Margarita Ortega

Organise! begins a new series - Revolutionary Portraits. This will be devoted to revolutionaries, some well known, some little known, who have contributed so much to our movement over the last 120 years.

Margarita Ortega was a school teacher who came from a family "made up of people who were not politically conscious, but were proletarians aspiring to be bourgeois". During the unrest in Mexico in the early years of this century, she joined the Partido Liberal Mexicano (Mexican Liberal Party). Despite its name, the PLM was openly anarchist communist in its views, and was very active among workers and peasants.

Margarita was an excellent horsewoman and crack shot. As Regeneracion, the paper of the PLM noted: "More than one time her daring and cold blood saved her from falling into the hands of the forces of tyranny. Margarita Ortega had a big heart on her horse, or from behind a boulder, she could keep the Government soldiers at bay, and a little later she could be seen caring for the wounded, feeding the convalescing or offering words of comfort to the widows and orphans".

In 1911 Margarita told the man she was living with: "I love you; but I also love those who suffer, and for them I fight and risk my life. I don't want to see more men and women giving their effort, their health, their intelligence, their future to make the bourgeoisie rich. I don't want there to be men who order around other men any more. I am determined to continue to fight for the cause of the Partido Liberal Mexicano, and if you are a man, come with me to the country; otherwise, you can forget me, because I am not going to be the companion of a coward". He refused to go with her, but her daughter Rosaura replied, "Let us saddle the horses and throw ourselves into the struggle for the redemption of the working class!"

Expelled

Because of their activities, Margarita and Rosaura were expelled from the border town of Mexicali, and marched out into the desert, with the command that they never return again... For several days they struggled under the blazing sun through the desert. At one point Margarita thought that her daughter had died, and was about to kill herself when she saw signs of life. The pair struggled on to Yuma in the United States, where Margarita was arrested by the immigration officials. She managed to escape from prison, and with Rosaura went to Phoenix, Arizona. Rosaura had been badly effected by her ordeals in the desert. She wished to return to Mexico to take part in the struggle rather than die on her sick bed but this was denied her by death.

With her comrade in struggle and love, Natividad Cortes, Margarita began to organise the anarchist movement in the northern Mexican state of Sonora, using the small town of Sonoyta as her base in October 1913. But she and Cortes were surrounded by government forces, and he was shot dead. Margarita was imprisoned in Mexicali. She refused to name any other members of the PLM and as a result she was tortured. "Cowards!" she shouted, "Tear my skin to pieces, break my bones, drink all of my blood, and I will never denounce one of my friends".

She was forced to stand up in a cage. Any time she leant against the bars she was shoved back into the middle of the cage. If she fell on the ground, she was beaten till she was forced to stand again. After 4 days of suffering, she was taken out and shot at night.

"A shot left this noblewoman without life, free; her existence and example to remind the dispossessed to redouble our efforts against exploitation and tyranny."
Anarchist Communist Federation

The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists.

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Anarchist Communist Federation

AS THIS ARTICLE IS BEING WRITTEN WE ARE CLOSE TO THREE WEEKS OF NATO BOMBARDMENT ALL OVER YUGOSLAVIA IN THE NAME OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION AND THE "ETHICAL FOREIGN POLICY" OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT IN SERBIA (PART OF THE REMAINING FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA) IS ENGAGED IN A NATIONALIST ADVENTURE IN KOSOVO, ONE OF THE POOREST REGIONS OF THE FRY. THE AREA HAS SEEN GREAT CHANGES OVER THE CENTURIES, BUT ESPECIALLY SINCE THE 1990s, WHEN A RELATIVE SIZE OF SERBIAN AND ALBANIAN INFLUENCE HAS SWUNG BACK AND FORTH BECAUSE OF POWER RELATIONS ALLOWED BY INVESTMENT PRACTICES ALLOWED BY THE NEW FREE MARKET, WHICH HAD BEEN PROPPED UP BY AID FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION, RESULTING IN COUNTRYWIDE INSURRECTION ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION, IN MACEDONIA WHICH ALSO BORDERS ALBANIA, AND IN GREECE, TENSIONS CONTINUE DUE TO CLAIMS ON ITS NORTHERN TERRITORY BY BULGARIA. HUNGARY, TO THE NORTH OF SERBIA, HAS RECENTLY BECOME A NATO MEMBER. THESE FACTORS HAVE GREAT REPERCUSSIONS WHICH NATO WILL SOON HAVE TO CONSIDER IN ITS BID TO CONTROL THE LONG-TERM PROSPECTS OF AN UNSTABLE REGION.

Air-strikes

As Milosevic stepped up the military action in Kosovo, both the UN and NATO warned of possible military action. In the end NATO has decided to go ahead with military action and launched air-strikes on the whole of Yugoslavia starting on March 24th, straight after 1400 monitors from Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) were withdrawn. Milosevic declared a state of war. People are now dying daily from NATO bombs, Serbian and KLA forces in Kosovo, and in the squallid refugee camps.

Nationalism

What can anarchists say about what is happening, and more importantly, what can we do? First of all we have to oppose the war-mongering of all sides, whether

Kicked in the Balkans Again

In Britain, we have been subjected to a barrage of propaganda, vilifying Milosevic as a new genocidal Hitler, and claiming moral justification of whatever action NATO sees fit. We are bearing the warnings of world war from the Russian CIA's calling for arming of the Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA or UCK). We have heard the call for ground troops, and about the illegality of NATO action under international law and its side-stepping of the United Nations. Aid of a few million pounds is being collected in Britain while £1000s of millions are being spent on the NATO war effort. Not to mention billions already spent on high-tech weapons and planes.

Balance

The government in Serbia (part of the remaining Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) is engaged in a nationalist adventure in Kosovo, one of the poorest regions of the FRY. The area has seen great changes over the centuries, but especially since the 1990s, when a relative size of Serbian and Albanian influence has swung back and forth because of power relations allowed by investment practices allowed by the new free market, which had been propped up by aid from the European Union, resulting in countrywide insurrection elsewhere in the region, in Macedonia which also borders Albania, Kosovo and Greece, tensions continue due to claims on its northern territory by Bulgaria. Hungary, to the north of Serbia, has recently become a NATO member. These factors have great repercussions which NATO will soon have to consider in its bid to control the long-term prospects of an unstable region.

Air-strikes

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pro-Serbia whilst some of the smaller sects like the Alliance for Workers Liberty are pro-national liberation even as far as calling for arming of the KLA (just like the CIA mentioned above). The Socialist Workers Party are much more metaphorical on this subject, thus insisting that the "KLA has fallen into the trap of calling for Western intervention" and, while admitting that "the Albanian nationalist internationalist approach must oppose all sides, call for the desertion of all troops against the war, and for the revolutionary overthrow of the Milosevic regime."

