, a single family, the Suhartos, concentrated into their hands almost the entire revenue of the world's fourth most populous state, placing them, and many of their friends, amongst the top hundred richest people on Earth. The zero-sum logic of such extreme wealth meant that this year's economic crisis, which left the poorest destitute and the middle classes ruined, was precisely the mechanism whereby the Suharto's wealth increased (now estimated at \$20billion plus). Their eldest daughter Rukmana responded to the collapse of Indonesia's public economy in January by chartering a plane to the United States for an emergency weekend of luxury shopping, blowing £100,000¹.

Indonesia: A Tax Haven Established through Genocide

Indonesia has long groaned under an economy thrown open by the Suhartos to global investment. Big business is largely liberated from the burden of capital taxation (apart from bribes) so regressive taxes on the poorest (based on consumption rather than income) have been used to make up state revenue shortfalls (much of which has also made its way into Suharto wardrobes). But Indonesia is not an aberration. It is just an extreme example of an economic structure which is becoming ubiquitous across the planet. The structure of Indonesian capitalism is an advanced model of the global economy, a fact attested to by former eulogists of Indonesia's growth rate who now attribute its demise solely to a "lack of transparency".

This is disingenuous because the chief beneficiaries of the Indonesian economy have always been as clear as day, the

Suhartos and their billionaire friends in the local tobacco, lumber and finance industries. Behind them come Western multinational investors (including Japan) who are currently courting Suharto's rivals in order to save their investments. Elsewhere monopolists have had more success in hiding their dominance behind a mask of parliamentary democracy. Although some single figure billionaires still choose to manage the impoverished staff at their corporate headquarters directly (eg. Fidel Castro, estimated wealth \$1.5billion²) most big league bosses employ low-waged line managers to undergo the public humiliation of elections for them. If you are as large as News Corp or Microsoft for example you can instruct a "statesman" like Tony Blair (estimated wealth \$450,000) to act as your European sales rep. (Recently some super-rich have decided to try governing for themselves in the West. Silvio Berlusconi's (\$4.9bn) ill-fated neo-fascist government in Italy, and the unwelcome attention it brought to his investment activities, taught him why most of the ruling class choose to tick the "no publicity" box).

The Suhartos had to attain their position somewhat more forcefully than did the Blairs (or the criminal Berlusconi) hence the mammoth cream off they and their friends have claimed as reward. Suharto Senior enthusiastically crushed any revolutionary alternative to monopoly capitalism in a bloodbath in the mid-1960s which cost the lives of half a million people. A further 200,000 died in the 1970s after the invasion of East Timor³, a massacre designed to starkly remind Indonesians what was waiting for them if they sought a different path to Suhartoism. Since then, as Indonesia's malign guardian of global investment, Suharto has had every indulgence lavished upon his regime by the West. His genocide in East Timor finally reassured overseas investors that he could deliver on his promise to make Indonesia puke cash in their direction too, provided they constantly supplied him with enough sophisticated weapons of repression. This is why so many governments ignored non-payment for arms shipments, writing debts off as unavoidable business expenditures. So successful was this strategy that by the 1990s the West's media, in particularly delirious moments, were not above holding up Indonesia as an economic model to be emulated by "backward" European nations still overburdened by welfare systems and human rights.

Indonesia's crisis is a genuine crisis of capitalism itself. Unlike their billionaire neighbours controlling the comparatively uninhabited island of Brunei, the Suhartos owe their riches not to the exploitation of oil reserves but to the exploitation of a huge population. This savage contradiction could not last forever. The entire trade off whereby the population either acquiesced to the veneer of a booming, westernised Jakarta (which most could never benefit from) or else faced the terror of the security forces was hanging by an increasingly slender thread. It would take only a single reverse to be suffered by Indonesia's middle classes to bring home to the entire population that no illusory ladder of opportunity existed for them. At this point Suharto's entire carrot and cattle-prod confidence trick would collapse.

Going Beyond Class Warfare

Revolutionaries have always maintained that capitalist oppression will eventually lead to the world's poor violently forcing their way back onto the stage of history and that no army, however well equipped, can ultimately hope to resist them. That Indonesia experienced one of the greatest eruptions of class warfare in human history demonstrates this point. But no-one should sing in praise of simple class war. The wanton destruction by the poor of Suharto's hypermarkets, toll roads and luxury hotels, whilst it proves once again how effortlessly and swiftly the revolutionary poor can paralyse a state, nevertheless appears to have gone no deeper. Class warfare is an ultimately wasteful expression of hatred, a rage against mass poverty which, though it can be expressed through mass uprisings such as in Indonesia on the 14th of May, remains individualised. The vacuum which follows when the poor flee back to the slum districts inevitably opens the way for a resurgent bourgeoisie to reposition itself, commandeering the uprising as its means of redistributing monopoly power amongst its excluded members. Just as looting only satisfies the immediate wants of the poor as individuals, rioting against the rich only dislodges the wealthy individuals currently occupying positions of power (who are immediately substituted by their rivals, or the army if their rivals are divided). As an outlet for accumulated personal grievances, class war occasionally ends up even finding common cause with

an urge for racial violence (especially where race and economic stratification coincide). Unless it breaks out of individualised mass action and becomes a truly social revolt, unless, that is, the poor rediscover their class consciousness, a riotous uprising, even on the incredible scale witnessed in Indonesia, will simply serve as a tool for middle class reformers to modernise, intensify and rescue a capitalist society in crisis. This is why it is vital to advocate social revolution, to highlight the spontaneous revolutionary organisation which the masses have increasingly managed to assemble in uprisings this century. Workers have transcended rioting and looting and begun to set out the basis for a totally new form of society in revolutions stretching from Spain in 1936 through to Albania (briefly) in 1997. But for their spontaneous organisation to be effective workers must draw upon the theory and analysis of

within our historical mission to abolish class society altogether, then we become a force potent enough to sweep away the armies of the world.

Who's Next?

The economic crisis which has, in one year, spread from the weak economies of central and southern Europe to devastate the dictatorships of South East Asia is a crisis which is rapidly climbing the world's economic pyramid. Global investors are losing their nerve in the face of a growing proletarian revolt (though they are sighing relief at the Indonesian poor's failure to organise socially on 14th of May). Whilst the disintegration of Indonesia was dominating the media's attention the global crisis which sparked it was relentlessly continuing to mount, its next target, Russia. Precisely as Yeltsin lurched toward his seat

at the top table of a newly expanded G8 his central bank was frantically battling to save the rouble from oblivion. China too is under growing pressure to devalue, initially able to resist speculators but now haemorrhaging reserves because of the full blown Depression mounting in nearby South East Asia¹. The Economist magazine regularly predicts that this current round of devaluations will not end until it has arrived back at the doorstep of the bubble

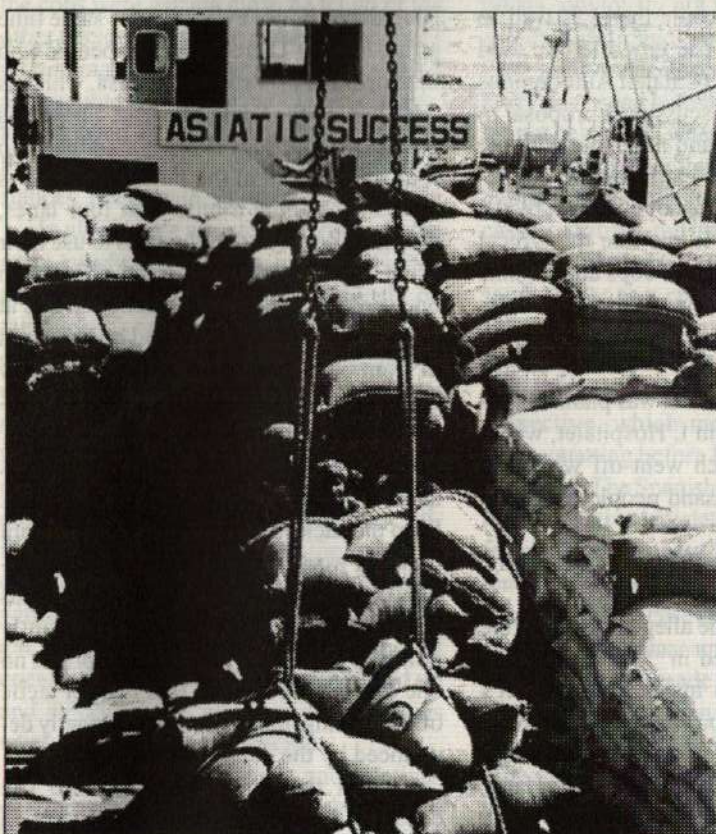
world for its multinationals. This was after all the strategy for which the Cold War was originally fought (and for which dictators such as Suharto and his family were hand-somely assisted to power). The genocide which elevated Suharto was merely a fragment of a global slaughter which raged across the developing world from the 1950s to the 1980s. Mass murder was employed by America, the West, and their proxies to establish a "New World Order" by 1991. But it has taken just seven years for that Order to crumble and for America's "emerging markets" to collapse in disarray. Now the chickens may be flapping home to roost. Though it is impossible to predict when or by how much the tottering economy of the USA will come to be effected by this crisis it is enough to point to the intense monopoly and class divisions prevailing there. The glittering, hi-tech skyscrapers of its major cities are underpinned by a massive underclass held in check by televised state murders and a brutal prison system which is approaching gulag proportions. The economy is dominated by a billionaire clique comparative to that of Suharto and his allies, their wealth increasingly derived as much from exploitation at home as from abroad. These are conditions not wildly dissimilar to those which lead to the 14th of May in Indonesia. If American workers respond to their crisis not with looting but with revolutionary action it will then fall to them to begin the greatest adventure of all, to explore the possibilities of human potential and thereby set an example to the world more profound than that of 1776 itself.

