CONTRARY TO POPULAR prejudice, fostered by both media caricatures and by the antics of a small number of self-proclaimed "anarchists", anarchism is neither "rogue individualism" nor individualism's opposite. That, of course, is not to say that anarchists are opposed to individuality — far from it — but that in capitalist society individualism is at best an excuse by some to selfishly indulge themselves and at worst an ideology which encourages the most horridly competitive and exploitative Capitalism loves (and sings the highest praises of) individualism whilst crushing real individuality. Capitalism, however, fears collective action. A Trade Union's strength is founded upon the potential, on the part of its membership, for collective action. Its ability to mobilise and control this action is crucial in maintaining its credibility and position as labour broker. Once the threat of collective action is removed, however, the Trade Unions tend to be no longer taken seriously by employers nor members. The individual can be compared to the finger of a hand. On its own it's not particularly strong or effective but in union with the other fingers it can become a fist.

The working class, in whatever context, be it community or the workplace, is more easily dominated and exploited when it is divided and insipid. When organised collectively it has the potential to act in a concerted manner against capitalist networks, particularly in the workplace, the individual can engage in sabotage, absenteeism and "theft", even these activities organised collectively (even clandestinely) can be more effective. Collective action also creates a spirit of combativeness as people realise that, far from being powerless, they in fact have power which can bring about change. Probably the most outstanding example in recent years was the anti-Poll Tax mobilisation and control this action is crucial in maintaining its credibility and position as labour broker. Once the threat of collective action is removed, however, the Trade Unions tend to be no longer taken seriously by employers nor members. The individual can be compared to the finger of a hand. On its own it's not particularly strong or effective but in union with the other fingers it can become a fist.

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Transport or Traffic
Continued from page 12

"multi-modal integration". Governments agree about the "need" for infrastructure. Clinton has promised to spend 80 billion on renovating America's roads, creating a new high speed rail network linking US cities and developing new technology to expand capacity. Similarly the European Commission is pledged to "the establishment and development of trans-European networks, in particular in the sectors of transport."

The forecast is for the doubling of most forms of transport. In the BC nearly five times as much freight is carried by road as by rail, 12 times as many passengers by rail. The bulk will therefore be roads. "Intra-modal integration" consequently means different forms of transport will act more efficiently as tributaries and distributors for each other. Infrastructure is not confined to the industrialised world. In order to meet the demands of International Capital, many governments are pumping borrowed money into infrastructure schemes. Most are centred on roads, e.g. Amazonia (which has the most extensive national water transport network in the world) is being rapidly covered by roads, as is the Congo basin. The Pan American highway, stretching from Patagonia to Alaska is now complete. There are plans to link Asia to Siberia. If these schemes are completed, the majority of the earth's land mass will have become one continent, with motorists able to drive from Buenos Aires to Cape Town, via New York and Moscow. For the South this will mean further rounds of enclosure, more colonisation with the displacement of people and the disruption of local economic systems, the stagnation of the environment and the dubious benefits of consumer goods. The improvement of infrastructure in the West is part of the move from manufacturing to service/distribution economies. Goods are shipped ever faster over ever greater distances. As transport costs decrease, competing firms will venture further and further, selling identical products in each other's territory. Manufacturers will look further afield to find the cheapest supplier of components. Workers will commute ever further to work. The result will be less an improvement in the quantity of commodities available and more an increase in travel and traffic. People will have to travel further and work more, visit relatives and holiday in less spoil resorts.

Even the European Commission has admitted the axiom that more roads leads to more traffic "infrastructure planning should not necessarily seek to promote an increase in capacity, since in certain instances this might boost transport demand and in the long-term exacerbate the problem, particularly in the case of road transport", EC Green Paper.

This damaging slip was withdrawn from the subsequent White Paper. The ERT claim: "The benefits are often widespread while the costs are typically borne locally . . . technocratic designs . . . which ride roughshod over the legitimate concerns of others, will simply founder on the obstacles of local resistance . . . Environmental objections, while important, cannot be simply granted a power of veto . . . the increasingly efficient organisation of those arguing for environmental citizens' rights must be matched by a more efficient organisation of the advocates of change, adaptation and growth."