Hypocrisy

If it is necessary to make comparisons with other conflicts, it is to show up the hypocrisy of NATO. Apart from its history in Ireland, both North and South, Britain has its other well known example of supporting the Indonesian government against East Timor. The EU, no less sympathizing over by Left and some anarchists do not see this as a "Stalinist show-trial". Both NATO and the EU are now here fighting for the war in what is the Balkans, where the imperialist and colonial aspirations of individual Western states in the latter part of this century. Already the International Monetary Fund is able to hold Russia to ransom enough for it to be careful about how far it's government will go against NATO, and it seems likely that the IMF and World Bank will explain this. We can and must play a similar role to play the Balkans when the military intervention has subsided. Other anarchists have already made the connection to the US/EU trade wars (e.g. over bananas and orange juice over the World Trade Organisation), and it seems clear that the US and Germany will soon be fighting against each other over the terms of IMF involvement when the war is over. On the other hand, the imperialists would also be hoping that American dominance in NATO will help it put the EU in line with its economic policy.

Nationalists

What about the nationalist movements in Kosovo then? As usual, the left in Britain is divided over this one. Some in the Labour Party left are anti-NATO and want a UN solution that stays with the slavocracy, and do not want an independent Kosovo. Some like the Socialist Party do support independence, though like their position towards the Six Counties they insist this must be a self-determined "socialist Kosovars as part of a socialist confederation of Balkan states". Living Marxism are more militarist in Ireland, both North and South, Britain has its other well known example of supporting the Indonesian government against East Timor. The EU, no less sympathizing over by Left and some anarchists do not see this as a "Stalinist show-trial". Both NATO and the EU are now here fighting for the war in what is the Balkans, where the imperialist and colonial aspirations of individual Western states in the latter part of this century. Already the International Monetary Fund is able to hold Russia to ransom enough for it to be careful about how far it's government will go against NATO, and it seems likely that the IMF and World Bank will explain this. We can and must play a similar role to play the Balkans when the military intervention has subsided. Other anarchists have already made the connection to the US/EU trade wars (e.g. over bananas and orange juice over the World Trade Organisation), and it seems clear that the US and Germany will soon be fighting against each other over the terms of IMF involvement when the war is over. On the other hand, the imperialists would also be hoping that American dominance in NATO will help it put the EU in line with its economic policy.

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One year on since the Good Friday agreement

The Peace of the Cemetery

UNIONISTS and Robert McCarthy's UK Unionists. As we have argued before (Organise! 47: If You Want Peace. Prepare for a 'Yes' vote), these groups have become less important since the election of the Labour government in 1997. Their rejection of the Good Friday document and their refusal to give support to David Trimble hasn't actually harmed the 'peace process' at all. Rather, their intransigence has served to make the Ulster Unionists appear the party of peace, progress and moderation. As head-banging religious fundamentalists, their politics were and are echoed paramilitarily by the Loyalist Volunteer Force, who, alongside the Orange Order, were the other 'hard-line' voice opposing the Agreement. The DUP will continue to be a depository for good old fashioned anti-Catholic hatred but its political constituency is unable to grow. The Loyalist Volunteer Force remains on ceasefire, even attempting to gain some sort of credibility by being the first paramilitary group to decommission (a few rusty weapons, probably 'decommissioned' by the group themselves when they were still part of the UVF!). The Red Hand Defenders and the Orange Volunteers, the two Loyalist groups who have emerged since the LVF called its ceasefire are, effectively, the LVF and sympathetic elements in the Ulster Freedom Fighters. Like the DUP, the rump of Loyalist Paramilitarism will continue to function, not least because of the collision of elites within the British state itself. Politically, this bloc stands for a return to the golden days of sectarian paramilitarism in a Protestant state. Those days are long, long over.

The Unionists

The anti-peace Unionists repre- sent the 'No' alternative. Among the 'No alternative at all' group, the Loyalist Unionists (both the IRA and the Loyalists, used by Unionists politicians as a stick with which to beat Sinn Fein and to delay things, are another insidious form of violence which both 'defenders of the community' cannot function without. The working class, Protestant and Catholic are stuck between anti-societal elements and would-be police forces, both drawn from their own communities but both equally controlled by them.

The overall situation is one of a violent, sectarian stagnation. One year has passed since the Good Friday Agreement. The March 10th deadline for the setting up of the Assembly Executive has come and gone. Sinn Féin accuses David Trimble and his Ulster Unionists of 'obstructing a man and of using the Unionist Vetco. In an assembly which not merely reflects but adheres to the sectarian divide, this is hardly surprising. The question is, how long can this go on? As ever, the working class critics of the Good Friday Agreement then they can be divided into the Unionist, the Republican and the Left.

What has happened to them since, and what sort of forces do they represent?

The Republicans

The major elements in the Republican Movement who have opposed the Agreement have been Republican Sinn Féin and the Irish Republican Socialist Party. Within mainstream republicanism, the 32 Countiy Sovereignty, had until very recently been in the 'No' camp. The attempts by the Irish state to criminalise the Republicans tendency to Omagh bombing has led to their expressing support for the IRA cease-fire and for the Peace Process. Despite continuing disagreements with the Sinn Féin leadership over the issue of sovereignty,

The Irish Republican Socialist Party rejected the Agreement but supported the Irish National Liberation Army's decision to join the 'cease-fire'. The IRSP appears to be going through a period of re-orientation at the moment and recently re-launched its newspaper The Starry Plough. Since its formation in 1974 The IRSP have been through various political crises and, sometimes violent, changes of leadership. The direction of the organisation seems to be towards an involvement in community-based struggles as a distinct Republican Socialist tendency within the broader Republican movement. Although the IRSP derides the Provisionals for having 'accepted the capitalist system' and of having a different (presumably bourgeois) class analysis to themselves, they have 'cashed in' defending the working class and the Catholic community. What can this mean other than unity with the mainstream Republican movement? The eventual destination for the IRSP is likely to be a re-affirmation of Leninism, although with the general crisis of the Left in Europe, who knows? Whatever path the IRSP take, their past as little more than an ancillary of the feud-ridden INLA, will weigh upon them like a nightmare. As before, their policies will not offer an independent working class alternative.

Part of the broader 'Republican' unity the IRSP would like to see is between Sinn Féin (RSF) and SF. However, there has been little harmony between the SF and the IRSP. Like the DUP, the rump of Loyalist Paramilitarism will continue to function, not least because of the collision of elites within the British state itself. Politically, this bloc stands for a return to the golden days of sectarian paramilitarism in a Protestant state. Those days are long, long over.

