Introduction

It is not often that we have a chance to vote on our art and entertainment. But the unique comic you hold in your hands represents just such an opportunity.

Class War Comix No.1 is the first chapter of a graphic novel which is projected to run for six volumes. Its artist, Cliff Harper, is a cartoonist and illustrator, well-known in England for his strong and elegant art dealing with ecology and politics. This comic was begun in 1972 following a period where Cliff, like many others, lived communally in the country.

Cliff’s experiences raised doubts in his mind about the “back to the land” movement being a real solution to society’s problems. As an artist and an anarchist, these doubts found expression in Cliff’s work.

He began to draw an epic story about English society after a political revolution has occurred. Within such a future framework conflicts arise between the city and the country, the old and the young, the “Party” and free anarchists. In this first book we begin to see the seeds of these conflicts as we visit a commune in the country.

Class War Comix No.1 was finished and printed in England in a limited edition in 1974. Though the edition sold out, Cliff received little in the way of feedback or encouragement. Discouraged, he temporarily abandoned his epic.

Cliff’s graphic novel, however, deserves to be finished, for its story relates directly to the dreams many of us had in the 60’s and the reality we’ve had to live with in the 70’s. Many of us who once harbored ideas of Revolution and radical change have put those ideas aside over the years without ever really acknowledging or analyzing our disenchantment. Though the Vietnam war is over and Nixon is gone, courtesy of a palace coup, our social and political order still assaults us daily, daring us to change it. Now, poised at the beginning of yet another decade (already!), it is a good time to stop a moment, and reflect on where we are headed. What might a revolution actually mean? Cliff takes us inside that alternative future and shows us one possibility.

I’m pleased that Kitchen Sink is bringing out a new edition of Class War Comix, for a wider audience this time. Your support for this project, both by reading it and writing the publisher with your reactions, will let Cliff know that it’s a story worth continuing!

Jay Kinney
(Executive Editor, Young Lust and Anarchy Comics)
FOLLOWING THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF THE REVOLUTION A NUMBER OF LARGE RURAL COMMUNES HAVE SPONTANEOUSLY GROWN UP. IT IS HERE IN ONE SUCH COMMUNE THAT WE BEGIN OUR JOURNEY THROUGH POST-REVOLUTIONARY BRITAIN... WE ARE IN THE ATTIC OF THE HOUSE WHERE THE CARPENTRY COLLECTIVE LIVE...

LATELY MY DREAMS HAVE SEEMED ALMOST REAL.

THEY BECOME LESS CONFUSED - MORE TANGIBLE....

ANOTHER PERFECT SUNNY DAY...

...SOMETIMES I FEEL LIFE IS TOO UNEVENTFUL IN THIS PLACE....
GOOD MORNING, PETE!

MORNING ALL!

I THINK I'LL GO INTO THE WORKSHOP TODAY...

THERE'S PLENTY OF WORK HERE - THE BACKYARD NEEDS CLEARING UP.

THE GARDEN FENCE NEEDS FIXING - THERE'S THAT WINDOW.

NO CHANCE, MATES, I PROMISED.

UNDER THE NEW REGIME, THE KITCHEN WORK WILL BELONG TO THOSE WHO EAT!
I was out at the hives earlier. D’you remember last year? The worker bees kicked out all the drones — ‘cos they don’t work enough — and they ain’t got stings.

Right! If they don’t act firmly then the drones will undermine all they’ve built. So they drive ‘em out!

WHERE TO? Another hive? Anyway we are not bees, we’re bloody people — I hope!

Yes, you’re right. It’s too cruel a solution — but they have solved the problem — that is more than we can do!
LOOK, WE'RE ALL PISSED OFF'ZOS YOU AIN'T PULLING YOUR WEIGHT, PETE.

SO THAT'S IT? WELL, I FEEL I DO MY FAIR SHARE—
ALAN, IF YOU ARE ALL SO
WORRIED WHY NOT HAVE
A ROTA—WITH WHISTLES
AND STOPWATCHES AND
TIME-SHEETS AND....

NO! YOU SHOULD
BE MORE AWARE OF
THE COLLECTIVES
NEEDS!

CHRIST, MARTHA'S STILL
WORKING ON THAT DITCH!

HARD WORK? SPOSE SO—STILL IT
KEEPS ME FIT... ANYWAY, I DIG
THIS JOB....
BAD NEWS! THE MILITIA RAIDED DOCKLAND LAST NIGHT - SMASHED THE PRESS-INTERNED A LOT OF PEOPLE!