1. "Ruling Family's Wealth Claimed at 20bn", Daily Telegraph, 16.5.98

2. Forbes

3. These figures represent the most conservative estimates for loss of life (those provided by the Indonesian army itself). Amnesty International has suggested that the true figures might be more than double in each case.

4. "Pressure Builds on China as Asian Scars Show" Evening Standard, 19.5.98



previous resistances. Rioting and looting can destabilise the rich but it is the revolutionary seizure of their means of production and destruction of the state infrastructure which represents the first step to permanently dissolving them as a class. The mission of a revolutionary proletariat is not to destroy the property of a Suharto, Gates, Murdoch or Buffett or that of any other billionaire. It is to rid the world of the class system which reproduces them. When we, the world's poor, make the power of class hatred dialectical, when we subsume it

economy which exported it in the first place. The global meltdown of 1997-98 could be a report echoing around the world, the sound of the American investment boom collapsing.

Our World: A Tax Haven Established through Genocide

Proclaiming itself the winner of the Cold War, America set out in the 1990s to consolidate its victory by taking over the

...and in Africa

Students in Zimbabwe compared dictator Robert Mugabe to Suharto in demonstrations against corruption.

They said if their demands for a probe into corruption were ignored they would drive Mugabe out of power just as Suharto had been driven out by Indonesian students. They denounced the president as an incompetent and chanted "Suharto, Mugabe, Indonesia, Zimbabwe."

squatting in barcelona

In one week, there were two evictions of casas okupadas in Sants, a working class Catalan speaking area where we have one of our largest CSOs (Centro Social Okupado), "L'Hamsa" and where we hold concerts of 1000 to 1500 people. One was evicted in the morning without prior warning, 8 arrested. In the evening there was the usual demo of about 200. Along the route 8 meat wagons suddenly turned up with riot cops in them who immediately blocked the road. The demonstrators decided to veer off and go down a smaller road heading for the evicted squat. Once there, they were confronted by a dozen cops dressed up as hard-core squatters who all took out their guns and tried to provoke a (shooting) incident. The okupas pulled back cautiously and later that night the large green paladin bins were set light to and the ETT offices were attacked. (ETT is Empresas de Trabajo Temporal, 6 month contracts with shit wages, just being introduced in Spain for the first time).

The response of the cops was to comb the area looking for anyone resembling a squatter. The area of Sants was taken over in a military style occupation, anyone they met was arrested and given a good going over once in the copshop. Obviously people who had nothing to do with this were "taken in". One guy hid under a car for an hour and a half not daring to move. In all, five were taken in and charged.

The following day another squat, where people live, was also evicted without warning. This time nobody was inside. The same day the eviction order arrived for "L'Hamsa", there had been one for a month on "La Vakeria". This seems to indicate that the authorities have decided on repression as the means to put an end to the okupas. Attacking two of our major social centres in the same week, and attacking three squats in the same area shows this. The latest thing, of dressing up as okupas and pulling guns is a new and very alarming develop-

ment. Catalonia is not the Basque Country, where there is a similar situation to Northern Ireland. Guns are rife there, but not in peaceful tourist-land Barcelona. Hence people are very concerned about this change of tactics and the people in Sants are tense and incensed at the occupation of their neighbourhood.

Subsequently, there were three big concerts: in "L'Hamsa", a place near "La Vakeria" and in "El Palomar" (another CSO similar to L'Hamsa). The concert at L'Hamsa was free and more than a thousand people turned up. It was held to calm the nerves of the people there, as well as creating publicity. The day after we read that the Generalitat (Catalan Autonomous government) was discussing a proposal to enter into dialogue and negotiate with the okupas. This, as you can imagine, was received with large doses of cynicism by the squatters. It seems to me like the typical cynical manipulations of cops and villains (politicos) to attack the okupas physically while making public statements to the contrary.

The day after a demo was planned outside the law courts in L'Hospitalet, where La Vakeria is, which went off without a hitch. About a thousand people turned up despite rain.

The following day another demo in the Ramblas attracted several thousand.

The next week the alleged report of the Generalitat appeared in "La Vanguardia" using photos taken inside L'Hamsa. It's tone was anti-okupa, saying their ideas were good but their methods were wrong, typical divide and rule stuff. Two days later, after everything had calmed down a bit, there was even a rumour that the judge on the L'Hamsa case had withdrawn or retired.

However, that Tuesday La Vakeria was evicted at 7am with 22 people inside, chained to different parts of the building, offering "passive resistance". Judges have already ruled (twice), in Catalonia, that

peaceful resistance (i.e. not fighting the cops) is not illegal and have acquitted people a couple of times so tactically this is a good thing to do.

As soon as the people were out and taken off to the local copshop, the bulldozer went in and what is left of a beautiful 18th century Catalan macia (country house) is nothing but a memory of 6 years of occupation and a lot of rubble.

So, La Vakeria went, and as L'Hamsa was still under threat another demo was called for the following day. People turned up in the Plaça de Sants and went to "La Morada", a house evicted at the same time as La Vakeria. There were 1000 people who then decided to walk to L'Hamsa, which is right behind the Sants copshop. There was serious rioting, cops at one end of the main road and okupas at the other. The road is straight for about a mile with four lanes, which made it easy for the cops to use their usual tactic of going in groups of five with one cop at the back firing rubber bullets at people. Many of the cops had been bussed in from other parts of Spain, didn't know the terrain and had no experience of confronting the okupas, who usually stand their ground and shower the cops with bottles taken from recycling containers and bricks from the sacks of rubble from the constant building work. Ironically, it's the construction companies which supply the okupas with the ammo they need by constantly doing up properties to rent out at prices no one locally can afford. This market tactic of controlling house prices is constantly denounced by the okupas as speculation.

When the demo got close to the copshop, it stopped, as usual, to maintain a safe distance from the cops. At that precise moment plain clothes cops on the demo, who were at the front of it and at the back, took out "self-defence spray" and started spraying people in their faces. These sprays are illegal in Spain, so the cops don't even respect the laws they are supposed to



enforce. It also appears that the whole thing was a set up. Normally demos go direct from central Barcelona to L'Hamsa, but because of the eviction of the house in Sants, it was predictable that they would have to go down Creu Coberta, the main road, past the copshop.

People at the back also knew that there was a line of plain clothes cops behind them, making it impossible for people to leave without getting nabbed, with the attendant tortures and beatings which go with being arrested. Also, the side streets of Creu Coberta are narrow, and there were more plain clothes cops hiding in their doorways. One squatter from Melbourne was caught in this way. He decided to get out of the area and ran down a side street where a plain clothes cop jumped from a doorway and sprayed him in the face. Not being able to see anything he grabbed on to someone else and they carried on running with cops in pursuit right behind them. Realising that the cops were getting close he let go of the other person to let them escape. He carried on running and later bumped into a woman and ran into a bar. The bar owner and customers tried to stop the cops from taking him off, a brave thing to do in the circumstances, but in vain, nonetheless.

In all 17 were arrested and taken to the main copshop in the Via Layetana which the squatters had attacked ferociously on the day of the eviction of the squatted cinema "La Princesa". Once there they had to run the gauntlet between the vans where nothing could be seen. Inside the eldest of those nicked and two women were beaten up very badly. Menstruating women were not allowed to change their tampons initially, and when they went to the toilets to do so were accompanied by male pigs, which is contrary to regulations and illegal. The prisoners saw cops taking lines of cocaine continually to keep them hyped up and could see the pleasure in their faces when they were hitting people.

All the next day friends and relatives of those arrested tried to see their loved ones, but only for a few minutes and had to wait all day to do it as the cops wouldn't say when. Charges varied, but they wanted to deport the Aussie. On his charge sheet it said arrested for "social disturbances and causing damages". For this, they deport people, but as Spain is now part of the EU this means deportation and exclusion from

any member country for 5 years. Another dirty tactic.

The Friday, just before 10am, the okupas went to the courts to support those "kidnapped" by the cops, as is the custom. During the morning more and more were arriving until there were a hundred or so, on the other side of the road from the cops. By mid morning the majority of the meat wagons went off as it was clear that nothing was going to happen. Those arrested were making declarations to the judge and people hung around outside waiting to see if they were going to be released or not. After 1pm one of our lawyers came out to tell us of the state of play. The charges for each one was read out and they would all be released soon. This news made us all a bit happier and gave a boost to our enthusiasm. As it was lunch time the judges, lawyers and clerks were leaving and were met with clapping and laughter from the squatters. This made some laugh but intimidated others, obviously not used to having their power questioned, or maybe because of their guilty consciences for what they do every day - send human beings to hell-holes for not being rich, where all suffer and some die. The rich have their cases quashed - as happens frequently here in Spain - or their case is thrown out of court because the "New Civil Code" now does not consider some things as a crime. This particularly angers the okupas as the new code makes occupying a building a criminal rather than civil offence, as it was before. It is also retrospective, which means that those who were squatting before March 1996 are now criminals. The Spanish constitution prohibits "retroactive legislation". During the defence of "La Princesa" part of the legal defence was based on this. At first the judge dealing with the case accepted the argument and shelved the case until the constitutional court in Madrid made a pronouncement.

However, after the summer went by the judge "suddenly" changed his mind and stated that the present law was the law and therefore the okupas had to go. He'd obviously had his orders. However, for cases of pederasty the penalties have been reduced, and in one important case in Valencia the accused, who were expecting to be sent down for a very long time, have been released for exactly this. The judge kicked the case out of court. One law for sexual offences and another for property offences.