The Anarchists

The anarchist movement in Ireland as it stands today consists of the Socialist Solidarity Movement, based in Dublin and the anarchistsyndicalist Organise! group; the local section of the International Workers Association (IWA), based mainly in Belfast. Outside these groups are various individuals active both sides of the border. The Workers Party (SWP). The SWP called for a 'No' vote on the grounds that the Assembly would 'institutionalise sectarianism' (Socialist Worker, May 1st 1998). The SWP in the North of Ireland is a collection of its mother party in Britain, albeit much smaller. Despite this smallness, the SWP intends to stand candidates in forthcoming elections in the North. Elections to sectarian institutions! The Left

Most of the left in the Six Counties called for a 'Yes' vote in the referendum. The Workers Party (WP), what's left of it, supported and continued to support the Agreement. Wrecked by splits and violent conflict, the Stalled 'No' alternative went under the label 'United Unionists'. This pact consisted of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists and Robert McCartney's UK Unionists. As we have argued before (Organise! 47: If You Want Peace. Prepare for a 'Yes' vote), these groups have become less important since the election of the Labour government in 1997. Their rejection of the Good Friday document and their refusal to give support to David Trimble hasn't actually harmed the 'peace process' at all. Rather, their intransigence has served to make the Ulster Unionists appear the party of peace, progress and moderation. As head-banging religious fundamentalists, their politics were and are echoed paramilitarily by the Loyalist Volunteer Force, who, alongside the Orange Order, were the other 'hard-line' voice opposing the Agreement. The March 10th deadline accuse David Trimble and his Ulster Unionists of 'obstructing a man and of using the Unionist Vetco. In an assembly which not merely reflects but adheres to the sectarian divide, this is hardly surprising. The question is, how long can this go on? As ever, the working class critics of the Good Friday Agreement then they can be divided into the Unionist, the Republican and the Left.

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Genetics can really spoil your day

A third and less well known example is the use of "Terminator" genes in seeds. This gene has the effect of stopping the plant producing fertile seeds. They claim that it will increase the yield of the crop and will provide more choices for the farmer by selecting high yielding seeds. The reality, of course, is to tie the farmers into dependency on Monsanto. Farmers are not able to save part of their seed crop to use to grow new crops the following year. This technology is being applied to cotton, particularly in India. It represents the final triumph of agribusinesses attempting to produce sterile crops.

The dangers

Some of the dangers of these crops are obvious:

- Pollen from GMOs can cross fertilise with non-GMO crops. The result is that all crops are GMO.
- Gene pollution cannot be "recalled". Once out there, it is there for good.
- GM crops can take more pesticides. This increases greater pollution of the waterways.
- If all the bugs that feed on the crops are killed, what happens to the birds that feed on the bugs - or the other animals in the food chain?

Other dangers are less apparent:

- Genes cannot simply be inserted into plants. They need some means of getting inside the plants' cells. Scientists are often misled to believe that the viruses are themselves modified to prevent danger to health. There has already been evidence that some of the viruses used retain harmful effects. How can we be sure that this effect the human immune system?
- Genes can spread from one species to another. This can lead to the growth of super-weeds.
- Genetic engineering is often linked with efforts to make plants and animals resistant to bacteria. The result can be the emergence of antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Resistance

Peasant farmers in India have recognised the dangers posed by the efforts of Monsanto. They have a long history of using seeds for the following year and of giving seed to neighbours in need. As Monsanto have patented the seed and claim to hold copyright over it, they are now saying that the farmers are breaching the law if they try to retain some for future use. In Canada and the USA Monsanto have been using patents to prosecute farmers. The reaction in India of the farmers has been to launch a Cre- mate Monsanto campaign, which has taken direct action and burned whole fields of GM cotton!

In Britain a campaign is well underway. Genetix Snowball have adopted the non-violent tactic of digging up some GMO crops. They have done so in the attempt to gain publicity and have courted arrest in their actions. So far they have been quite successful in getting their message across. They have also entered supermarkets and walked off with GMO food-stuffs, saying it was contaminated. Their actions in Manchester have caused embarrassment to MG Spencer who subsequently became one of the growing band of supermarkets to say they won't carry the products. Other spectacular actions are planned. Other campaigners, often around local Earth First! Groups have gone in for the minor tactic of the GM crops. This has a number of advantages for them:

- It is a stick to hit the US with whilst at the same time being popular with populations already scared by BSE, E-Coli and Salmonella and who are understandably hostile to GM food.
- A moratorium allows them to protest but do something but also to allow GM crops in at a later date when all the fuss has died down.
- It gives European biotech companies a chance to catch up in the development of new crops.

The Government

Monsanto are now privately admitting that they are looking at ways to mess with the hearts and minds of the British public. They are relying heavily on their friends in the government. The British New Labour Government has close links with biotech companies. This caused serious embarrassment to MG Spencer but less obvious are the efforts the biotech companies put into lobbying. The major organs of the pubic are now against genetic engineering but 70% of MPs are said to be in favour!

Despite all the opposition, the state is only talking of a voluntary moratorium for a couple of years. It has less to do with worrying about us and more to do with nationalism and the looming trade war between Europe and the USA.

Banana Wars

In recent years, US foreign policy has aimed to displace British and French imperialism from Africa and replace it with US domination. This was the re- ality behind their support for the Tunisian uprising in 1952 and for the uprising in the then Zaire. These areas were within the French sphere of influence, now they are coming under US domination. Now they have turned their sights on the Carib- bean. Here they aim to take the area out of British domination by the destruction of that region's main export, bananas. The destabilisation that will bring will provide the US with the excuse it needs to intervene fi- nancially or militarily, whatever is most convenient. Not only does this give the US the chance to get rid of the Brits, it also serves as a warning to the increasingly integrated European Union. Which the US fears will become a real rival in years to come.

Hence the Banana Wars. The Euro- pean response has been to increasingly adopt the line of a moratorium on the import of GM crops. This has a number of advantages for them:

- It gives European biotech companies an almost united press and the Tory Government that encourages production to make sure that our food is healthy enough to meet the need of all of us. When we have created a libertarian socialist community, it will be the responsibility of the community to make decisions as to what science should be allowed to tinker with the basic genetic material. To do otherwise will be difficult decisions to make but we can be sure that they will be made on the basis of what is in the interests of the planet as a whole not to make a fortune for private investors or corporate employees.
Whose land is it anyway?

Get Off My Land!

This is the message the landowners of Britain have been giving working people throughout the centuries. And this message remains the same today. With the government backing down on the issue (what a surprise!) on its Right to Roam legislation the mass of the people remain not only excluded from the land unless the landowner deigns to grant access, but also excluded from any decision-making about what is done with this land. We need to question this myth of land 'ownership'. For, in fact, the whole landowning system is based on theft. To understand this we need to go back to the times of the Norman Conquest.

Without romanticising the Saxon period (slavery was widespread and it was clearly a class system), peasants before the Norman conquest had a certain control over the land. Free, independent peasant owners called ceorls cultivated their own areas. They owed certain duties to the king, but there were no non-cultivating landowners. This situation started to deteriorate even before the Normans arrived. As a result of various military campaigns, the Normans gained control over certain territories. The treatment and extent of the peasants' exploitation depended on the whim of the particular thegn (lord). Some peasants found themselves forced to sell land to the thegn in order to become wage-labourers. However, there was still extensive common land which was available for grazing, fuel collecting and gathering.