Operation Roadblock
A national roster of 100 people per day for a mobilisation against the building of the M11 Link. Contact No M11 Link Campaign, Arch 211, Grove Green Road, London E11 4AJ or phone 081-558 2638 - fax 081-559 7569.
The Electoral Charade

AGAINST a background of ever escalating racist attacks combined with far-right electioneering, and mounting xenophobic "Fortress Europe", fears are mounting in the UK that at the forthcoming May elections, the British National Party will be able to repeat its success of last year in winning its first council seat on the Isle of Dogs in the Tower Hamlets borough of London.

The three main parties blamed each other for the BNP's first electoral victory (while at the same time virtually everyone else was acclamated white working class voters, as the mainstream parties could abnegate their own responsibilities for the social mess of both local and national levels). Jack Straw of the Labour Party, in particular, unhesitatingly blamed the Liberal Democrats for stoking up racism, as the election run-up campaign accused the BNP of perpetrating a race election. Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrats, both in the borough and the candidate, James Hunt, lost no time in using the vacuous rhetoric in an attempt to win over key sections of the electorate— think. Vacuous drivel about their "Mr Clean" record.

The racism, institutionalised by the British political system, has a long history in Tower Hamlets, and did not mysteriously evaporate away when the Liberal Democrats took control of the council in 1986—if anything they carried on the tradition of discrimination previously perpetuated by Labour. At the time the BNP won its council seat last year, for example, one of the Liberal Democrat campaign leaflets was shamelessly proclaiming a "Bangladeshi shocker", urging BNP voters not to vote Labour which had "squandered money on aid to victims of the Bangladesh flood. There is a frequent emphasis on the rights of local people to have a council house in their own community", local people first, and so on. It may sound benign, but it adds to the already poisonous atmosphere created by Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Tories.

Counterbalance

As a counterbalance to all the vacuous rhetoric, particularly from Labour, we reproduce below some extracts from an independent report commissioned by the Labour-run Greater London Council after complaints of racism in housing allocation from the community group, Spiralfields Housing and Planning Rights Services (SHPRS). The report was researched by Deborah Phillips who as "an independent researcher was able to observe GLC housing management practices at close hand and to make daily contact with housing staff".

During the investigation, the researcher found: "over racism; a disturbing level of racist comment and joking was witnessed by the researcher. Bengalis in particular were stereotyped as causing troublemakers and causing problems on estates, although social security tenants were often characterised in similar ways. Several officers who independent expressed personal views on Tower Hamlets' racial and housing problems offered remarkably similar solutions, that is, to put all Bengalis together in E1 and allocate them to poorer estates, their view was that they could turn them into slums anyway."

families who enjoy a different social and culinary style in blocks with internal access where the areas of more sordid cooking tends to permeate the immediate area.

It should also be noted that the idea for an independent report was first considered and rejected in 1992. It was Labour who laid the foundations for racism to thrive in Tower Hamlets, until the Liberal Democrats took control of the council in 1986. In that light, the self-righteous bleating of the borough's Labour councillors — "we joined the party because of its anti-racist policies" — must seem pathetically hollow.

So whom should you be voting for in the May elections? Perhaps it looks like a choice between the least of three evils? There must, after all, be some decent people in the Labour Party, mustn't there? There may be, but they're not among the candidates (for anything). And they're certainly not going to change the way that people vote. The electorate — think. Various rhetoric from politicians, inconsistent with their actual practices, is clearly recog...
Squat! Don't Rot!

ARTILLERY MANSIONS is a good example of what we anarchists call propaganda by the deed. That is through direct action, squatting. We're talking about control of their lives. We hope that more and more homeless people will take action and occupy the large numbers of empty buildings, offices, flats and other spaces that have been left empty for many years. The homeless problem could be solved if enough people take action to squat buildings.

In 1940 in Britain large numbers of homeless people occupied empty properties, and the British Communist Party, anarchists and left-wing socialists initiated a squatting movement in London that spread throughout Britain.

As a result many people took over empty properties over the last 25 years. The movement needs to be re-activated as everyone talks about squatters, but they have secure tenancies, which is a real contradiction. Squatting is the only way to take control of the local authority or other space we are being denied. We have to get back to moving on the property market and bringing it under our control.

We have a responsibility to homeless people to try and make sure that they are looked after properly. It is important that the property market is not allowed to continue.

Organiser: In the media it was said that this was being done specifically against the Criminal Justice Bill. Is that correct?