LOOKING FOR "ANARCHIST TERRORISTS" AS USUAL?

GOOD! THEY'RE GETTING ANGRY-MIGHT EVEN SEE SOME ACTION FROM THESE DREAMERS!

THOSE BASTARDS
WHAT CAN WE DO HERE?

NOTHING! THE ACTION IS IN THE CITY, ANYWAY. FOLK HERE DON'T CARE.

Yeah, first they'll be angry, but they will soon forget—unless it threatens their everyday lives!

WE MUST DISCUSS IT AT TONIGHT'S MEETING—IT IS ABOUT TIME WE CLEARED UP OUR POSITION!

HERE THEY ARE...

ABOUT TIME

COME ON YOU TWO—I'VE A BUSY DAY AHEAD
WHAT'S THE POINT, ALAN? NO ONE WANTS TO HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

STILL CAMPAIGNING TO WIDEN THE BRIDGE, JIM?

POLITICS REALLY Piß ME OFF. THEY'RE SUCH A DRAG.
I used to be into politics —
but it began to hang me up.
I know lots of bad things
go on in the world — but
everything around me
is a reflection of
myself so there
is nothing I can
do about it.
You can't lay
a trip on
people.

Yeah, well, that's
no solution
to the bridge!

The commune is the largest possible unit in a free society.
It is no more or less than the voluntary federation of
autonomous collectives. Each collective, either self-
supporting or fulfilling a specific function, co-operating
with all others for mutual aid and benefit.
I thought I'd come in today and finish the job I left lying about.

Pete, unless you work at it you'll never make a good craftsman. It needs dedication.

I'm not sure any more... I just want to be able to do a useful job now and again.

About bloody time! Those chairs have been getting under my feet all week! There are half a dozen new jobs hanging about as well...
I don't want to be just a craftsman—I'm not that interested in perfection.... If I feel like working—I work—nobody holds the big whip over me—it don't exist.

Oh! That line doesn't cut any ice with me, Pete.... Suppose everyone thought like you and worked only when it pleased 'em?

That's just it! People really work only when they want to—don't you?

I dunno, this job's a pain in the neck—but I'm still doing it....

And as long as you feel like that you'll make a balls up of it! If I feel that way I stop working!

Right! If I was made to work when I didn't want to—I'd down tools!
It's all very well for us to talk—but what's it like for those poor buggars in the factories?

Right! They don't even control how they work! Let alone whether they work!

But most people around here don't want to know... they've become apathetic—contented—potential reactionaries.

Some of them even believe the government's propaganda—they...

Well— I like them!

Frankie! Come to get the chairs?

Yup... but I'm pretty pissed off...
I've just heard my folks want me to go to a bleedin' free school in the city - they think I'm not learning enough - they don't see, here I get a real education.

Who are these chairs for? That bunch of fairies up at the manor?

Yeah, I've been dying to go up there and meet them.
I know how they feel, Frankie—we seem to be moving much too fast. You have got to walk before you run...and all that stuff....

What should I do, Pete? My folks have been struggling in the unions for years but when it comes to my freedom...

Anyhow I don't know what you should do, it is really your decision, Frankie.....
THE IDEAL AND ABSOLUTE SOLUTION FROM THE INDIVIDUAL'S STANDPOINT WOULD BE A SOCIETY THAT EXISTED NOT FOR ITSELF, NOT FOR ITS ALL OVER-RIDING COLLECTIVE PURPOSE, BUT FOR THE GOOD OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS FULFILMENT, FOR THE GREATER AND MORE PERFECT LIFE OF ALL ITS MEMBERS, REPRESENTING AS FAR AS POSSIBLE HIS BEST SELF AND HELPING HIM TO REALISE IT. IT WOULD RESPECT THE FREEDOM OF EACH OF ITS MEMBERS AND MAINTAIN ITSELF NOT BY LAW AND FORCE BUT BY THE FREE AND SPONTANEOUS CONSENT OF ITS CONSTITUENT PERSONS.
Pete! I thought you would be coming today.

We have been working on a new series of songs— you must stay and listen to them...

Sure, I'd like that... maybe you could sing them at tonight's meeting?

Of course, that would be nice— is that why you came?

No, Frankie brought up your new chairs in one of the transport collective's trucks.
FRANKIE, COULD WE BORROW
YOUR TRUCK FOR A FEW
DAYS? WE'RE RENOVATING THIS
HOUSE AND WE NEED TO
MOVE UP SOME BIG ROOF
TIMBERS FROM THE
WOOD YARD...