Those arrested were released one by one and greeted by loud cheering and clapping. The squatters crossed the road en masse and okupied the space outside the entrance where the prisoners came out, shouting slogans like "Llibertat detingudes" (Catalan for "Free the arrested") and the pigs had to get out to show their authority. After a lot of singing and shouting and taunting the police there was a moment of tension when the chief pig tried to quieten down the okupas and get them to move back across the road, something they aren't used to doing. Retreat is not in their vocabulary, especially when it comes from a pig. The okupas are total democrats, making decisions in assemblies, meetings open to everyone, and do not like "orders". They know how the cops act with eviction orders, brutally beating people and even strangling them. There was a stand-off and what broke it was that at exactly at that moment more prisoners came out. So everyone ignored the cops and started cheering. This calmed the situation and the chief pig could have eased off, but then being reasonable isn't in their vocabulary.

The cop tried again to get people to move back, was ignored, so the helmets went on and the truncheons came out. Some of the cops just waded in and the rest followed suit. One of the two TV crews started filming, the other intentionally did nothing. The okupas caught them out and got them to film as well. As the okupas were pushed back across the road some couldn't get up the steps leading to the Promenade above, as part of it was blocked by cops. Then the most brutal attack occurred, many of those who couldn't get up there fell over and two cops started laying into them with a sadistic ferocity.

Even then the cops didn't let up. The squatters regrouped and shouted "Basta Ya!" (That's enough) holding their hands up in the air like the anti-ETA demonstrators, to show that they are non-violent, against violence and against terrorists. But even doing this didn't stop the cops laying into people. They were all lined up in riot gear chomping at the bit to lay into the okupas. The father of one of the squatters, who had just been released, was screaming abuse at the cops, as he had been one of those who had fallen over and was in a lot of pain. His daughter tried calming him down along with others. An unconscious





girl was laid out in the grass in the middle of the Passeig (Promenade) well out of reach of the cops.

Another friend came up to me and we hugged one another to give each other support and show our solidarity. She had been hit really hard on her shoulder with a truncheon. There was blood on her hand, which she explained was from another friend who had had her head split open by the cops. Later when I saw this on TV I saw the censored version where a group of friends screamed wildly at the cops; one of them had blood pouring down her neck from the head wound; the others touching her head, showed their bloody hands to the police, who were just arrogantly ignoring them.

As if all this wasn't enough, when the ambulances arrived the cops started attacking the injured who wanted to go to hospital. They also refused to let many of the injured (30 in all) anywhere near the ambulances, let alone get in them, saying they weren't injured enough. Only two were allowed to go to hospital.

People regrouped to an *assemblea* which drew up a list of the injured with all relevant personal details on it, necessary to file a complaint against the cops. Others who were more hurt got together to go off to the hospital, they needed official proof from a doctor to sustain their complaints, as well as to treat their wounds. Not having transport we all walked off.

At the hospital we were well treated, in every sense of the word. Nobody made

waves about us, or about legal problems over medical insurance or being a foreigner. Gradually we all moved to the waiting room which we okupied, sitting on chairs, talking, some sleeping and passing around snacks and water. These attitudes of sharing and doing what we want surprised those in the hospital, both workers and patients. The atmosphere was good despite the fact that we were breaking all the normal rules of the hospital. Even the porters and security guards were friendly to us. This was bigger and better publicity for us than the "mass media of disinformation" who only gave the cops version. One comic moment was when an elderly woman with a crutch came into the waiting room. We gave up a seat for her, re-okupying floor space and that's when she asked what we were doing there. "The police have attacked us", to which she said "this is just like the okupas", which caused some laughter. She explained that she lived near La Princesa (the evicted cinema which was attacked by 200 riot cops and a helicopter in a battle lasting three and a half hours) and she described what she saw that day.

After being seen by the doctors, people started leaving in groups, with a group of squatters protecting the main entrance, to make sure that no more cops turned up to kidnap people. After La Princesa was evicted, one okupa was taken off to hospital, but as the ambulance was driven by cops he didn't get there, instead going to the main copshop. On every okupa demo

there's always an ambulance wanting to come through, which we always let through, but what a coincidence.

People drifted off gradually but this was far from being the end of it. Those from La Vakeria (an old 18th century dairy) went straight to the town hall meeting in their area, L'Hospitalet. Those responsible for the eviction and subsequent police brutality were the mayor and politicians of L'Hospitalet. At the meeting the okupas claimed La Vakeria as being legitimately theirs, because "we have con-

structed it physically and intellectually".

Part of their communiqué which they read out was shown on one local TV channel. So people went off to their squats to protect them and continue their lives in as normal a way as possible, and to go to the incessant demos being called, two for that Friday night, and another for the following morning under the slogan "La Vakeria sigue, sigue, la lucha sigue sigue" (The Dairy keeps on keeps on, the struggle keeps on keeps on). We re-okupy, so it's a change of scene or place, but as the okupas say "You can evict our houses but you can't evict our ideas".

The same day as the unwarranted and cowardly attack on the squatter outside the courts, there was a demo against the temporary work agencies (ETTs). According to official figures most people leave these agencies' jobs after one month. This is probably because people are so hard up that 45000 pesetas a month (£90) seems better than nothing. So people accept the work and after one month drop it immediately realising that it isn't worth doing for the pittance they give and call a wage. It's not even subsistence wages. Rents in Spain are 30000 per month minimum, but normally are about 40-50,000, so people give up their time to have enough to pay the rent but nothing else. Eating, transport, going out, presents or even such basic things as clothes and household goods just don't come into it.

The demo was called in Cornellà, a

working class area where there are lots of factories, most notably multinationals, e.g. Siemens, and has a lot of people in trade unions, albeit reformist ones like the Comisiones Obreras or UGT who always make pacts with the government, going blatantly against their own affiliates interests. The central government pay them for every affiliate, a pay off if ever there was one.

A few years back when the French government was attempting to introduce short term contracts, the youngsters at one of the Colleges/schools in Cornellà had a banner hanging outside the school for ages saying that the French through constant rioting had succeeded in obtaining the withdrawal of this scheme. Therefore, they in Cornellà should be doing the same.

Just before last Christmas, the people from the same schools decided to call some demos against these agencies, the ETTs. It's normal practice on many demos in Spain to push the large green paladin bins into the middle of the road, take out useful material to lob at the cops and then set fire to them. On that occasion something of that sort happened, as well as attacking the ETT offices. As this went on for a while, one young lad was picked out by the cops, arrested and tortured and then released after a couple of days. He was rearrested and a confession was extracted which he signed naming himself and his mates as being those who had done this. Not being able to live with himself he committed suicide. A demo was called and a thousand people turned up, and it was attacked by the police with plain clothes cops arresting people just like they had with the other guy.

As a reaction, the youngsters in Cornellà called a general strike for one day in protest. As there was quite a lot of publicity the cops did not attack them (then!). Not long after a hit squad went into the ETT office and set it alight with petrol and molliques, in plain daylight, telling the office workers to leave. This made publicity; so when people saw posters for a demo in Cornellà the same week as the full scale attack against the okupas, nobody had any doubts about the outcome.

About 600 people assembled in the middle of Cornellà and decided to march to another place where they would read out a communiqué. Once there the riot cops attacked them before they had time to read out anything. The major danger came from the 50 plain clothes cops inside the demo and about 6 people were arrested. They were taken off to a nearby building where they were placed in separate rooms. Shortly afterwards a group of 5 to 6 riot cops came in to give them a good working over. In the

corner of the room the pigs already had the molotovs, rocket launchers, etc. to back up their charges against the accused. For this they could get sent down for a couple of years apiece. The propaganda work had already been carried out by the mass media saying that the okupas had called the demo, and this two days after the Sants demo where 17 were arrested for rioting, etc. The judges normally send down anyone brought before them by the cops, dismissing contradictory evidence saying they prefer to believe the word of a police officer. This had happened after La Princesa to an American who was teaching English in a private language school until 10pm, but the cops claimed had been rioting at 8.30-9pm. The judge rejected his underground ticket with date and time on it as evidence. Spain has progressed from Fascist dictatorship to banana republic.

The fly in the ointment for the authorities is that several of those arrested are CNT members. This is bad (for them) for two reasons. Firstly there is a media blackout on the CNT and anarchists, except historical things, 1936 and all that. The CNT is now "historical", according to them not existing today and not having any relevance to today. Secondly, the CNT is a legally recognised organisation, and so has a right to reply to anything published against it or its members.

When the press published the cops version, as always, the CNT handed over a personally signed communiqué giving its version of events to each newspaper. Some of them published it, albeit reduced, which gives publicity to the CNT and anarchist movement, as well as officially denying the cops version and showing up the press as the lying shits they are.

The week after this onslaught against the okupas (and remember the okupas say "L@s okup@s somos tod@s, pero faltan l@s pres@s" - the okupas are all of us, but the prisoners are missing, i.e. not here with us) there was ten days of events organised by the squatters about the arrested and talking about what had happened. These took place from one end of Barcelona to the other, including the suburbs, and brings together all the cases of repression taking place around the city. The prisoners are 49 from La Princesa, 16 from the riot attacking the main copshop that same day; 17 from the Sants demo including the Aussie compañero who faces deportation from Europe for 5 years; 6 from the Cornellà demo.

For more details and to support those arrested contact CNT, c/ Joaquim Costa 34, Barcelona, Spain

Tel/fax (93) 318 88 34

answers to quiz

1. They were vulgarised as the Stanford-Binet test in the United States, and were used to assign places in society, i.e. blacks at the bottom, followed by recent immigrants from Latin and Slav countries and with white Northern Europeans at the top. Apologists for the tests claimed that someone's position in society was a "natural" effect of their intelligence, rather than to do with racial and social discrimination. Similar arguments were used in Britain as a justification for selective education.