Yes. And in three things. Firstly, it was a protest against the Criminal Justice Bill, which was a government attempt to increase the penalties for squatting. Secondly, there were more and more squatters coming off the street when the homeless couldn't get a bed in the streets. Lastly, it was to run an alternative rough sleeper initiative, which is to get people off the streets and put them into squatting.

Organiser: Are more and more rough sleepers coming off the street when the homeless can't get a bed in the streets?

Yes. It's starting to fill up a bit more.

Organiser: How do you get the homeless to come to your meetings of all the people who have been evicted from Artillery Mansions?

AM: It's made up of the activists who are kicking it all off. Some of those are quite scary. They have their powers. Thirdly, it was a way of running an alternative rough sleeper initiative, which is to get people off the streets and put them into squatting.

Organiser: How long do you hope to be in here?

AM: We're going to court on the 17th. We're pretty certain that it's going to be a possessory fencing, it's just a matter of how long it takes the bailiffs to come round. We have sent letters to the solicitors saying that we know what most of the building is to be left empty because they intend to turn it into offices and the property market is not good enough to support that at the moment, so they intend to leave it empty as they have done for the last eighteen years. A few of the flats here were occupied right up to 1990, but the majority have been occupied for eighteen years or more.

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cross channel links

An interview with a militant of the Organisation Communiste Libertaire

The ACF has always considered international relations as a key area of our activity. We believe that the social revolution must and will be international, therefore it is vital that revolutionary anarchists and libertarian communist parties exchange their experiences and contacts. We have long been in contact with the Organisation Communiste Libertaire and they have largely been transformed into an exchange of publications.

Then, last summer, we attended the OCL Summer Camp in Lille, France, where we held lengthy discussions on a number of important issues. This has led us to seek closer contacts with this organisation in which many ways is similar to the ACF. This proved easier than expected as the OCL has a group in Boulogne — easier to get to than most of Britain for the want of a channel tunnel.

The interview

ACF: How are you organised in Boulogne?

OCL: The group has been around since 1989. For the first two years it was in the early stages of development and in a struggle to crystallise itself. It was a bastion of the socialist trade union ( CFDT) which was formed in 1989. Then, last summer, we attended the OCL Summer Camp in Lille, France, where we held lengthy discussions on a number of important issues. This has led us to seek closer contacts with this organisation in which many ways is similar to the ACF. This proved easier than expected as the OCL has a group in Boulogne — easier to get to than most of Britain for the want of a channel tunnel.

OCL: It is difficult for us to say how many people are involved in the group. We have a regular activity which has been well established for a number of years. We hold meetings on a regular basis and we have a group of regular members. We also have a number of occasional participants who attend our meetings and take part in our activities.

ACF: Relations with other groups?

OCL: We are the only revolutionary group in our town. The Communist Party remains relatively well-implanted, but we don't really have much to do with them. We have good relations with the Front National, which is well represented in our town. For example, we have had a stand beside the FA's at the Brad ern Fete in Lille, which is a big popular festival in that town.

Alternative

OCL: This is a key strategy of the Front National in France.

ACF: The Front National in France?

OCL: The Front National developed when the Left was in power. In fact, it was a manoeuvre by the Socialist Party (PS) which was never admitted. In order to prevent the PS from dominating the left, splitting its votes, we had to introduce a new political force to destroy the front Nationals. The Front National has been a key factor in the political landscape for many years.

ACF: Your success and your problems?

OCL: It is difficult for us to speak of successes. We try to get our voice heard with all our fire movements. Our work is still the too ideological character of our approach.

ACF: International relations?

OCL: This is a key strategy that all the revolutionary organisations must develop. The example of the Libertarian Communist International


Organise! No. 34 April-June 1994

If Fred West had been a hunt sabber...?

Every year, when councils are working out their budgets, the police put in a bid to increase their funding to help them "investigate" crime. Well, the police in Gloucester have been trying to increase their funding for a hundred-fold judging by their recent piece of gardening.

A man's wife, daughters and lodger disappear and the police don't notice this may be more than coincidence. Presumably if they had sent a policewoman round to ask about the missing lodger her colleagues might still be scratching their heads about why such a good officer disappeared without even resigning.

But the police budget has very little to do with detective work.