Blood Sports

It is not just a grossly unequal system of land ownership that dates from the Norman Conquest but also the tradition of blood sports. The loss of the peasants' rights to the best commonland meant that they were driven to hunting. The hunting of deer, for example, was at first a sport for the nobility. But as the nobility became richer, the demand for meat grew and a new class of professionals, the poachers, came into being to supply the demand. The result was a decline in the population of the deer. To overcome this, new forests were established, their boundaries were marked with 'deer parks', and shooting became a pastime for the nobility. As a result, the peasants were driven even further into the commonland, which was increasingly fenced and enclosed. This was done to ensure that the landowners had the best possible hunting ground, and to prevent the peasants from using it.

Struggles

Peasants did not succumb passively to the exploitation of the landowners. (See accompanying article.) As a result of their struggles, some reforms were made. But for the last 900 years there has been a history of continuing exploitation. Reforms would be made and then a new form of exploitation would emerge, causing further resistance. The 18th-century Enlightenment idea of a 'free contract' with common land and common rights had been reduced but still existed. Peasants also had a right of passage over any land that was uncultivated, except deer parks and other hunting areas. Landowners had an obligation to see that the main tracks were maintained. The Forest laws were relaxed and Henry III started allowing the felling of the Royal timber. The destruction of game and the violation of certain tracts of forest Penalties were also reduced.

The development of agrarian capitalism in the 15th-17th centuries was the cause of some reforms but also created new forms of exploitation. Peasants could now sell food on the market rather than being tied to the ground. The decline of feudalism meant that the peasants had more freedom to sell their produce. The landowners joined by reinforcements from the bourgeoisie. Sir Robert Walpole was Prime Minister for 23 years and oversaw many of the enclosures. He was a keen hunter and would open new 'deer parks' and lease them out to hunting clubs.

Poaching

For the peasants, the situation seemed to get even worse under early-capitalism. Laws against poaching were lightened and deer stealing was punished by hanging. It was even forbidden for smallholders to own hunting implements like traps in case they looked game that stayed on their land. The Black Act (named after the poachers who blackened their faces) passed in the early 18th century created 50 new offences which were punishable by death. Common rights were also attacked more vigorously than they had been under feudalism. Landowners wanted their 'privately agreed' enclosures to have the backing of law. During the 18th and 19th centuries 7 million acres of land was enclosed. The enclosed land was used for sheep, mining and cattle rearing. In addition, access to the countryside was curtailed.

The old tracks were blocked by enclosures. Traditional recreation activities of the peasants such as foami and football couldn't take place because there was no available land. This was of course welcomed by the Calvinist capitalists who thought such activities detracted from a disciplined workforce. The result was the end of the peasant, the landowners and their transformation into an urban working class or emigrant labour.

Corn Laws

In the 19th century, the urban middle class gained strength both economically and politically and there were moves to protect the landowners. The controversy over the Corn Laws symbolised this conflict. It was a battle against the import restrictions on corn and there was a major campaign to repeal the Corn Laws which had imposed these restrictions. This, of course, was opposed by the landowners. The eventual repeal of the Corn Laws was seen as a victory of the industrialists over the landowners. The power of the landowners was never effectively destroyed as we saw in the last issue (Organise! 19) there was too close a connection between the industrialists and the landowners. The reduction in the amount of land and the emergence of more small farmers did not alter the fundamental structure of British society. In many respects, the new owners were even more committed to the old ideology, including the interest in blood sports. The industrialists often were landowners themselves but they just needed to own land to adopt the culture of the land owning aristocracy. They rented shooting rights with the London rich taking hunting boxes in the shires. According to Sutherland (an academic writer on land use) in the late 19th century 40% of all land was closed to the public. Every foxhunting was completely unrepresentative of the countryside. The 20th century brought considerable pressure for reform. But despite the passing of the game laws in 1919, the right of access to the Countryside Act in 1949, in terms of the mass of the people having any real access to the land itself or details about how the land is used, nothing has changed. Whether it is said by the landowners or by the National Farmers' Union or the National Bandit, the message is still the same: "Get Off My Land." It's about time we did something about it.
Far from the bucolic picture of Arcadian bliss, of paternalistic big farmers and contented farm workers, the history of the countryside, and the struggle of classes in that countryside, is far, different. When a poll tax (?) was introduced in 1381 to pay for the Hundred Years War with France, this acted as a spur to fight the tyranny of the landlord of rural unrest. All taxes would be passed down to the serfs themselves and attacked the King’s tax collector in the Home Counties. Essex. These events inspired other uprisings throughout Essex and Kent. Yosman veterans of the war joined with the serfs. Wat Tyler, one of these ex-soldiers and an eloquent orator, was elected commander-in-chief in Kent. Capturing Canterbury, the movement liberated John Ball from prison. This wandering priest had been touring the country for 20 years preaching radical doctrines of levelling and the land to be in common. Many threatening letters were sent to landowners. This movement became known as the Diggers. Diggers, issued a call for the people to have access to the forests and common lands. Harassment from the local landlords forced them to move to another site, and continued attacks forcing the movement to accept the failure of the movement. Other Digger settlements sprung up throughout the southeast and midland counties.

In 1649, the Diggers’ chief theorist, argued against the whole idea of private property. He attacked the notion that the landowners had a right to the land and declared that they had stolen it from the masses of the population.

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries there were hundreds of revolts against enclosure. In May 1607, for example, there was a month of widespread protest. In Hampshire, where enclosure had been carried out on a massive scale, the farmers went into the fields, and by night, people began to dig up the forests and clear enclosures, driving out of their houses on ‘‘masterless’’ men. The peasants marched on London from East Anglia. The Duke of Newcastle’s steward wrote in 1673: ‘‘I have got a list of about 10 poor wretches chiefly women and children that have been piling the woods this cold winter and intend having them before a magis- trate at the first proper opportunity and if I can prevail upon the justices to act as they ought shall get them whipped’’. Four months later another ‘‘stealer’’ of wood had his house torn down by the stonewall.

In the 1720s gangs of men with their faces blacked up invaded deer parks in the Home Counties, in particular the Royal Forest of Dumbarton. The death penalty was brought in to deal with the ‘‘Blacks’’ and ‘‘16 were hanged in the next 2 years. Two gamekeepers were shot dead by the Blacks. Many Blacks died in prison, and many others were transported and about 40 became outlaws.

In 1830 country labourers rose in revolt throughout southern and eastern England. The hated threshing machines were smashed, ricks and barns were burnt down, all under the cover of darkness. Many threatening letters were sent to landowners. This movement became known as the Diggers because it made demands for the land to belong to all. Many threatening letters were sent to landowners. This movement became known as the Diggers because it made demands for the land to belong to all. It was met with repression. The attempt by farm workers to organise in Tolpuddle in Dorset in 1834 resulted in the transport of some of the leaders.