2. Dr Johnson quotes the derivation of the word elf as being from Guelph, a political faction in medieval Italy (and the word goblin from their rivals the Ghibellines). The names of the factions originated in Germany, and the Guelph dynasty reigned in Hanover until 1866. The British royal family is descended from the House of Hanover.

3. Mohandas Gandhi was featured on a stamp in 1969 to celebrate the centenary of his birth. While the likes of George Woodcock claim Gandhi was an anarchist, they are really confusing anarchism with pacifism, and at best Gandhi was only a tactical pacifist.

The libertarian communist William Morris explicitly stated he was not an anarchist, even though he worked very closely with anarchists in the Socialist League. He was recognised in 1982 for his contribution to textile design. The Post Office refused to commemorate the centenary of his birth in 1996.

4. Dennis the Menace was featured in a book of "smiles" greetings stamps.

5. It gives them a chance to show off their pedantry by making the point that May Day is the First of May, celebrated as International Workers Day, while May-day is the international distress call derived from the French "M'aidez!", meaning "Help me".



Newham Monitoring

Newham Monitoring Project has been fighting racial harassment and police harassment in East London for 18 years - consistently running an emergency advice line, offering practical support to individuals and running campaigns. NMP has always been a grass-roots community organisation and funding has come and gone. The withdrawal of funding and loss of its office more than a year ago had led to rumours of its demise but Black Flag found NMP still going strong when we interviewed Adil Rahman.

BF: Tell us how NMP started

NMP: NMP was set up 18 yrs ago in 1980 following the murder of Akhtar Ali Baig - a young Asian lad. He was walking out of East Ham tube on his way home from college, where a group of skinheads had a £5 bet on who could kill the first "paki." Akhtar was the first black person they saw and they actually fought to get across the road - you know they wanted to win the bet - it was broad daylight - and they stabbed him through the heart for a £5 bet.

That was really the straw that broke the donkey's back - East London was the centre of the NF's programme and there was a lot of fascist activity. There had been many other cases - in 1978 the Viet brothers who had been working on their car outside their home were attacked by a group of fascists armed with iron bars and other weapons. The three brothers defended themselves while another brother inside the house called the police for help. The police came - allowed all the fascists to go, arrested all the brothers and charged them with affray!



The charges were very serious and the brothers were imprisoned for between 3 and 25 years. This scenario of unprovoked attacks by fascists resulting in the arrest of the victims was a daily reality.

The other side of the coin to all this fascist activity was the police racism. There were 2 kinds of responses from the police to call outs from black people reporting attacks. You could get a brick through the window and wait four hours for the police to turn up - or they'd turn up immediately, allow the perpetrators to go and arrest the victims. (Today they may have learned the language of multi-culturalism but little has actually changed.)

So the community had had enough - the community leaders, the temples, churches and mosques got together and said look this can't go on - the response of the statutory agencies had been totally inadequate and we needed to do something ourselves. Racist and police attacks needed monitoring 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and so the NMP was formed. It is very important to remember how NMP got started and why 18 years on we are still active and supported - NMP came from community politics - from the bottom up and not from the top down.

Following NMP's formation in 1980 there was the case of the Newham 7 which drew a real focus to Newham. A group of racists had been attacking kids at a local school - it had been going on for 4 months - the police had been informed, the school had been informed, the council had been informed - and nothing had been done about it. So 7 young men got together and said well if no-one else is going to do anything we will make sure you get home safely. They got to the school to find a group of men there - who turned out to be police officers. The fascists arrived, were allowed to go and all 7 of the lads were arrested.

From this came the phrase 'Self Defence is No Offence.' We believe the community has a right to organise if no-one is going to protect them. There is a very distinct difference between vigilantism and 'self defence no offence' where you have been forced to say enough is enough - even one attack is too many - but here it was happening day in day out.

The case showed police racism on one side and local racism on the other side of the coin and NMP began to run the first emergency service in England offering im-

mediate practical support and advice to people suffering from police and racial harassment.

We eventually got funding from the council but now have lost it again which, for a lot of people at the beginning, seemed a disaster but now it's turned out a lot better. NMP only accepted funding on the understanding that it would continue to be a political organisation - and how can you be a pressure group when you've got constraints? We always said we'd refuse funding if it came with constraints and we stepped on the council's toes and the police's toes one too many times which meant we were doing our job - but also meant that the council wouldn't fund us. It's over a year now since this happened and the office was burned down. We now have another office in Stratford and are going strong - the racism from the police and racism on the streets hasn't gone away and nor have we. We have less resources than before - but we're still there doing cases and campaigns. One of the things we are doing is helping to run the Stephen Lawrence campaign together with his family and the Southall Monitoring Group.

BF: Is NMP now all run by volunteers again?

NMP: Yes purely by volunteers which again shows the basis we have in the community. This is the difference between NMP and a lot of other organisations and why we've survived so long. We said look we're not going to parachute in, stay a couple of weeks, get a bit of media attention and then go and let the black community face the backlash. We've maintained that we would be there 24 hours, 7 days a week whatever happened.

BF: Did you have to build up the trust from the community or was it always there from the beginning because the people who started NMP were people who lived in Newham?

NMP: I think the reason why the community got so involved in NMP was firstly that racism was such a big issue and we got things done. NMP's work forced Newham Council to be the first council in the country to adopt a racial harassment policy - unfortunately now the policy simply acts as a buffer and has little effect - black people now get moved out and the racists stay.

A lot of people came to NMP after they'd hit brick walls everywhere else - they'd go to the council and say what was happening and nothing would be done, the

Project - 18 years on

same with the police and eventually they'd arrive at NMP. We not only provided practical advice but also said - together we will *do* something, we will *change* things. That's why we have such firm roots in the community - what we say is what we do. We try to channel people's anger as a community to achieve change.

For example in Second Avenue there were fascists terrorising a whole community - NMP put the black families in touch with each other - because after all they are there day in day out and if they link up to become a strong unit you know that not only will you be able to solve the problem for that day but you can also solve it for future - that's why community politics is at the core of every thing we do.

NMP have always maintained that the problem isn't a lack of laws - there's a thousand and one laws against racial harassment - but the problem is the implementation - its no use having hundreds of laws if the first one isn't put into practice. Newham councils racial harassment policy is perfect on paper but when it comes to putting it into practice and putting their money where their mouth is you realise that, to them, its just a piece of paper in a drawer and it's just not good enough.

Its weird looking back 18 years ago to remember fascists openly walking the streets. It's so different now; now the police are the main problem. A year and a half ago 6 people died in police custody - Ibrahim Hussain died in the police yard at Forest Gate police station, handcuffed on the floor surrounded by 6 police officers and *then* sprayed with CS gas - you can't talk anymore about one rotten apple in a barrel - your talking about a police force that is rotten to the core.

NMP have dealt with hundreds of police harassment cases over the years and not one police officer has ever been sacked for racial harassment. One Asian man was arrested and he had a tape recorder on him - he taped the arrest. The two officers from Forest Gate police station racially abused him and you could even hear them slap him on the tape - they threatened to take him around the corner and shoot him - gave him the whole works. We put in a police complaint and the police officers had to admit what they'd done. Their punishment was to have one day's pay docked from their pay packet! The Police Complaints Authority is a joke - it's police officers investigating police officers - it hardly inspires

confidence.

Overall NMP think there are two strains of racism - the racism that discriminates in recruitment, education, the media etc. and in East London you have the racism that kills - that's the difference - that's why NMP is here - it is such an issue.

BF: Can you tell us a bit about the Dray family

NMP: Yeah - to understand this case you need to look at policing in East London. The stations are huge - they are not there to solve crime - they are there to contain, to police, the community. The one in Forest Gate is like a fortress - it's built to say 'here we are; don't mess around' and they drive around in TSG vans and riot vans - as if black people were rioting daily.

The fact that Paul Condon says that say 80% of muggers are black shows that its not just a few police officers on the ground but it goes right the way through. The Home Office's own figures show that black people are 7 times more likely to be arrested than white people; when they get arrested they're more likely to be charged; when they go to court they're more likely to get convicted and on conviction the sentences are longer for black people than a white person in exactly the same position.

So this is the sort of policing black people get in Forest Gate - but equally this is the sort of policing that white working class people get in Canning Town and Custom House - they face the same sort of assaults and harassment. We are a black organisation, and the Drays' case was the first that NMP took on for a white family - but it was so, so important. This was a family who were very well known in Canning Town - they were big in their community. A lot of people had reservations - but you can't just go into a community and *tell* them not to be racist - you'll only get alienated. Policing was an issue that linked both communities - this inroad was well used by us and I think we did a really good job.

The Dray family's case was amazing - it centred around Lee Dray a 17 year old boy. The police had been driving around Canning Town and Custom House harassing local youths. In the same way that black



youths are stereotyped as drug users, muggers, illegal immigrants etc., the white working class kids in Canning Town were seen as burglars, drug users, criminals. The police were randomly picking up kids - slapping them around and assaulting them. Lee Dray couldn't even walk from his house down the street to a friend's - he'd been attacked on numerous occasions by police officers. One police officer with 8 complaints of assault against him was still on the same beat.

Eventually one of them took the skin off one side of Lee's face - the pictures we took were horrific - they put his face to the ground and scraped it against the tarmac until the skin had gone - and the police officer responsible, PC John Fortune, is still there at Plaistow Police station. We took the police to court and won - the evidence against the police was upheld. But there's always a price to pay with the police - they charged Lee Dray with assault and disturbing the peace - so not only was he victimised but also criminalised and that's very, very important - they criminalise a whole generation and that's what policing today in inner cities is about - containment.