What the budget is really about is funding the control of dissent, riots, demos, strikes, occupations and Gloucester police budget's demands this year have rather more to do with harassing travellers, hunt sabbs and working class youth than with looking for the next multiple murderer.

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The way it is run. For example there is Bill who is a rough sleeper and has just booked out of his hostel, which he is to close in two weeks and moved in here. He makes a great big tub of soup every day and that is his place and his pride.

Organis! So is it the first time he has been here in a roof in a while? Has it really changed him a lot?

AM: Yes. They have respect and dignity when they have got their own room and own lock on the door. They can build their own fire, they have softs, pictures that have picked up in skips hung up on walls. They have turned it into a home straight away.

They don't want to go back onto the streets after this because it is the first bit of dignity they have had for a long while.

Organis!: They might try to move into other places after this?

AM: Yes. Quite a lot of them are saying they are not aware of the fact that you could squat, or if they can you want to live in a group so that people and get clued up on how to do it. I think that there will be a whole group of people that is going to wish to return to sleeping in the Nags Head Street after this time. They will go and try and squat in empty property.

Organis!: What relationship does it have to the old squattting movement that started in 1969? Are there any veterans from that movement who were involved in taking flats?

AM: No. I don't think that you can view it as an organised movement that evolves in a structured way. There aren't any people that are involved in it. Advisory Service for Squatting and Registrars are involved in preparing a court case and I guess that there are a few veteran squatters there, but not in the running of the place.

Organis!: What sort of support are you looking for? Can people who are not rough sleepers or homeless give their support apart from donations of food and blankets?

AM: They can get down here and help man the place. There is constantly lots of cleaning up to be done. There is constantly lots of running around to be done with the small group that is trying to keep it centred along the lines and are well stretched. So if anyone wants to get down here and help, there is a vacuum for them to step into.

Organis!: Is there any relationship between people in the place? Do people fall out?

AM: It's peaceful.

Organis!: So if the court issues a possession order, you will stay until the bailiffs arrive?

AM: Yes.

Organis!: Will people have to be taken out of the building?

AM: Yes.

Organis!: Do you think it will inspire the homeless to start squatting?

AM: Yes, as I said earlier, they didn't even know about squatting until this happened.

Organis!: Is there any way that the homeless can be reached and told about the place?

AM: This is really the best instruction to it. It's hard to go up in people in the street and tell them that they can get in if they find an empty window.

Here they are exposed to the reality that they have a room of their own for the first time in a year having said that, the Bill will be coming out over Easter and June.

Organis!: The Bill at the moment refers to some new court orders which haven't yet been defined?

AM: There are two things with regard to squatting. There is delegated legislation, which is going to be handed down from the Lord Chancellor's Department. That is the teeth of which the Bill is the drawback. They are going to have two pictures there, but not in the running of the place.

They have turned it into a home straight away. They don't want to go back onto the streets after this because it is the first bit of dignity they have had for a long while.
International Round-up

THE ACF SEE the need for an international unification of revolutionary anarchists and libertarian communists. Capitalism is international, so is the working class. Our assault upon Capitalism must be international and we need an international organisation to co-ordinate this.

Unfortunately, such a co-ordination does not, for the moment, exist and a great deal of work, both political and organisational, needs to be done in order to put this right. The ACF is in contact with similar political groups and tendencies in a wide variety of countries, and we regularly exchange publications. We thought our readers would be interested to know about libertarian revolutionaries and publications which hold similar positions to our own. We are, therefore, reviewing some of the journals which we have recently received.

Comunismo Libertario no. 7.

Comunismo Libertario is the magazine of the Organisation Communist Liberator in Switzerland. Originally confined to French speaking Switzerland, the OSL now has sections in English, Spanish and Dutch. In common with much of the libertarian communist press, political correctness is taboo and there is a focus on the Zapatistas. Also included is an article on the Spanish general strike in January and a report of the events from the perspective of an anarchist journalist in Spain. Like much of the libertarian communist press, the OSL contains articles on science and technology, on the Anarchosyndicalism in Northern Europe; "Autonomy or Brutal Reformism?" and an analysis of the Timex Strike in Dundee, amongst others. Probably the most clear-sighted political analysis is from Scandinavia.

Alternativa libertaria no. 21.