The repression unleashed against them brought them no sympathy and in 1660 all radical publications were banned. In 1662 the Justices of the Peace were allowed powers to stop migration, effectively sabotaging the setting up of new Digger settlements.

The war of the landowners against the rural poor continued into the next century. Equally, defiance of enclosure continued, in small ways with the gathering of firewood, and in large-scale, crop destruction and attacks on the landowners’ property.

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The heavy repression after Captain Swing meant that never again was there to be violent uprising on a mass scale. This step back from insurrection resulted in a turn towards the creation of unions. Even these attempts were met with persecution. The attempt by farm workers to organise in Tolpuddle in Dorset in 1834 resulted in the trans- 10. The repressive legislation of the 19th century reversed the gains of the union. The National Agricultural Labourers Union was short-lived. The years of bad harvest and agricultural decline reversed the gains of the union. The farmers set up a blacklist of those who were members. In 1877 the first shiploads of prairie wheat from Canada arrived and many crofters set sail for the New World. The government was forced to make some concessions like a rent tribunal and security of tenure. The crofters continued, however, because no extra land was granted to the crofters.

Rebecca Riots

In Wales in the 19th century, there was widespread destruction of enclosure fences as well as bread and corn riots. The most important of these were the Rebecca Riots. From 1839 till 1844 throughout Wales hundreds of actions took place. Many villages across the country were smashed. Salmon weirs were destroyed because the game laws stopped the poor taking fish from the rivers, hay- stacks were burnt and poorhouses at- tacked. 150 police and 1800 troops were

In Scotland these Highlanders who did not emigrate because of the Clearances settled on coastal smallholdings (crofts). The landowners put the squeeze on the crofters. The crofts were not large enough to maintain a whole family, so they were forced to work for the land- owners. But there was a widespread be- lief that the land belonged to all. In 1888, some Skye crofters put out a petition de- manding that the landowner Lord Mac- Donald return the land of Bon Lee to them. This was immediately rejected and the crofters started a rent strike. When a sheriff tried to serve notices on the crofters, a crowd of 150 physically attacked him and burnt the notices. The Sheriff of Inverness-shire sent 50 police to arrest the crofters. They were surrounded by local people and stoned, but the police managed to arrest 5 men regarded as ringleaders. The Highland Land League which grew out of these events rapidly gained support, and the government was forced to make some concessions like a rent tribunal and security of tenure. The crofters continued, however, because no extra land was granted to the crofters.

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New disturbances erupted in the 1880s in Wales caused by tenant farmers and this crisis was thoroughly constitutional and no direct action on a large scale took place.

From time to time, the old practice of summoning down encroachers fell into disuse. In 1908 a landowner at West Preston Manor in Sussex decided that a farm running by his property was an innovation and had two gates put up at each end of the lane. The local villagers destroyed the gates. The landowner reasserted them. The time the villagers turned out in force, accompanied by the village band and broke them down again. Local postcards of the event were produced!

During the 19th century, the idea that city dwellers should enjoy the countryside and fresh air was a popular one. By the 1930s this had become a massive movement, with an estimated 15,000 people from Sheffield and 15,0000 from Manchester visiting the Peak District on an average Sunday.

However, large tracts of land were cut off from the ramblers. In 1935, there were only 12 footpaths in the Peak District. The best walking land, including Kinder Scout and Bleaklow Ridge, were fenced off. Ramblers started to organise annual rallies in the Peak District. In 1932 a new organisation, the British Ramblers' Association, was founded. In 1934, 400 ramblers organised a march on the Ramblers' Association and a number of them were arrested. The Ramblers' Association was formed in 1936 to protest against the trample of tractors cutting up footpaths. 5 ramblers were imprisoned and in response thousands joined two more mass trespasses.

The history of the British countryside is a history of struggles for mass trespass, the militancy of farm labourers, the repression all things that should be known and understood. They are a constant reminder to us that the land is an important issue that can mobilise thousands.

**For every 79 people charged with murder the death penalty irrecoverably claims, one of those executed is an innocent person. Is such a price too high? Would you volunteer yourself as that person? If it happens with all too depressing frequency in America, perhaps we can have severe hardship for the death penalty.**

**Henry (Hank) Skinner**

**For those who know Hank to be innocent that they spent thousands of dollars of their own money in trying to prove him to be so. There is growing international concern as well. In Texas, mount to 'legally' stuff out Hank's existence. A great deal of new evidence has been unearthed which proves that he could not have done that which he is accused and falsely convicted of, including a sworn affidavit from a key prosecution witness who confesses to having made "inaccurate and unethical" statements, both to the police and to the trial. Compelling documentary evidence is also available to add weight to Hank's testimony. But nothing of this may stand to be taken at face value.**

**Fowler Albert Maggard PO Box 1451, Pumpkin Ridge, Texas USA and Henry Skinner 999143, Ellis Unit, Death Row, Huntsville TX 77343 USA.**

**For information via the internet: www.cyberspace-inmates.com/skinner.html and www.citizen.decom.co.uk.**

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**Out Again!**

The Anarchist Movement in Japan. The Fascinating account by John Crump of Japanese Anarchism from the late 19th century onwards. Japan had an anarchist communist movement in the late 19th century and numbered tens of thousands. The ACF have just reprinted this popular ACE pamphlet. £1.80 plus SAE from ACF c/o Bob Whitchapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Mark Barmesley is an anarchist prisoner inside for defending himself against a gang of students (see issues 47 and 50 of Organise!). Letters from Brandon of the Justice for Mark Barmesley League suggest that they may take action. Re-Beuf from Sheffield ACF trying to sabotage the Mark Barmesley defence campaign. Frankie Dee the ACF's prisoners liaison officer of organizing with Mark Relf in this of lying about it. Brandon has spent a lot of time critical and, indeed hurting abuse, at anarchists. He vented his spleen on Chumbawamba, then ex-Class War people grouped around Smash Hits, amongst others. Now he is using his support of Mark Barmesley as a way of attacking the Anarchist Black Cross and the ACF as apparently we don't catch up to his high standards. We are writing to the prison in support of the ACF's national and international prisoner support work and the work done by the Prison Action Group and others. We believe that Mark Barmesley was a victim of injustice. We commend his courage and solidarity, with the Hungry For Justice 47 and 50. We encourage people to help Mark by contacting a support group. We may do more. But if we did it would be because Mark deserves our support and not because his so-called supporters threaten us with broken legs or a 'wielding out'.

**Brandon, lies, slanders and prisoner support**

**A statement by the ACF**

Secondly, as a non-hierarchical federation of anarchist communists we work together in solidarity but we cannot deny what our members do like a Leninist party. So, if on the one hand an smashing donor have taken unconditional support to a prisoner while another gives other prisoners higher priority or refuses to support a particular prisoner that is up to them.