For NMP the case was very successful because we made inroads into the white community and could address issues around fascism - the white community was much more receptive to our ideas after the Dray case and we were able to make links. The same social issues that were effecting the white working class community were affecting us and divided communities don't get anywhere. We needed to be united in order to fight for social justice.

Another important case was the Tower Hamlets 9 defence campaign. Derek Beacon had just been elected, the BNP were rampaging through Brick Lane and this young lad, Qudus Ali, was attacked. These

fascists put his head on the kerb and took turns to kick it. He was in a coma on a life support machine and to this day he cannot eat without help. There was a vigil outside the hospital for Quddus and the average age of the kids on the vigil was 14 - 15 yet the riot police attacked them. After the incident they randomly drove around the borough, picked up 5 kids and charged them with riot - only four of them were arrested at the vigil but the police needed 9 defendants to make a charge of riot stick - it's a very serious offence carrying a maximum sentence of 10 years.

NMP did the campaign for the Tower Hamlets 9 - highlighting the fact that the police had done nothing to arrest the people who attacked Quddus Ali despite ample evidence of their identity. The problem is that you want to trust the police - that's who you ring when you're attacked but you can't have faith in them. I should have no fears about walking past a police car - but I do - when I walk past a cop car I think to myself 'God I hope he doesn't get out, hope he doesn't stop me, hope he doesn't search me or push me around'. It's no coincidence that 80% of black people and women joining the police leave within a year and that top police officers think Bernard Manning an appropriate entertainer for their staff events.

BF: you talked about the Quddus Ali campaign and the Tower Hamlets 9 - but are there no organisations like NMP in Tower Hamlets or in the rest of the country?

NMP: There is CAPA in Tower Hamlets - a civil rights organisation - which is a good organisation but civil rights can be anything. I think what is needed in Tower Hamlets is a group solely concentrating on racial and police harassment. Also in our 18 years of campaigning the NMP have never sat at the same table as the police - how can you when you have seen injury after injury inflicted by the police on the bodies of the people who come to us for help? But groups like CAPA are part of the "multi agency approach" (where statutory and voluntary agencies including the police meet to deal with racial harassment

issues) and we have problems with this. We feel that it's a talking shop and the council and police can use it as a buffer. Newham had an amazing structure for dealing with racial attacks and harassment - but what did they do? They simply employed black race



officers - somebody would get attacked, come into the council office, see a black face and they'd become a buffer between the victim and the local authority and nothing changes.

What's worse is that when the council stopped NMP's funding they gave the money to an organisation called ALERT who deal solely with racial harassment issues in Newham and not policing issues. Incredibly, ALERT is run by ex-police officers from Stoke Newington. So the issue was never money - the authority were uncomfortable with our stance on policing. ALERT is a 9-5 organisation with no roots in the community. Three weeks ago I found 2 swastikas painted in white paint outside my house and I rang ALERT to report it. The worker on the other end of the phone didn't even know what a swastika was! Even when I said it was a Nazi symbol this didn't ring any bells with her. She said she'd get someone to phone me back and an hour later a man called me to ask me about some 'frosty stickers' outside my house! I put my head in my hands and thought this is a borough where in the local elections 19 BNP candidates were standing - leafleting every weekend - and the local racial harassment outfit do not even know what a swastika is. It's scary. In a borough where a black single parent could be housed with known fascists as neighbours - the local agency that should be helping her did not have even a basic understanding of what fascism is.

Issues have changed in the last 18 years and racism used to be high on the agenda. It isn't anymore. Local authorities and the police have now learned the language - they've learned to shed crocodile tears but will not do anything. Policing has become

a very controversial subject and none of the political parties want to touch it. Law and order is a big vote catcher. Somewhere like Chigwell the style of policing will be completely different - local bobby on the street - but you don't get that in Newham. In Newham black people stopped for a faulty wing mirror will be asked to show their passport. That's what it is to be British for a black person

at the moment and only an independent community organisation will speak out about these things.

BF: If someone was to try to set up a group like NMP from scratch, what advice would you give them, particularly as many anarchists are increasingly seeing the need for working in small groups within their local areas.

NMP: Southhall monitoring group is an example of another group like us and there are a few others. NMP has 18 years of experience now and we've made a lot of mistakes, along the way. We've not been perfect but experience is invaluable. We'd be happy for people to phone us or talk to us about setting up their own group. But most importantly you need to be part of the community where you want to work. People like the SWP who go in and leaflet for a week, put up posters everywhere and then piss off achieve fuck all. In fact I think it does more damage than good. As soon as they go away, black people in that area get attacked - they're left to face the backlash.

BF: Yes, I remember friends with black children on the Isle of Dogs during the BNP election campaign who said that they couldn't go out after the ANL had been around. If the ANL had been around on a Saturday then the BNP would be around all night and they would be housebound - they got no support and felt that the ANL acted as if the local community didn't exist - wouldn't talk to them unless it was to

recruit.

NMP: Yeah that's true. NMP has always maintained that you have to deal with fascism ideologically, politically and physically. So if they leaflet - we leaflet - it is important to make sure there is no platform for fascists - if they're on the street, we'll be on the street. You can't allow them to have that space. So in Newham, where fascist activity is strong - 3 or 4 years ago they were 66 votes away from getting a councillor - you have to work within the community. The worst thing you can do is walk into a community and say "don't be racist" and walk away - you have to talk and work with them. Of course for me the only good fascist is a dead fascist, fine, but any campaign has to have staying power and has to politicise people. Once a community is politicised they will always be able to fight back.

BF: One of the problems is that, especially in London, it is hard to feel rooted in your local community - you move to a neighbouring borough and you're an outsider! We may feel a part of our own little ghetto but don't even know our neighbours.

NMP: You've got to work from the bottom up - the fascists do this, they're clever - they go to tenants' association meetings and other small community meetings and manipulate them. There is no left any more and people need to start from scratch and make links wherever you can. There is a problem with people becoming more and more isolated from each other and this has to be tackled.

BF: So it's a question of starting small and tackling things that you can definitely achieve and working from there - the opposite of what a lot of big left groups do which is to start with a lot of razzmatazz and noise.

NMP: Take our emergency service for example - we have 80 volunteers all from the community. They give an evening once a month and will do it. That's where our strength lies - in our volunteers. We only had 3 or 4 workers, but look what we achieved - local and national campaigns and we could only do it because of the support in the community. And of course it took time to build up - NMP were fortunate (if you can put it like that) in that a lot of black people were experiencing the same problems and needed solutions. You're not talking about passive victims. These people had been fighting racism from day one and had the tools - they know what they are dealing with. It's important not to stand in front of people saying "I'll lead you to the promised land", but to say "we'll stand side by side and deal with it together".

BF: If someone phoned your emergency line and said there's five people attacking my home - what would you do?

NMP: We'd phone the police, but also we have a telephone tree which we use to get volunteers down there to support the family. I don't want no favours from the police, I just want them to do their job. You need people there to protect the family from police indifference or worse. Of course, you end up sometimes with the police acting true to form and nicking the NMP volunteers that turn up rather than going for the attackers.

BF: Do you ever get problems with people treating you as experts and expecting you to work miracles? You said that you try to get people to link up and support each other, but do you get situations where people start to treat you like you're the council? Where they ask you to provide the solutions rather than for support in fighting back?

NMP: The basics of everything we do is empowerment and to be honest - none of these people are passive victims, they've all fought back. The stereotype of the timid Asian woman hiding behind the window is bullshit. The problem is that when you do fight back you get nicked. People do ask us what we can do - and we are honest about the limitations of some courses of action. We'll write letters to the Police Complaints Authority or to the council but admit that it is unlikely to result in any action. We say it's important to do it so we can say that we made x number of complaints and nothing was done. Our reputation and history show people who come to us not to expect us to act like the council but to work with them and not for them.

BF: Would you be prepared to come to a meeting of people wanting to set a group up?

NMP: Of course. We'd love for other similar groups to be set up and to make links with them. It's even more important now. Now we've got this Labour government - for years working class people have been waiting for a Labour government to get in and suddenly they've been shat on. We are very worried about a fascist backlash and we know that the government won't do anything for us - they won't provide shit. It's a problem we are going to have to deal with. But policing is, for us, the biggest issue at the moment. Today a case came in where 3 riot vans raided a house, armed with CS gas, and arrested a bloke who had done nothing. Another case that came in recently was a priest that had been raided and assaulted in his home! Most people wouldn't believe this could

happen. The Stephen Lawrence case really epitomises the state of policing in this country at the moment.

The police are the front line of the state and the state is racist - for me policing is the most forceful manifestation of the state. They are fully armed. Their uniform is a licence to kill. The gap between the community and the police is bigger than ever before. The role of policing in inner cities is to make sure that people stay in their ghettos and are contained.

People in the inner cities are nothing to politician, nothing to the police. Black lives are cheap and working class lives are cheap, that's why NMP has always been a race and class organisation. It is important to make links between working class communities, working class black communities, and anti fascist organisations in the fight for justice. That's NMP's politics and for me, this is where it's at.

**NMP can be contacted at PO Box 273,
London E7
telephone/fax 0181-555 8151**

The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry

This year is the fifth anniversary of the racist murder of black student Stephen Lawrence at a bus stop in Eltham, London. For those five years his family has fought for justice for their son, from a police force who couldn't give a toss and the wider racist society that spawned his killers. After the Crown Prosecution Service dropped a trial of the five white youths identified by witnesses, (Luke Knight, David Norris, Neil and Jamie Acourt and Gary Dobson), the family took out a civil case. This too failed and the murderers smirked as they walked free.

The family then got a public enquiry established into the matter. The enquiry has looked at the police response to the murder and the racism that pervades the Met. In an unprecedented move, the Metropolitan Police apologised to the Lawrences.