Alternativa libertaria is the Zapatistas in this 16-page monthly journal of the organisation of the same name. A group of autonomists from the New World Order in Africa, the South African Police: "SAP — To Serve and Protect", reappears in this issue and there are developments in London and the UK. The ACF also make a good point about the need for an international organisation to co-ordinate this. The ACF are seeking to put into place by the government regard them as invisible, with no rights and no voice. But the Indians of the region have always put up a fierce and courageous resistance to the system of exploitation of which they are a part. They have been supported by the government of Mexico, the Spanish colonists and by their successors. In 1847 the Mayan rebellion broke out in Chiapas, the home of the Zapotecos, and resistance lasted for 18 years. The Mexican authorities exacted a terrible revenge.

The armed uprising of 1st January 1994 launched by the EZLN (Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional) in the southern state of Chiapas surprised all of Mexican society, even though this movement was totally foreseeable. After an initial surprise, the government admitted its knowledge of the movement of armed groups in Chiapas during 1993, during which several soldiers were killed.

Over the next few days the Mexican media published a list of actions taken against the peasants, the great majority of whom are Indians. Armed repression was the immediate reply of the authorities to the demands for better conditions, followed by arrests and mass imprisonment. The attacks on the peasants led by the landowners, big farmers and the army contributed to the radicalisation of the peasant organisations, which led peasant demands to respect for individual rights, and which took up the call for radical agrarian reform. The EZLN sprang out of these organisations, which had always been misunderstood groups that attempted to defend and to defend the Indian communities from the Spanish authorities. In 1492, at the time of the conquest, the Indians were granted the "right" to sell the land they used to cultivate it. In the 19th century, the Indian communities were forced to sell their land to the Mexican government, which then divided it into small plots and registered it as private property. This process was repeated in the 20th century, when the government of General Eduardo Molina remitted the land to private owners, who then sold it to foreign companies. The result was that the Indian communities were left with only a few small plots of land, which they were forced to cultivate in order to survive. This process of land redistribution continued until the 1980s, when the government of President Miguel de la Madrid began to implement a land reform programme. This programme, known as the Agrarian Reform, was intended to redistribute the land to the Indian communities. The programme was implemented in a number of steps, and by 1990, the government claimed to have distributed 4 million hectares of land to the Indian communities. However, the programme was not successful, and the Indian communities continued to be forced to sell their land to the government in order to live. This process continued until the 1990s, when the government of President Vicente Fox began to implement a new land reform programme. This programme, known as the Agrarian Modernisation, was intended to improve the living conditions of the Indian communities. The programme was implemented in a number of steps, and by 2000, the government claimed to have distributed 6 million hectares of land to the Indian communities. However, the programme was not successful, and the Indian communities continued to be forced to sell their land to the government in order to live. This process continued until the 1990s, when the government of President Vicente Fox began to implement a new land reform programme. This programme, known as the Agrarian Modernisation, was intended to improve the living conditions of the Indian communities. 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march to the forest of Lacan-ado, which is well-don, where they created a zone 90% young men and women.

eral government in Chiapas that it could have its churches reached a deal with the Fed-

plains the abortive attempt of who want to make sure they pressure on the Pope to carry this out then backed off when

struggle in Chiapas, combin-
ings points to the existence of

times anti-hierarchical sensi-

iano Zapata, the most liber-

EZLN in a favourable light.

The development of the EZLN committee. The peas-

To fax its messages to the prin-

mittee. The committee is able

and schools. If you ask them

as those workers in the work-

places at home. This is OK as

or it shows a gap between the

mass and the "leading militias" which the EZLN is always considered as a problem. There is no talk about active workers, but corporations which own up to 30,000 hectares of land in the region are able to permit a ceiling of 2,500 hec-
tares. These corporations have been making each 2,500 hectares out to small-scale farmers and the landless dog. Another major problem is that the EZLN has not broken with the Catholic Church. They talk about "The forma-
tion of a free people's government in our country" and "the liberated populations Free and democratically electing their own administra-
tive authorities" from the Declaration of the Forest of Lacandon.