-IT CAN CARRY—WE'RE DEVELOPING
A NEW FUEL SYSTEM, BASED ON
WIND-GENERATED
ELECTROLYTIC HYDROGEN!

SURE—BUT I WILL
HAVE TO GET THE
COLLECTIVE'S O.K.
The truck's mileage
is limited by the
amount of methane.
Hullo Peter. I was coming to look for you... you've heard the news? There's nothing I can do here - it's in the city that the direction of the revolution is being determined... so I'm leaving. I've been thinking about this for a long time... I feel it's the right decision... 

For Christ's sake I'm trying to get my head together and you are screwing me up... I want to be with you... but I don't want to leave here and I don't believe in making sacrifices... just in being free!

I would like you to come with me... but if you want to stay here that's up to you...

Look Jeane, we've been through this before... why can't you be content here with me?

What a load of balls, Pete, I'm not asking you to make any sacrifices for me... besides what about my freedom? I have to be able to choose my life...
I hear you’re going to leave us, love. You take care of yourself.

I certainly don’t envy you going back—though there is one thing I miss about the city... and that is a cup of real coffee!

Are you lot implying that my acorn brew isn’t as good as Nescafé? I always said—everytime you drink a cup of coffee you say yes to the system!

No one’s getting at you Arnold. Nostalgia’s all right—so long as it doesn’t drag us back into the past.

Ah yes! Those were the days all right! That was the amazing thing about capitalism—Coca-Cola! Chewing gum! Mars-bars!
They'll let capitalism creep in the backdoor without noticing it!

Let's go and see Dave and Sheila - you should say goodbye...

They'll let the state in by the front door - and welcome it!

That's a bit hard... at least they are committed.

Not just in their heads, like you - but commitment to what - living ideals? - or dying structures!
Can you go and get the saddles?
How many of our friends have been interned?

I wonder how Dave and Sheila will take the news.

I'm not sure Pete—they have belonged to the party from the very beginning... and they've been my friends for as long...

Do you think this could mean the finish of your friendship?

Yes—I do—it is that important.

But even they cannot ignore all these signs?

I wouldn't count on it. Their party's been their strength for so long. Maybe it's impossible...

If we no longer understand...

One another—how can we be friends...?

For them to break away—and in such a situation a little thing like our old friendship may mean

—nothing! Absolutely nothing at all!

I hope that you are wrong. Some things must survive all this...
Hullo, hullo! What earth-shattering event brings you two out here?

Sheila, have you heard what your party’s done now? Raids, arrests, closing down newspapers! God knows what next!

Sure, we’ve heard! So what? It needs to be done! We’ve got to be firm at this stage. Your anarchist friends never know when to call it a day—always agitating, causing trouble!

For Christ’s sake! I hoped you two would understand! I thought you had rejected all that crap by now!
Well, it looks like you were wrong, Pete! We know what’s going on. In the party we have a clear view of things; we see the whole picture, not just one little corner. Our feet are firmly on the ground. I know you’ve fought just as hard as anybody for the revolution—but it’s not time yet to sit back and say... "Right, the struggle’s over. We’re all free now. Anarchy for everybody..." It’s just not like that—not yet anyway....

If we all did that, forgot our discipline, what would happen? There’d be chaos overnight. It’s been a struggle so far but it’s still not finished, there’s a hell of a long way to go... and if you don’t see that, Pete, then you’re blind.

...and dangerous—to all those around you. That’s why the party is acting in this way. That crowd were doing more harm than good.

...have you heard what they have been saying? The final act of the revolution—smash the party!

-In other words—counter revolution! Maybe this all sounds extreme... but later you’ll see, we are right, wait and see!

...I suppose you’ll shout about it at tonight’s meeting? We’d best come along and show the other side of the coin... see you later.
THE MANY DECISIONS THAT NEED TO BE MADE CONCERNING ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE, INDIVIDUALLY, COLLECTIVELY ARE DISCUSSED AT WEEKLY MEETINGS OF ALL. NO DECISIONS CAN BE REACHED UNTIL EVERYONE CONCERNED HAS FULLY DISCUSSED ALL THE ANGLES AND BEEN MADE AWARE OF ALL THE IMPLICATIONS. EVEN THEN, GREAT THOUGHT IS GIVEN TO ALL OF THE POSSIBILITIES AND THE CARRYING OUT OF A DECISION IS OFTEN PUT OFF FOR A LONG TIME. ESPECIALLY WHEREVER THE DESTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS AND GROWING THINGS IS INVOLVED. IN FACT, SUCH DECISIONS ARE BEST AVOIDED . . . .
I hope we get something done at this meeting.