You might find this contradictory but we are not a monopolistic organisation compelling members to toe a party line.

Rather we are a group of people sharing the basic principle of thought and action in solidarity, which we call proudly, anarchist communism.

Thirdly, nothing about our principles compels us to work in solidarity with people who oppose and constantly criticise our every move, or who we know are willing to use violence if called upon, and we see that as being in the class struggle.

On that basis a member of the ACF is free to state that they are not supporting Mark Barmesley's fight for freedom (if any members have said such a thing) and neither you nor we can compel them to say why. Freedom not to speak is as much a basic tenet of the free society as intimidation and coercion to tell all is of the political state. One of our members has been accused of hounding support for Mark Barmesley but not how or in what way. There have been many accusations but few facts. Another ACF member has been accused of colluding in this. of knowing things he could not know and does not know what saying what things are. This is the language of the show trial: invent a crime and then get the defendant to explain how they came to be guilty.

Brandon has demanded explanations. The ACF as an organisation has done nothing wrong and we know only actions to those who threaten us. We would add though that developing a broader base of support for Mark Barmesley is more likely to be achieved by propaganda and campaigning than by accusing its members of sinning through we may be willing to debate acts of disengagement. Nor are we, as an anarchistic group, to be or trustworthy, that we would provide the most that support every cause embraced by others in the movement. As free individuals we make those judgements for ourselves and speak only for ourselves when we do so. allowing others to take different positions and act in different ways. This is as much a principle we apply to prison support work as to all other aspects of the class struggle. This means that as an organisation we consider all requests for support in-...ruins and wrote to the ACF prisoner support speaks for itself and need no further explaining. The record of the ACF on prisoner support can be seen in Organise! 47 stated our position. We believe Mark Barmesley to be a victim of injustice. We commended his courage and solidarity, with the Hungry For Justice 47 and 50. We encourage people to help Mark by contacting a support group. We may do more. But if we did it would be because Mark deserves our support and not because his so-called supporters threaten us with broken legs or a 'wielding out'.

In the class struggle truth is often the first victim but it is always the innocent who suffer. We have not enjoyed spending our precious time responding to malicious slanders when our time could have been spent more constructively (for example discussing the Bal- kans war or the Munich Must Live! campaign). The record of the ACF on prisoner support speaks for itself and that is our final word.

This statement was written by the Na- tional Secretary of the Anarchist Com- munist Federation, based on a letter written by Merseyside ACF and as in- structed by the National Delegate M eetin g of 10, 4, 99

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**prisoner support**

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**prisoner support**
**DISNEYFICATION**

Nostalgia ain’t what is used to be

Nostalgia is key element also in the tendency to disregard conflict - there is no politics, tragedy or poverty. Nostalgia is deployed to create a feeling of childhood innocence and naivety, which legitimises ignoring the historical (and current) realities for many Americans - including children - of class conflict, exploitation, racism, poverty and abuse. It is a white, conventional, middle class view of childhood that disempowers and exploits children. Visitors participate in the past - Passive spectators reduced to the 'ideal' child-like condition of being acted upon rather than acting. The sense of a return to childhood is the basic appeal of many Disney products, the essence of this nostalgia. A deep nostalgia for one's past is engendered because it is hard, even for children, to fully enter the present - I wish I were still a baby! I wish I were younger!" was the response of a six year old girl to Disneyland. It is probable however, that even if her wish were granted, that she would not still have experienced it as totally real. This is a nostalgia longed for a past that never existed.

For adults there is probably also often an additional layer of nostalgia in the parks, the longing for a return to the nature of our play in childhood innocence. In spite of the fact that artefacts are frequently dislocated from their historical contexts, there is a sense of historical progression from an exciting and misty past to an even more exciting, but still misty, future. There is an ambiguous sense of the present as deficient in the Disney parks; the essentially optimistic picture of the past and future act to reconcile people to the barely outlined present. This sense of deficiency is a fundamental part of the consumer impulse: it can only be addressed (within capitalism) by buying a product or service, though satisfaction is only temporary and fleeting.

The deletion by the Imagineers of the past is a created longing for a past that is often displayed as zany! The past is often displayed as zany! Household gadgets of previous time are frequently dislocated from their context in which the problem of the past were either ignored or glossed over. The past is often displayed as zany! Thus the past is often displayed as zany! The combination of these two feelings results in a celebration of the certainties of the past. This nostalgia allows the present to be cast in a more favourable light, and the future, since it is represented in the Disney parks by unremarkable features that people have some familiarity with, so that they can feel nostalgic forwards too! Nostalgia here is also about people accepting their present position, the way in which past, present and future are dissolved into one another helps to render the present more agreeable. The growth of deliberate, synthetic nostalgia is closely linked with consumption, capitalism, which must constantly change and expand or die. destroys the past at an ever faster rate, then strives to sell back a version of it. Disney's fabricated nostalgia such as Main Street, (which was not a clean, commercially prosperous strip) is also a mask for the commercial realities behind it.

Family Favourites

For Disney, "the important thing... is the family... that's been the backbone of our whole business, catering to families. The family was (and is) an important theme of many of the studio's most important films such as Bambi and Snow White. The characters in the various parks are set up to show that Disney's fabricated nostalgia such as Main Street (which was not a clean, commercially prosperous strip) is also a mask for the commercial realities behind it.