The enquiry has touched on police corruption; David Norris' father is a gangster with links to the police and a history of having charges dropped, and it seems that there was more at play than just the usual police racism in their faulty investigation.

For two days at the end of June, the five were called to the enquiry to give evidence. The contempt they showed there for the family shows they are stupid, as well as racist. These marked men will find even their far-right drinking buddies will steer clear of them now, if only for safety's sake.

Mark Barnsley

As reported in our last issue, Mark Barnsley has served four years of a twelve year sentence after being fitted up by the police. He had defended himself in an unprovoked attack by pissed-up students in the Pomona pub in Sheffield. The attackers got off scott free but Mark was imprisoned for GBH. He was well known by the local police as an active anarchist before his conviction and two years previously, had obtained an injunction to prevent the Yorkshire police force from harassing him.

To mark the beginning of his fifth year of imprisonment - June 8th, Mark went on a 72 hour hunger strike. Supporters in Sheffield protested outside the local CPS and picketed the office of the Star - the local rag that has peddled numerous lies about Mark. Supporters around the country bombarded the local CPS' switchboard with calls about the case. There were vigils in Holland and Greenland and calls were even made from Holland to the CPS office.

The support group intend to picket the Star's offices again on July 8th and again on August 8th. At the same time they are asking people to telephone the Star's classified section to close the switchboard to prospective business on each of these days. For information about these days of action and the Star's telephone number, contact the support group on the number below.

Mark's case is currently under investigation by the European Commission of Human Rights, something that occurs with less than 4% of cases referred to them. He is also intending to refer his case to the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Mark has chosen to reject the parole procedure stating "I am an innocent man and freedom is my right, I am not prepared to compromise myself by submitting to any form of conditional release. If that means spending extra years incarcerated...then it is a price I am prepared to pay, albeit regrettably. My life has been completely destroyed by the terrible injustice that I have suffered, all that I have left are my principles and integrity, and I am not prepared to compromise them by bending my knee to the parole board."

Contact the Mark Barnsley Support Group, PO Box 567, Sheffield, S5 0YS, Tel 01205 311198 (evenings and weekends)

Mark would appreciate letters - write to Mark Barnsley, WA2897, E Wing, HMP Full Sutton, York, YO4 1PS

Obituary

Merle Austin Africa

In early March 1998, eco-revolutionary MOVE activist Merle Africa died in prison. As one of the MOVE Nine she was serving a 30-100 year sentence for a crime she did not commit having been framed by the Philadelphia Police in an attempt to silence the revolutionary voice of MOVE.

Despite knowing that she would probably die in prison, Merle was one of the strongest, most determined women I have ever known. Staunch in her belief in defence of life, all life, she always remained positive and focused. She never appeared bitter by her wrongful imprisonment, instead she turned her energies to compassion and support for others. When Merle found out that I'd been arrested under the Gandalf prosecution, she was quick to offer support and advice.

fer support and advice.

Like all of the MOVE Nine, Merle was a staunch revolutionary. "MOVE's work is to stop industry from poisoning the air, the water, the soil, and to put an end to the enslavement of life - people, animals, any form of life." (quote from MOVE)

With the death of Merle we have lost her inspirational voice and Chuck, Debbie, Janet, Janine, Delbert, Ed, Mike and Phil have lost their sister.

Obituary by Noel Molland (aka Rabbix)

For more information about MOVE read "A Quick Guide to MOVE" in BF209

Leonard Peltier denied parole

On May 4th, native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier was again denied parole, despite a wealth of evidence to prove that the U.S. government framed the American Indian Movement member for the death of two FBI agents on Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota in 1975.

The parole board rejected his request for release after just a few hours. Peltier said that it "was a set-up."

Board members said things like "the government can't prove who is responsible for the agents' death, [but] someone has to pay," and, "We spoke with one of the agent's wives and she wants you to die in here. You will not receive another parole hearing until 2008."

A couple of weeks before the hearing, when asked if he expected parole,

Leonard said, 'I have no faith in this system.'

He is also suffering excruciating pain from his jaw after malicious medical treatment in Springfield. He needs to get out to a doctor, and one has agreed to treat him, but the US government is not allowing him treatment, even though it is his legal right. Supporters are worried that the authorities may use his medical needs to transfer him back to Springfield, where the problem started. If you write to the authorities, please stress that Leonard be allowed to go to the Mayo clinic and express your serious concern at him being sent to Springfield.

Write to: Leonard Peltier #89637-132 PO Box 1000 Leavenworth, KS 66048, USA
For more info e-mail lpdc@idir.net

<http://members.xoom.com/freepeltier/index.html>

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African Anarchism

Anarchism in Africa: The History of a Movement by Sam Mbah and I.E. Iagariwey
See Sharp Press, PO Box 1731, Tucson, AZ 85702 USA

Written by 2 Nigerian anarchists, members of the Awareness League, the book contains a useful potted history of anarchist theory, a sideswipe at the failure of "African socialism" and asserts that "the process of anarchist transformation in Africa might prove comparatively easy, given that Africa lacks a strong capitalist foundation, well-developed class formations and relations of production, and a stable, entrenched state system." Given the comrades' own experience of the vicious resilience of the military in propping up the status quo in Nigeria, this seems more than a little naive, particularly as the book's only suggestions as to strategy in this regard are for a "long term program of class consciousness building, relevant education and increased individual participation in social struggles."

Nevertheless, the book is particularly illuminating in detailing anarchist precedents in African communalism, drawing on past work by such writers as Walter Rodney in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. In traditional African societies "communities produced surpluses of given commodities which they exchanged, through barter, for those items they lacked. The situation was such that no one starved while others stuffed themselves and threw

away the excess." The authors examine the "stateless societies" of the Igbo, the Niger Delta peoples and the Tallensi, based on extended family structures, clan societies and village councils.

They refer favourably to the writings of the Tanzanian Marxist Julius Nyerere and his concept of *Ujamaa*, "familyhood" - "rural economic and social communities where people live and work together for the good of all, their governments are chosen and led by the peasants and workers themselves."

The authors establish that the *Ujamaa* model "failed because it degenerated into state control over the peasants. Through its bureaucrats and technical assistants, the state started to dictate to the peasants what to do and what not to do, what to produce and what not to produce. Soon, too, the World Bank and other aid donors hijacked the program." Equally, the authors are clear that, contrary to some in the anarchist movement, rural subsistence is not a positive alternative to state socialism; that what African people require is "equality and an end to extreme want." The book is a genuinely provocative and exciting contribution to the development of an anarchist movement in the struggle for liberation in Africa. In welcoming it, however, we should

not be blind to its weaknesses. The decolonisation of Africa took place under the banner of the battle for national independence. Given the arbitrary nature of so many African nation states, this was merely a flag of convenience for the comprador bourgeoisie. The book makes brief reference to the way in which ethnic tensions are used to undermine opposition across Africa, and notes that the roots of communal hatred often lie in an arbitrarily created ethnic/state consciousness. It posits class consciousness as the solution without looking at how ethnic consciousness can be drawn down the road of class awareness. In particular the authors give no consideration to ideas of Pan-Africanism, or to the concept of African Inter-communalism as put forward by the Panthers in the 60s and taken up by groups such as Black Autonomy now.

Equally, while scathing about the past failures of state socialism in Africa, the authors are silent about those who don't quite fit the mould. The book gives no consideration to the methods of organisation of Polisario, whose militias and structures, in war conditions, are organised along libertarian lines. Nor does it consider the initiatives of the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front, which has managed to cohere a

cont. over

dole autonomy versus the imposition of work



This 40 page pamphlet from *Aufheben* is a useful and readable analysis of the New Deal. It goes from looking at enclosures in the 16th century to the developments with Workfare in the USA, which will be our future if we don't resist.

The pamphlet analyses the problems facing resistance to the New Deal, the most serious being that any regular drinkers at the "Duck and Dive" will not want to draw attention to themselves by causing trouble. It also criticises the Groundswell network (a grassroots claimants network) for encouraging purely individual resistance by distributing New Deal survival guides to help people get around the rules.

I think some of *Aufheben's* criticisms are unjustified as Groundswell have done the best they can in the face of a general crisis in working class resistance to capitalism, and individual survival is not a substitute to collective resistance but often precedes it. These points aside, this is a well written and useful analysis of the New Deal, and it has lots of good cartoons.

Do Or Die / Animal

Do or Die No. 7...makes you sick. It's interesting, well written, and looks fantastic. It only comes out about once a year but manages to be relevant for a lot longer and this lets their collective go off and have lives (albeit up trees). DoD is the best direct action/environmentalist publication there is. It reflects a growing level of discussion and thought within the DA movement. Discussion on the No Opencast action in Derbyshire last year (see BF213) is a history of No Opencast, reports on the action itself and a piece questioning the possibility of resolving the contradictions between eco-protesters closing down an open cast mine and ex-miners who want old pits reopened or between dockers defending their jobs and those who resent the environmental cost of transporting goods half way round the world. At last eco-protesters seem to be addressing the gap between an idealist green puritanism and the needs and immediate concerns of the rest of us.

Best of the international news in DoD

is a long piece on the Sem Terra movement in Brazil. Homeless and landless people invade huge areas and set up houses and farm the land. On top of this there's a fair piece on the Gandalf trial, which of course BF has ignored or wilfully misreported, drawing parallels with the trials of anarchists in Italy and of Radikal magazine in Germany.

DoD shows where militant environmentalism and class struggle anarchism meet. And its fun. Bastards.

[Do Or Die, £2.50 UK, £3.50 elsewhere from: PO Box 2971, Brighton, BN2 2TT]

At the other end of the layout evolutionary scale is Animal, now on issue 3. But don't be fooled by the presentation, this is the first magazine where I've read everything in it since...early 2000AD. Long letters from prisoners, an excellent piece on the Countryside Alliance and the most inspirational rant on Class War you will ever read. Send a flash computer (or £1) to PO Box 467, London, E8 3QX.