I hope we get something done at this meeting.
WE'D LIKE TO FINISH OUR SHOW WITH AN EARLY ELIZABETHAN MADRIGAL - JOIN IN THE CHORUS IF YOU CAN.

YOU'VE POURED A LOT OF HOT COFFEE IN YOUR DAY.

RAVISHING RUBY - SHE SLEEPS IN A BUNK OUT BACK. RAVISHING RUBY.

HER DAYS AND NIGHTS ARE FILLED WITH DREAMS OF A MAN CALLED SMILING JACK.

RAVISHING RUBY BY TOM T. HALL FROM RHYTHMS AND SONGS: J.P.
O.K. LET'S BEGIN TONIGHTS MEETING. THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF ARGUMENT ABOUT OUR BRIDGE. JIM HERE THINKS WE SHOULDN'T PULL IT DOWN.

YOU ALL KNOW WHAT I THINK. THAT BRIDGE HAS GOTTA COME DOWN AND A NEW ONE'S Gotta Go Up. ONE DAY THERE'LL BE A VERY NASTY ACCIDENT... I SAY BUILD A NEW ONE!

RIGHT! NO ONE WANTS TO BE RUN DOWN BY JIM'S BUS! SO... SHOULD WE WIDEN THE EXISTING BRIDGE...?

OR CAN WE BUILD ANOTHER BRIDGE SOMEWHERE ELSE?

... OR LEAVE THINGS AS THEY ARE. I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT A LOT AND I THINK JIM'S OVERESTIMATED THE DANGERS. IT SEEMS TO ME WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SPEND TIME AND ENERGY ON DISMANTLING AND REBUILDING A BRIDGE WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER MORE IMPORTANT JOBS TO BE DONE IN THE COMMUNE LIKE...
Look, don't get me wrong. I like what you are all trying to do here...

This is no time for squabbling over petty local issues!

...but you must face up to what's going on in the city. Once workers freedom is crushed you haven't a chance.

Maybe if you shut up we'll be able to find out what has all this got to do with us?

It's the text of a secret party document..."The Militarisation of Labour"...should be introduced as a temporary measure to maintain and increase productivity...this will also facilitate the suppression of irresponsible agitation!
FROM THE WAY SHE TALKS YOU WOULD THINK THE PARTY LEADERS WERE A BUNCH OF SCHEMING POLITICIANS...

-MORE LIKE A GANG OF GENERALS! CAN'T YOU SEE THEY WANT TO TURN THE WORKERS INTO SOLDIERS - OBEYING ORDERS WITHOUT QUESTION.... We haven't any LEADERS HERE TO TELL US HOW TO RUN OUR COMMUNE....

DON'T YOU REALISE THAT THE PARTY IS ACTING IN THE INTEREST OF THE REVOLUTION - UNINFORMED CRITICISM OF THE PARTY AT THIS TIME WILL ONLY LEAD TO ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHAOS!

YOU'RE RIGHT! THIS IS A CRUCIAL TIME. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE PASSIVE SPECTATORS - IF WE SIT BACK AND LET THEM GET AWAY WITH THIS... ONE DAY WE WILL WAKE UP TO FIND OUR FREEDOM HAS PASSED AWAY LIKE A DREAM!
IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T REALISED IT, THIS COMIK HAS BEEN ABOUT ALTERNATIVE POLITICS, SOME OPTIONS TO CAPITALIST RELATIONSHIPS . . . . IN THE NEXT COMIK WE'LL BE SEEING THE COMMUNARDS PRODUCING POWER, HEAT AND LIGHT, BUILDING THEIR OWN HOUSES AND MAKING THEIR ARTIFACTS, CLOTHES AND OTHER NEEDS . . . . THE THIRD COMIK WILL SHOW THE COMMUNARDS GROWING AND PRODUCING FOOD, CELEBRATING THE HARVEST AND BUILDING THEIR BASIC ECONOMY . . . .
Afterword

This is the first of six projected comix that deal with two basic problems that have always faced our society: how to change it and what to change it to.

The first three comix describe a Utopian society of about 2,000 people living in a rural situation.