**Reel Nature**

As the world becomes increasingly urbanised, many people's main or only exposure to nature is via films, television and packaged tourism. The Disney corporation has been - and remains - one of the main mediators for Disney the main value of the natural world is as a source of exploitation for profit. In the early days this took the form of praising the virtues of logging, mining and urban development, now it is the right to defi ne nature that Disney ( & other corporate capitalists) covets. In the earliest Disney productions nature appears as a dead animal, or in the anthropomorphic form of humanized animals. Bambi (1942) saw the beginning of the current form of nature, a killer of animals, has been turned into a hero and killed, and the parks' nostalgia is far more likely to appeal to them. Disney as a result the films similarly use symbols from the natural world, such as heroes looking like Cary Grant, and heroes like Hollywood starlets. The appeal of the parks to adults has been crucial to their success. In the middle of despair at the losses of EuroDisney (nearly £500 million in the year to September 1993), the company targeted the older generation of over-55s, after finding that the park had a significant migratory flow of 'nostalgics'. Add to that the added value of discovering the new, such as Peter Pan. Swiss Family Robinson, and other Disney nostalgic recollections of (mythical) place such as Moomin Street. EPCOT is cloaked in emphasis on the future - in World Showcase children are almost totally dispelled, as most of the attractions are adults-only. Eiffel Tower, St Mark's Square and Landmarks. Similarly the British pub. Geriatric Hall and its Marmite feature, the demystification of the Animation Tour and nostalgia of the Great Movie Ride are adult oriented. Engaged parents are modes of buildings of restaurants, the deleted by the Imagineers of the past. This nostalgia allows the present to be cast in a more favourable light, and the future, since it is represented in the Disney parks by unremarkable features that people have some familiarity with, so that they can feel nostalgic forwards too! Nostalgia here is also about people accepting their present position, the way in which past, present and future are dissolved into one another helps to render the present more agreeable. The growth of deliberate, synthetic nostalgia is closely linked with consumption, capitalism, which must constantly change and expand or die. destroys the past at an ever faster rate, then strives to sell back a version of it. Disney's fabricated nostalgia such as Main Street, (which was not a clean, commercially prosperous strip) is also a mask for the commercial realities behind it.
These distortions can be seen as part of a North American artistic tradition. Writers such as Ernest Seton-Thompson had a huge readership for their exciting, detailed accounts of the behaviour of wild animals. By 1910 they were exposed and discredited as the ‘nature fakers’, naturalists such as John Burroughs suggested that Seton-Thompson’s masterwork should have been discredited as the ‘naturefakers’; nature praised or condemned using the ideal rather than education; but was the startsaying the intention was enter-
called ‘Wild Animals I (Alone) Have Known’. Disney admitted the ruse from the start saying the intention was entertain-
tainment rather than education; but was still blasted by critics. Animals were la-
belled ‘courageous’, ‘jolly’, ‘lonely’, ‘treacherous’ etc. Animal mothers were prai-
ed or condemned using the ideal WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) human family as a yardstick. The film Bear Country showed the never-in-
 Golosie American history as a major 
In the 1960s, work moved from ‘mockdocumentary’ to Seton-style animal story. The formula was the adoption of a young male animal by a soft-hearted hu-
mans, the animal grows up in the house-
hold until the destruction caused by its 
life and instinct forces its re-
scape was supplied with mountains, 
leaves, sown, savannah and jungle with 
the importancethat they 
especialists many important texts. somefa-
cal, Paris, the best known and most fa-
book reviews

**The East End Years: A Stepney Childhood**

Fernim Rocker Free-
dom Press £7.95 192 pages

**RUDOLPH ROCKER WAS one of the foremost anarchists of the early Twenti-
eth Century. His work amongst East London Jewish workers in his capacity as editor of the Yiddish language radical periodical ARBETER FRAINT (Workers’ Friend) has become almost legendary, whilst his international reputa-
tion as a propagandist was, at the time, probably second to none. Unfortunately, little of what he has written has been trans-
lated into English, the only exceptions to this being the magisterial Nationalism and Culture and his seminal and widely 
read Anarcho-Syndicalist London. 

Family Life

The book is written in a clear, simple and attractive way. It is illustrated throughout with a series of Fernim’s own line drawings. Other than the close-
ness of the Rocker family, several themes quickly emerge, the most obvious of which being the strength of the pre-
dominantly Jewish radical community at that time, and the importance that they

in turn placed upon respect for culture and the development of strong interna-
tional links. The sheer passion and in-
sistence with which anarchists conducted their day-to-day business also shines through, the anarchist message having an optimism and vibrancy which has since been partially lost. Similarly, al-
though Fernim paints a warts and all picture of the Anarchist movement and is in fact quite open about sectarian di-
visions, units against the common en-
emy seems to have been the consensus 
with well developed support networks 
for those falling on hard times being 
the norm rather than the exception.

What makes Fernim’s account unusu-
ally readable however, is his ability to 
place both politics and the life of his 
family within the context of East End 
society at that time, a context which, in 
turn, gives the narrative much more 
body and depth than is typically seen in 
political writings. We learn as much, fo-
example, about colourful local characters on the streets and about Fernim’s friends in the tenements as we do about Anar-
chist ideology. It’s hard to know which 
was more fascinating, the depiction of the 
outside world enters in to beat strikers 
industrial activism or to prison activists. It’s cold. profit-
aren’t to order) and devoid of informal accompaniment. In 1995, Dis-
ney reached an agreement with most of 
the US forest land management agen-
cies for more interpretative services for 
visitors to public lands. It has since pro-
tected full guide tour training to forest land man-
agers. As part of the comprehen-
sored American Recreation Coalition. 
Disney is pressuring Washington to ac-
tually promote commercial recreation on 
public lands. The majority of park visi-
tors favour industrially-oriented tourism, 
so this could foreshadow an avalanche of 
heli-skiing sightseers, snowmobilers, 
powerboasters and camper vans heading 
for the newest Disney Wilderness Lodge 
and Visitor Centre, with the accompany-
ing despoliation and destruction.

**All Power to the 
Imagination**

Disney’s influence derives from its asso-
ciation with playfulness based on anima-
films, parks as films, and its prom-
ise of making childhood dreams come 
true for both children and adults.

This playfulness consists of predictable, controlled experiences - the negation of play which is unpredictable, spontaneous and controlled by the participants. The 
corporation’s many nostalgias serves to 
disguise consumption, obscure the in-
adequacies of the present and bridge the gap into a higher future care of technol-
ogy, the development of strong internal 
and self-destruction.

The arrest of Rudolf Rocker

**No Gods, No Masters**


**THE LATE DANIEL Guerin, libertarian communist and editor of several French organisations. intellectual and 
gay activist. put this anthology of writ-
ings together in French in 1965 A re-
vised edition appeared in 1980, of which this is an English translation. We should be grateful for this collection which assembles many important texts, some fa-
miliar to British Anarchists, some, and very important ones at that, never before translated into English.

And yet, and yet the collection assem-
bled by Guerin points to a certain amount of confusion in his own thought. It is rather surprising to find the begin-
ing of a new chapter on page 20.

The myths of childhood, family and pro-
gress are a powerful drug. We need to 
wake up to the smell coming from these 
minor-earthworm corpses and collectively 
seize and create the present and future.

**The Washington 
Connection**

The nature attractions of the theme 
parks borrow the films’ pacing as well 
as their themes. The endless hours of 
silence, slow changes in sky and light.
A La Recherche 'uncommunismelleiber-
er. Guerin regularly affirmed the class
grandfather of individualism, Max Stir-
Guerin was under the influence of the
archist communism in the same or-
ich and which he never
the 60s.
thesis (which attempted to reconcile
theanarchistmovement at a time of de-
alongside Bakunin, Kropotkin, Makhno
and Durruti.
the mass of the people, clear analyses
continuing to weaken anarchism, sabotaging
organisation, serious agitation amongst
since, throughout the world, it has con-
the group around Marceau Pivert.

In his foreword to the last book he wrote
features of the market under capitalism.
French activist and thinker Proudhon.
characteristic of the current movement (the First International) and then some references to Prou-
don, whose work in Volume I is devoted.