Parliament or Democracy?

by Kevin Doyle,
published by the
WSM, PO Box 1528,
Dublin 8, Ireland. £2

This comprehensive, well written pamphlet is one I would recommend. It traces the evolution of the idea of democracy, what anarchists mean by the term and how the State uses it to have a completely different meaning. The roots of modern democracy lie primarily in the 18th century, with the revolt against those born to privilege which was the French revolution, and from where most modern European political ideas and movements can trace part of their ancestry. At school, we are always presented with a straight black and white question whenever there is a great historical moment. In this case, it is the absolute monarch against the people. Obviously, the 'people' are the good guys (no one these days who isn't an absolute monarch or an eastern mystic believes in divine right). But what's never mentioned is that the 'people' aren't a homogenous mass, and contain both the would-be new ruling class (the bourgeois-

PARLIAMENT —OR— DEMOCRACY?



Irish anarchist pamphlet

sie) as well as peasants, artisans, workers and so on. They can all use democracy as a rallying cry, but the bourgeoisie put a number of conditions on it - property ownership and sex being the main ones.

The pamphlet goes on to address how workers organising was sidetracked into Parliamentary politics, and why as anarchists such parliamentary antics are the antithesis of our politics. An examination of Labour Parties records in power shows just

how dismal was the failure of early socialists who trod that first step on the chimera of the Parliamentary road to socialism. A quick look at many countries around the world quickly shows that "democracy" as most people would understand it is not practised anywhere at a governmental level.

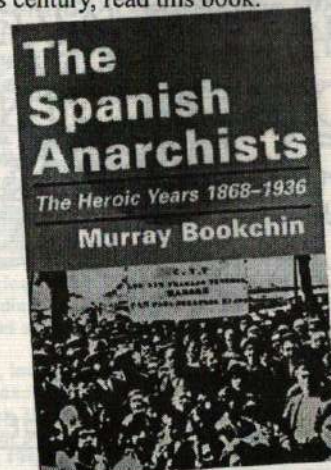
It would have been very easy to end the pamphlet with that, a survey that shows up how far from democracy Parliament is. However, in closing, Doyle puts forward the anarchist alternative to Parliament, what we can really call democracy, and looks at the mechanisms of democratic control developed during the Spanish revolution.

society of nine different ethnic groups, and make genuine efforts towards the liberation of women; has land under community control, dams built, millions of trees planted and civil society slowly rebuilt with minimal centralisation of powers. Unless anarchists (and not just in Africa) are able to develop a critical but supportive relationship (i.e. real solidarity not just words on paper) with libertarian left movements engaged in real struggles - and this applies as much to the EZLN in Mexico as to the EPLF - we will forever be assigned to the roles of holier-than-thou carpers and backbiters, rather than seen as those most stridently engaged in the battle for liberty and equality. The Awareness League, we should remember, began, in their own words as "a leftist coalition composed of marxists, trotskyites, human rights activists, and leftists and radicals of various persuasions, and only cohered as an anarchist current in 1990, following critical analysis and debate over the collapse of Eastern European state socialism." As they moved, so others will follow, but not if we make the precondition for support of ongoing struggles wholesale ideological adherence to our flag above all. As Afuerke Isaras of the EPLF noted, "Third World societies should come out with new theories about their 'socialist' transformation."

The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868- 1936

Murray Bookchin
AK press £13.95

AK have finally got around to reissuing Bookchin's seminal work on the anarchist movement in pre-revolutionary Spain, complete with a new, and surprisingly unembarrassing preface by Bookchin. If you've ever wondered why anarchist ideas were in a position to animate the most inspirational revolution of this century, read this book.



Gandalf

Dear BF

I am writing to thank you for all your support you have shown myself and the other Gandalf defendants. Your support as with everyone's support is extremely appreciated.

Whilst I am writing to you I would like to apologise for the ridiculous and outrageous attack on BF, AK Press and other anarchist collectives, made in the Spring 98 issue of Green Anarchist. As I have written to you and said before, though never in an open letter, the attacks written against you in Green Anarchist are not reflective of the "Editorial Group" but just reflect the narrow minded politics of confrontation as promoted by the GA General Editor, Paul Rogers.

What you, Black Flag, have written about the Gandalf Trial, saying it has been set up in an attempt to hit the Animal Liberation Front and intimidate the growing direct action movement is very true and a view I totally agree with. Any of my co-defendants who allege anything different are just living in a paranoid fantasy world. For a full report on the Gandalf Trial I strongly recommend the report in the animal liberation magazine Arkangel, no. 19 (from BM 9240, London WC1N 3XX) or any good radical bookshop for the highly reasonable price of £1.80.

For Animal/Earth liberation

Noel Molland, Gandalf Defendant and former GA animal lib editor.

A letter from prison

Dear Comrades,

Thanks once again for giving my case a mention (although I should mention that I was actually acquitted of three of the counts on the indictment against me - not that it did any good since the judge simply ignored the verdict when he sentenced me). I've now succeeded in getting my hands on BF213 and it was good that you found space to report that cold-blooded murder of Diarmuid O'Neil. Pat Kelly is a good friend of mine (as is Jimmy Murphy) and while he pointed out some slight inaccuracies in the piece he was pleased to see it. Not only had the S019 filth that murdered Diarmuid been hyped up by the lurid propaganda they had been subjected to before the raid, but they had also been left terrified by it. A combination of cowardice, psychotic racial hatred, and deadly firepower proved a lethal combination.

As far as Britain's prisons are concerned, these are dark days indeed, with Straw continuing with Howard's lunatic

policy of adopting every tried and failed notion that the American penal system dreams up. The so-called '3 strikes' law is bound to lead to an increase in both the murder rate and the number of miscarriages of justice.

In the mid 80s prison regimes were liberalised, not because the Tory government had grown soft, but because they got tired of paying for new prison roofs. Over the past 4 years and particularly since the Whitemoor and Parkhurst escapes, the State has gradually taken back the concessions to humanitarianism it was forced to make in the 80s. At the same time a good many lessons have been learned in terms of controlling prisoner resistance, combining measures such as the divisive 'Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme' with technological advances such as CCTV cameras and using brutal repression, as in the newly re-opened 'control units', to deal with so-called 'subversives'. Our enemies have also learned how to deal with the media more effectively, leading to the misreporting of even major events such as last year's riot here at Full Sutton, which in some respects was even more significant than Strangeways.

The 'Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme', introduced around two and a half years ago, splits prisoners into 3 categories, Enhanced, Standard and Basic. These categories determine the clothing, location, work, association, private cash allowance, number and quality of visits, etc. of prisoners. Not only are prisoners penalised for 'not conforming to the prison regime' and a host of petty and trivial offences, but they are also penalised for claiming innocence. Anyone who thinks that men and women claiming to be victims of miscarriages of justice are somehow trying to 'work their ticket' are very much misinformed. While rooftop protest are practically impossible these days because of advances in prison architecture and design, innocent men and women are still prepared to make great sacrifices and go to enormous lengths to protest their wrongful imprisonment. However, without outside support and solidarity our protests are largely meaningless.

I hope that you will be able to support the days of action being organised to mark the start of my 5th year as an innocent man behind bars.

"I was not a prisoner; merely, I was an Anarchist in the hands of the enemy" - Alexander Berkman, Prison Memoirs.

Yours for justice,

Mark Barnsley

(for more info on Mark see p.26)

Reclaiming Whose Streets?

As a motorcyclist of ten years I was until recently very enthusiastic about the ideals of Reclaim the Streets (RTS) until the recent debacle at Tottenham. I arrived after 6 to find the High Road brought to a halt after exchanging 'alrights' to various faces I looked around to see people of various states of consciousness and unconsciousness crashed out in alcoholic heaps on the road and some highlighting the problems of public transport by dancing to the bland throb of techno on bus shelters which looked like they were going to collapse. The notion didn't occur to the ravers that the day after someone might need that shelter to catch a bus or shelter from the rain on a cold night.

So I walked about (crash hat on wrist) to decipher what the aims were. Immediately I was met by hostility from some spaced-out hippy about getting there by motorbike. I explained to him that my glorious 2 cylinder wet dream cost me £20 and when Mr Honda built it I was 12. I rebuilt it with my own and friends hands which I believe is recycling, unlike trying to destroy bus shelters.

After this I disclosed that prior to this at another RTS I had seen one of the organisers turn up on his own in a relatively new Volkswagen with only himself in it.

The response to this was "hey, no one was having a go at you you've got your right to use your motorcycle as much as he has his car". I was gobsmacked by this, I thought this was a protest against car culture, the selfish one bottom on seat four doors around me which is stifling the inner cities and their inhabitants. Turning up to a RTS in an empty, nearly new car is likely liberating a vivisection lab in a mink coat.

The response to this was about Anarchy and that Tesco's had remained closed and that was attacking multi-national capitalism. Yes, that will really make a difference to Jack Tesco and Shirley Porter's bank account that Tesco's N15 shut for 10 hours.

I tell you what does make a difference to someone of low or no income, who does a bit of minicabbing on a Saturday night and can't get their cars out because some group has decided to have a street party in their road. Although Tottenham is the home to North London's inferior football side it's also the home of your average bod who hasn't a bean, normal people who see owning a vehicle as a way of making ends meet and really do not have any control over the cult of the motor car.

Ask yourself this; does smashing the

window of a car at Kings Cross with a toddler in the back really gain support? You know who you are. Do you think frightening a child and its parent will make them empathise with the beliefs of RTS? Or were you just too off your face to consider it?