The social organization is Anarchic. Decisions are flexible and arrived at by everyone considering the needs of everyone. Social relationships are not rigidified by artificial conventions such as male and female, husband and wife, teacher and student, producer and consumer. They are each responsible for the welfare of themselves and each other.

The community is totally self-sufficient in terms of food production. Their system of agriculture combines both traditional agricultural methods (such as planting and sowing by hand) with advanced machinery such as tractors and combine harvesters. Working with a humble respect for the earth and its mysteries, the Communards are concerned that their efforts do not destroy natural systems. Consequently, they do not use artificial fertilizers and pesticides but enrich and protect the soil with organic farming.

Sun, wind, rain, and decomposed matter—natural, free energy sources—are being harnessed to produce their power. Windmills are being used to generate electricity. Rain water is collected and human and animal shit is decomposed to produce methane gas. Such methods are resource conserving, non-polluting, and in harmony with natural cycles.

The Comunards' other needs—shelter, clothes, and artifacts—are mostly produced by themselves in small workshops.

The commune represents a dream of the future. It attempts to portray a possible, not a fixed, direction in which an alternative society might develop.

Which brings us to the second three comix of the projected six-volume series. These deal with the more immediate and pressing problem of the processes involved in realising radical change, and specifically with the conditions of urban life in this post-revolutionary society. Historically the situation in the comix series is parallel to the situation in Russia in the years 1917 to 1921. A political revolution has occurred in which our present ruling class has been forced to relinquish all power to a Socialist government. A Socialist bureaucracy has arisen almost as repressive as the system it has replaced. The workers continue to struggle for their freedom.

We focus on an industrial community, say the size of Belfast or Liverpool, where the people are trying to take control of their everyday lives. Finding themselves still in opposition even to the new government, Councils and Co-operatives have spontaneously been organised.

In the factories, general assemblies of all the workers meet regularly to discuss all areas of their work, from production to work conditions. Factory councils—constituted of one particular industry—also meet to maintain relations with the world outside the factory.

In the streets and on the housing estates, tenants and street councils take over the role fulfilled by bureaucratic local governments, determining such things as housing developments, garbage collections, street cleaning, play areas, and education.

Local food co-operatives have been organised to distribute agricultural produce on a non-profit basis. Some skilled workers are attempting an alternative system of production by creating small workshops which are open for local communities to learn the skills and to produce what they need.

The decisions of the councils meet with the continual opposition of the government, which is trying to suppress them, using an armed police force and militia. The problem for these popular organisations becomes more and more how they can confront and defeat the State, while remaining truly democratic and of the people.

The people arm themselves.

In 1972, after four years of communal living, I began drawing this comix. At the same time, I was active in squatting, so it was not until 1974 that it was finished. It was intended as a criticism of friends who were turning their backs on urban life and politics to form rural communes. At the time this development seemed crucial to me, but looking back it appears pretty irrelevant.

Primarily, the comix is visual. I finished the drawings before writing a single word, even drawing the balloons before the script! In fact, only after drawings were complete did we discuss any kind of story line...

This is an attempt to explain and apologise for the poverty of the words. They are inelegant, rhetorical, dull and ponderous. All I hope is that the drawings make up for this. Originally, this book was to have been the first of the six-part series summarized above. However, due to the lack of encouragement [in England] I never carried on. Now, four years later, Kitchen Sink Enterprises is reprinting the comix. If you, the reader, like this, then perhaps I'll continue with the remaining five volumes.


We would like to see Clifford Harper finish his Class War Comix series. But we can only do so if the project is supported. Your letters of comment are solicited. So is your support. If you can help us distribute the comix for fund-raising purposes, wholesale quantities are available. The same is true to bookshops, labor groups, or any sympathetic organizations. For details (and letters) write:

Kitchen Sink Enterprises
P.O. Box 7
Princeton, Wisconsin 54968

Thanks for your support.—The publisher.
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<th>Class War Comix</th>
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<td>Published March 1979</td>
<td>The first chapter of a projected graphic novel by an English cartoonist and anarchist. Set in a post-&quot;revolution&quot; future, the book raises doubts about the viability of &quot;back to the land&quot; solutions to social problems.</td>
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<td>(1st edition)</td>
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<td>Kitchen Sink Enterprises</td>
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<td>$1.00</td>
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<td>36 pages</td>
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<td>Printrun of 10,000 copies</td>
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<td>Cliff Harper - 1-34, 35(t), 36</td>
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Sir Real's
UNDERGROUND COMIX CLASSIX