The second statement is ambiguous. Does it mean that the creation of revolu-
tionary bodies controlled by mass assemblies and active workers or does it mean particip-
ating in the democratic forces? All this in agreement with the "tendency of the society, each tribe because they are symbols of working people in their societies", which may be well dominated by par-
tisanism of liberation theology, which cannot be understood in the Catholic Church by Catho-
lic lay preachers.
The EZLN's revolt has been driven by hunger and desperation and represents the collective resistance of the Mexican. Anyone who wants to help these comrades active in this part of the Balkans, particu-
larly isolated because of the embargo which favours the war is serious. The war is a strong tool to be used against all of them. Only when the latter comes to power the former do not want a civil war or by oppression; sometimes by

Anarchism in

AIDED BY international solidarity, which itself is a tribal society, each tribe had its chief-

in Ireland is doomed to failure,

purity con, realising that the British la-

roots in the fertile soil of Irish (sorry . . .

De Valera and Adams, will reveal the

pul the Irish melting pot that assimilated

The Provos like to portray the conflict

The real roots of this movement lay of

The Mythology of Nationalism

The Myth of the golden age before the invader came has been a potent force in modern Irish republican politics.

However, the shine of the pure Gaelic race, the "High King" mythology, has been an illusion, created by noble kings and defended by superhu-

man heroes, has become so fixed in the national identity that it is difficult to imagine a people who have been enslaved for so long without a phony image of their ancestors. This mythology has contributed to the destruction of the native culture and the emergence of a new, more modern, national identity.

The elevation of the Pope to the role of "High King" was a deliberate strategy to divide the Irish people and to create a sense of inferiority among the population. The Pope was portrayed as a dispenser of blessings and a source of inspiration for the Irish people. This tactic was used to undermine the authority of the Irish government and to create a sense of dependence on the Pope.

The myth of the golden age before the invader came has been a potent force in modern Irish republican politics. It has been used to encourage the Irish people to resist the British government and to fight for independence. The myth has been used to create a sense of national identity and to foster a sense of pride in the history of the Irish people.

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Transport or Traffic?

In this article we look at the origins of the traffic system and the huge malign influence of the Road Lobby. In the next issue we will look at the Human Environmental consequences and alternative resistance to road traffic.

Origins of Traffic System

Nikolai Kondratiev, a Marxist writing in the 1920s postulated the Kondratiev wave which argued that the industrial economy expanded and contracted in waves of around 50 years, starting with the transport revolution of 1844–70. He thought the emerging rail network, with the steel and electrical styles before the First World War developed the ruling class are often ruthless in their efforts to destroy all sense of community, tradition and identity that is not in line with the profit motive. To quote from Active Resistance: "Capitalism's greatest fear and threat is a non-consumer, non-sporting, non-conformist, non-normative person."

Cultural Identity: Anarchist Perspective

As anarchists we want to create a new world in which people are not used to being forced to do what other people want. To do that we will have to destroy this new breed of culture that is tightly controlled by marketing with its grasp for profit. If this is achieved people may rediscover what culture has been used to form an unequal relationship. It is obvious from this perversion of culture. One cannot help but to wonder if many of the things we are told to enjoy. Culture can be a way of resisting uniformity and imperialism.

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In the next issue we will look at the Human Environmental consequences and alternative resistance to road traffic. That the economy expands until it reaches the limits of its distribution system. Simple tends to be caused by glut — the inability to shift (rather than produce) goods. One promising way out of recession is therefore to reach a critical mass, which is achieved by developing new transport systems. Around the world, we are seeing a new class of traffic, the ruling class are often ruthless in their efforts to destroy all sense of community, tradition and identity that is not in line with the profit motive. To quote from Active Resistance: "Capitalism's greatest fear and threat is a non-consumer, non-sporting, non-conformist, non-normative person."

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Dear Organiser,

Class strugglists used reformist though disintering Chris "Miss 1990 Euro election Greenboomas pillage, primary resource workers as well as the environment. It's not about "preaching at the others that are responsible, capital-topped think themselves revolutionaries —- GoldenHill being as strong an example of this as George Green —- whether that denies them validity is, perhaps, 14. Organise! No. 34 April-June 1994 7  Organise! No. 34 April-June 1994 15. Oxford GreenAnarchists —- whether that denies them validity is, perhaps, 14. Organise! No. 34 April-June 1994 7  Organise! No. 34 April-June 1994 15. Oxford GreenAnarchists

class, women and black people as should be as working class organises ourselves collectively. It's not possible to abolish capitalism without a revolution which will bring the government.