How many got into their cars to drive home after RTS, even if it was the day after? What are the aims of RTS? Is it about a group of Trustafarians (crap dreads and Mummy and Daddy supplementing giros) getting off their faces in working class areas like Tottenham while disregarding the aims of RTS in attacking the motor car.

If attacking car culture take your argument to the streets of Chelsea, Hampstead, or Virginia Water, the land of porsches, rollers and jags, and guess where the people with the power who make the laws live, instead of Tottenham High Road. But then again you wouldn't want to piss off Mummy and Daddy, would you?

A.

Dear BF,

Neo-liberalism's current "new deal" and "war on the workshy" can't all be seen as bad. After all the fact that they have to put so much effort into such a war shows that, despite class struggle appearing to be weak and disorganised, workers' resistance to work is still a significant factor in obstructing the bosses big plans to make capitalism more efficient.

Outside the formal channels of opposition: activist campaigns, organised political groups, trade unions, many working class people are informally organised in extended family networks, counter cultures, and counter communities practising informal mutual aid and solidarity, sharing things and looking after each other in practical ways. These things help to fight back against total absorption into work slavery and commodity existence, refusing domestication, bourgeois citizenship and atomised consumerism.

These bad habits and bad attitudes are probably just as important, if not more important, in preventing deeper encroachments on the social wage than formal activism in unemployed groups or the potential threat of traditional trade union dominated industrial action. Hence the system's social cleansing drives against the workshy, the dirty squatters, the single parents, alternative cultures etc... This is my sad feeble excuse for forgetting to turn up at my local claimants group meeting last Wednesday and staying in to cook stew for the people in my squat,

Bye for now,
Paul P.

Back to Looking Inwards - again

The notion that anarchist ideas are so hot and the continuing conundrum as how to make anyone give a monkeys changed up a gear this May as the hordes gathered in Bradford to discuss how to get noticed.

Maybe it's too much to ask for a summary and conclusion of the events, discussions and rants which took place - the whole four days were massive, with unknown hundreds turning up - however it's perhaps a little too convenient an excuse to avoid giving a personal view of what happened.

The build up to Bradford '98, the pre-event debates, saw a lot of unlikely characters sitting down and discussing what they thought to be their differences, the very notion that these people could be found in a room trying to make sense of it must have shocked some into tragic pathos. This possibly was the most exciting part, but to be fair they all speak, or at least understand the same language. The admission from some anarchists that the claim that all is well in the anarchist movement is in fact a myth shows a healthy level of critical analysis - something anarchists are good at - although this reality hasn't hit home for some, and the myth goes on.

London Smoke

With arguably the most anarchist activity and the strongest concentration of self-aware anarchists in the country, London is home to the perpetuation of this myth. With enough numbers and smart-arses in each camp to keep a sectarian war going, the rest of the anarchist groups around the country have to make sense of their disenfranchisement from the ordinary people, whilst attempting to peddle pages of bitter infighting included in anarchist propaganda all of which is based in London. The very fact that in London the two closest aligned libertarian organisations, the ACF and SolFed, seem to spend every opportunity in putting each other to the test, or chastising for some ideological wrong doing, speaks volumes.

Perhaps one benefit of not having as many people in the libertarian communities outside London is being able to step back and examine the real differences and what is actually being said to each other. It may strike people on the periphery that it's just a case of language and attitude as the greatest obstacles.

Into the ghetto

The eighties were blighted by individualism and arguably inconsequential single issue campaigning, sometimes a thousand

years from most people's interests. Political correctness was rife, for some people everyday conversation changed forever. Anarchists were found taking up the cause for the likes of veganism and using it as a moral club to beat, and to score points against fellow comrades.

The 90s backlash against all that pointless hot air was harsh, though overdue. And although too much could not have been expected of Bradford 98, some of those attitudes were inevitably present. It's not that libertarian ideas are crap, it's the libertarians. If they're not beating each other up with words they're jumping down other people's throats for sounding un-PC. But to be fair, the past ten years have seen interest in class struggle libertarian ideas progress in leaps and bounds, though not at the expense of the DIY attitude. Recently there have been attempts by class struggle anarchists to claim the direct action eco-movement as a prodigal son returning to its roots and embracing class consciousness. Possibly true for some, though an awareness of genus over class seems to be de rigeur for most eco activists. The argument that there have been recent examples of association between everyday people's struggles and eco activists holds very little water. The DIY scene is presented by hopeful anarchists as radical, united and collected, one step away from joining a class struggle federation. Anyone can pass on views on pieces of paper on behalf of the eco-movement in just the same way anyone can form opinions about that movement by the people from within it they speak to, and there's some would have you believe the Liverpool dockers were nothing but manure for trees. Language.(??-ed.)

More hot air

Rather than set up any list of people who libertarians, especially class strugglers, should be speaking to, let's just enjoy speaking to each other for a while; smaller miracles like speaking to people outside anarchist circles may one day happen. Go Bradford!

In Solidarity

Arthur T.S.Jackson

Comment: While we find some of these points valid, it's not true that *all* anarchist propaganda is based in London. Direct Action & Taking Liberties (Sheffield), Subversion (Manchester), Counter Information (central Scotland), all come to mind. Similarly, what you say about the behaviour of ACF and SolFed in London leave at least this writer bemused. What do others think?

CONTACTS LIST

If you want to be included, drop us a line.

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Solidarity Federation (anarcho-syndicalists)
PO Box 29, SWPDO, Manchester
M15 5HW (tel: 0161-231 8177)

Anarchist-Communist Federation
c/o 84B Whitechapel High St,
London E1 7QX

Class War
PO Box 467, London E8 3QX

INDUSTRIAL

Education Workers Network - SF
Communications Workers
Network - SF
Both PO Box 29, SWPDO,
Manchester M15 5HW

Transport Workers Network - SF
c/o Norwich Solidarity Centre (see
E.Anglia section)

Public Service Workers Network
PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE

Industrial Workers of the World -
British Isles, F.Lee, Secular Hall,
75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester
LE1 1WB

LOCAL GROUPS

SCOTLAND

Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh,
17 West Montgomery place, Ed-
inburgh EH7 5HA

Glasgow Anarchists, Box A,
Fahrenheit 451 Bookshop, Vir-
ginia Galleries, Virginia St,
Glasgow

WALES

Aberystwyth, PO Box 17, Aberyst-
wyth, Dyfed (tel: 01970-624590)

NORTH ENGLAND

Bradford 1 in 12 Club, 21-23
Albion St, Bradford BD1 2LI Tel:
01274 734160

Huddersfield ABC
PO Box 381, Huddersfield HD1
3XX

Lancaster Anarchist Group
c/o The Bookcellar,
9 Meeting House Lane,
Lancaster LA1 1TJ

Leeds Anarchist Group,
145-149 Cardigan Rd, Burley,
Leeds LS6 1UN

Liverpool Anarchists PO Box 110,
Liverpool L69 8DP

Sheffield Anarchist Group, PO
Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY

Tyneside Anarchist Group, PO
Box 1TA, Newcastle NE99 1TA

MIDLANDS

Birmingham Solidarity Group
PO Box 3241, Saltley,
Birmingham B8 3DP

Worcester Anarchists
c/o PO Box 3241, Birmingham, B8
3DP

Wolves ABC
PO Box 339, Wolverhampton
WV1

SOUTH EAST

East Kent Anarchists,
c/o Canterbury Centre, St Alphege
Lane, Canterbury

Haringey Solidarity Group, PO
Box 2474 London N8 0HW

Hounslow Anarchists
c/o PO Box 87, Hampton, Middle-
sex TW13 3TF

56A Infoshop,
56 Crampton St, London SE17

Oxford Solidarity Action,
c/o BM BCM 1715 London
WC1N 3XX

Red & Black Club (S.E.London)
PO Box 17773, London SE8 4WX

South Herts SolFed PO Box 493,
St Albans AL1 5TW

Gravesend Resistance
PO Box 1, Gravesend, DA11 7NE

EAST ANGLIA

Cambridge Anarchists,
Box A, Arjuna, 12 Mill Rd,
Cambridge

Norwich & Norfolk Solidarity
Centre,
Unit 13, Muspole Workshops,
Muspole St, Norwich NR3 1DJ

East Anglia Anarchist Network
PO Box 87, Ipswich IP4 4JQ

SOUTH WEST

Bristle, Box 25, 82 Colston St,
Bristol, BS1 5BB

South Bristol Anarchists, PO Box
1076, Bristol BS99 1WF

Write c/o Black Flag for contacts
in Plymouth and Cornwall

IRELAND

Organise!, PO BOX 505, Belfast
BT11 9EE

Workers Solidarity Movement, PO
Box 1528, Dublin 8
email: wsm_ireland@geocities.com

OTHER CONTACTS

Advisory Service for Squatters
2 St Pauls Rd LONDON N1 (tel:
0171-359 8814)

Anarchist Black Cross (prisoner
support) and "Taking Liberties"
PO Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY

Legal Defence & Monitoring
Group, BM Haven, London
WC1N 3XX

Kate Sharpley Library,
BM Hurricane, London WC1N
3XX

Anarchist Graphics, Box 5,
167 Fawcett Rd, Southsea, Hants
PO4 0DH (graphics collective)

NOTICES

SelfEd Education Collec-
tive, the education collective of
the SolFed, is running a year
long correspondence course on
the History of Anarcho-Syndi-
calism. The course costs £18,
£9 low or unwaged. For more
details write to: PO Box 1095,
Sheffield S2 4YR

African Solidarity Project

Interested in setting up a
group to specifically work on
solidarity between anarchists
and libertarians in Africa and
Britain?

Write to Africa Solidarity, PO
Box 17773, London SE8 4WX

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