These failings are in part made up by the
inclusion of texts by Bakunin, Ces-
de Paepe, Schwartzgubel and Guil-
and finally Kropotkin in Volu-
In particular, the previously un-
translated texts of De Paepe, Schwartz-
gubel and Kropotkin are very inter-
and are correctly grouped under the
title Direct Action and Libertarian
Construction. Guillaume’s ideas on Social Organisation is indeed
anarchist programme, clearly revo-
itionary in its outlook. Indeed
laeme is seen to be clearly breaking
with his much admired friend Bakunin
on the subject of anarchist collectivism
and developing towards an invol-
the mass of the people, clear analyses
continuing to weaken anarchism, sabotaging
organisation, serious agitation amongst
since, throughout the world, it has con-
the group around Marceau Pivert.

The same with the next section on the
French activist and thinker Proudhon.
For too long Proudhon has been seen as
the real founder of the anarchist move-
ment. It is true that the burning cri-
unarchist on a number of occasions.

But he is equally one of the pioneers of
socialism in general. Marx owes a lot to
him, even though the German philoso-
pher was to turn on him as time went by.
Proudhon has many revolutionary ideas
including praising the patriarchal fam-
ily and a strong contempt for women.
Many anarchists were to be deeply em-
mourning by these writings. Proudhon
in Germany. He believed in a peaceful evolution to a society of
anarchism, which retained many char-
QX. Better still take bundles of Resis-
our Austrian comrades in German.

If anybody you know who speaks Serbo-
Croat an issue of the manufactured VULSANA TAY-GRIZ.

Dear Anarchist Communist Federation comrades.
I am Silvano Pelissoro and I am enclosed in a house prison.
I write only French and Spanish. I can write to you in English
because today I have a friend that helps me
the newsociety comes to the fore, all-
the federations of communes as the basis of
anarchist movements. This means that
means that work of the movement is critical
of distribution. it would be need, From
Eco and Soledad were held in the prison of Torino city. On 28th
March 1998 Eco Massimo was arrested in Valletta Prison (Tolino).

I was arrested on the streets of Valossa, Soledad and Eco,
were arrested in the squat in Collegio city called "The House".

Stormy Petrel Pamphlets
Towards a Fresh Revolution by The
Stormy Petrel. This is the
much misunderstood group who
attempted to defend and extend
the Spanish Revolution of 1936. 75p

Malatesta’s Anarchism and Violence,
an important document in the
history of anarchist theory refutes
the common misrepresentation of anarchism
as mindless destruction while restating
the need for revolution to create a
free and equal society. 50p

Resistanc

Counter Information Quarterly newsletter independent collective. Information on struggle worldwide. Free copy with SAE from Pigeonhole CI, c/o Transmission, 20 King Street, Glas-
5Q, SLP, Scotland.

RESISTANCE

THE ACF HAS now produced 3 issues of our
agitational Resistance, keeping to our
bi-monthly schedule. The latest one (No.3)
has articles on the "low-intensity" war in
Iraq, GM foods. the Czech anarchist
Michal Polara, and the Dawgs. A supple-
menting article in the Balkans was also
pulled out for this issue and will be for
the start of resistance against the war
in the Gulf and the war in the Balkans. For the next
issue a London supplement on the threatened
eviction of the 121 Centre in Brixton was also produced.

ACF comrades have been incredibly
active and more are joining. A couple of issues with revolutionary anarchist ideas.
This is at a time when there is growing disentente at the Left Party. The
Stalinist and Trotskyist left are spiraling
downwards into decline. There is a real chance of building
a credible anarchist movement in this
country with consistent and dogged
work. Unfortunately, on too many oc-
ations, ACF comrades are often the
only anarchists to be seen on mobilisa-
tions. often with the only organised an-
cartists do appear. They are few in number
and sometimes choose not to
march in a united bloc with us. Ah
well, we are not discouraged.

If you would like the next 6 issues of Resistance send P0s, cheques payable
to 'ACF' to c/o46b Whitechapel High St,
London E1. 7QX. Better still take bundles of Resis-
tance to distribute in your area.

ACF pamphlets in languages other than English

As if It were is available in Welsh, Serbo-Croat. Greek and now.
thanks to our Austrian comrades, in German.
They are each available for 70p includ-
ing postage and packaging from our

The role of the Revolutionary Organisa-
tion is also available in Serbo-Croat for

If anybody you know who speaks Serbo-
Croat in Britain or you have contacts in the
countries of former Yugoslavia where Serbo-Croat is understood then
why not send them copies?

German, Czech, Portuguese, Italian,

Experts and Spanish translations of
our Aims and Principles are also available.
Contact us in Dutch.
Write to the London address for orders
and bulk orders.
Workplace Notes

We begin a new series in Organise! where workers in different industries and enterprises give an account of the situation where they work. In this issue a railworker speaks.

I work in the railway industry and right now there is an interesting time for a revolutionary line on the one I am based on. We are among the first in the industry to undergo, as a result of privatisation, a scheme of total labour restructuring. The consequence of the line plan is to replicate the strategy which they used following the deregulation of the buses. They are basically to buy a company, break the union, hammer the workers, etc. After one or two years, a lot more attractive prospects become available. The end result is a vast increase in the value of their shares. (Add to this share options and they are forecast to increase in value even further.)

What this restructuring entails from the workers' point of view is a massive drop in both pay and conditions - more unsociable times, no sick pay and bank holiday bonuses, very little paid overtime. Vacations, variations in shifts from week to week, and every shift which we are to work being rostered to the minute. (While we cannot vote second time round. Restructuring happened not long after New Labour won the General Election. No union leader in the industry would believe in the risk upsetting Tony Blair, and so the order to the reps from above would have been that industrial action was not an option. Hence 'the best that we can get' means best through talking with management. This is the second answer, that is, management were fully aware, the union hierarchy had become totally detached from its membership. The reason is that in years ago with the same reps preferring to spend more time splitting hairs with the same bosses over details than talking to the people that they are supposed to be speaking for. This is what happened. They didn't discuss with workers about the content of restructuring, which saw them locked away together. When they then needed to be made public, it was a case of management and the unions trying to sell us the deal.

Finally, as soon as restructuring was brought in the union reps were the first to be offered lucrative severance deals, which must shamelessly accepted.

So, where does this leave us all now? Well, despite the scheme being brought in, it has been far from accepted by the rank and file. One indicator of this is that absence through sickness is currently running at an incredible 20% (This has made a poor service even worse, with the result of a 13% rise in written complaints by passengers)

There is a lot of anger at the company's actions and the buying off of the union reps by management means that the deals offered between them and us has disappeared. Add to this the fact that the company has never gained the majority of staff and there is a certain amount of new room for revolutionaries to exploit. The challenge is to find this discontent more critical on the people who are the ones that most importantly all working class people what 'the best that we can get' is.

The simply answer is that people never used to the union reps fighting for them that they had forgotten how to fight for themselves) for management to get the vote second time round. Restructuring is the first answer that management speaks.

So why, you may be asking, did workers accept this new deal, especially in a highly unionised industry like the railway?

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