KURT GUSTAV WILCKENS was born on 3 November 1886 at Bad Bramstedt in Schleswig-Holstein, close to the Danish border in Germany, one of the five sons of August Wilckens and Johanna Harms. Of average height with red hair and light blue eyes, he loved nature and hated cities. Starting work as a miner in Silesia, he emigrated at the age of 24 to the United States where he got work in the Arizona mines.

In Arizona he became involved in the agitation of the revolutionary workers' organisation, the Industrial Workers of the World (popularly known as the Wobblies). Wilckens took part in strikes and became an organiser in the miners' mass meetings.

The IWW organised successfully among Mexicans and South Europeans, the lowest paid of the miners. As a result of the growing might of the miners in the Bisbee area, the local businessmen and union leaders organised into Loyalty Leagues. Early on 12 July 1916, 2000 Loyalty Leaguers commenced a round-up of miners. One miner shot dead a Loyalty leaguer in self-defence and was gunned down. There were robberies, vandalism, and beatings and abuse of women carried out by the Leaguers during the round-up. 1186 men, including 104 Wobblies, among them Wilckens, were herded into cattle trucks and dumped across the border in the New Mexico desert.

Wilckens, by now an anarchist as well as an IWW member, was interned in a camp for German prisoners. He escaped from there, was recaptured and deported to Germany in 1920 from where he departed to Argentina, arriving there in late September.

Here, he got a job as an agricultural worker in Rio Negro, then as a docker in Buenos Aires. He frequented the anarchist bars and centres. On 12 May 1921, he was the victim of a provocation by a cop who attempted to have him expelled from Argentina. This failed, but Kurt spent four months in prison before being freed. At this time, anarchy was strong among the working class of Argentina. After his release from jail Kurt devoted all his energy and money to help his imprisoned comrades.

In the south, in Patagonia, the anarchists started organising among the agricultural workers of Santa Cruz province and among the workers of the meatpacking plants and ports. General strikes broke out regularly and workers formed themselves into horse-mounted units. Patagonia was experiencing an armed uprising inspired by anarchists. The government sent in the troops and, egged on by the British landowners, 1500 workers, including many anarchists, were rounded up and summarily executed.

The leader of the repression, Colonel Hector Varela, was feted by the British who sang, "For he's a jolly good fellow!" The reaction of prostitutes in a local brothel was different, shouting, "Assassins, Pigs! We won't go with killers!" when Varela's troops turned up after the slaughter. They were jailed for insulting men in uniform!

Disgusted

Wilckens was disgusted by the murders headed by Varela. He was heavily influenced by the pacifism of Tolstoy, but felt that violence from the ruling class had to be answered. On 27 January 1923, he met Colonel Varela on the street and hurled a bomb at him. Wounded in both legs, Varela attempted to draw his sabre. Wilckens emp\ti...
Organise!

Organise! is the magazine of the Anarchist Federation (AF). Organise! is published twice a year in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and initiate debate on ideas not normally covered by agitational papers.

We aim to eventually publish any article that falls within the political scope of our Aims and Principles. Having said that, even agreeing with our Aims still leaves much open to debate. The articles in this issue do not necessarily represent the collective view of the Anarchist Federation. Indeed, some of them have provoked considerable discussion within the editorial group. We hope that their publication will produce responses from readers and spur the debate on.

The majority of the articles in this issue are written by members of the AF. However, once again, we have been fortunate enough to be able to publish a major article (on Colombia this time) by someone outside the AF. We hope that others will take the opportunity to contribute articles that meet the broad editorial objectives of Organise! If you would like to contribute, but are unsure how to do so, then get in touch first.

Deadlines for the next issue are: articles 14 Feb 2001 and letters 2 Feb 2001.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to: AF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. It would help if articles could be sent either typed or on disc (PC or MAC format).

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Issue 27: LA Roots; Yugoslavia; Malcolm X.
Issue 28: Debate on the unions; Italian workers' struggles.

Issue 37: Pornography; Booze, cigs and dope; Moral panics.
Issue 38: Militarism: Myth of overpopulation; Castro.

Issue 39: Prisoners; Algeria; Heritage.

Issue 40: Work; Job Seekers Allowance; Art as a Weapon.

Issue 43: Green politics; Raving; Road accidents.

ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Columbia - a libertarian perspective

This fascinating article, written by a Colombian anarchist, tells the story of Colombia's violent history, up to the present day. It examines the reasons and implications of its government's new 'Plan Colombia' sponsored by the US and EU, which can only bring more misery in terms of a new arms race and increased exploitation of the population. It explains the differing positions of the guerrilla and paramilitary groups including their relation to drug-dealing, and the activities of civil and indigenous opposition movements. It concludes with reports of opposition by anarchists and other anti-militarist activists, and a call for your help in spreading the libertarian message in the face of a strong Marxist-Leninist tradition.

This article is available to subscribers only. If you wish to subscribe, please send £6.00 to: AF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Columbia is currently passing isn't new. It's been present since the independence wars (1810-1819). At first it was between federalists and centralists, then between liberals and conservatives, the most important political parties in the country. From this situation originated several internal wars, the most recent of which started on 9 April 1948 with the killing of the liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitan.

This killing unleashed a civil war which lasted for a decade or so, known simply as 'La Violencia' (The Violence). The main difference between liberals and conservatives was their positions towards clericalism, making the liberal party the more radical option because they openly expressed their anti-clericalism in a country with a deep catholic tradition. The church, one of Colombia's most important political forces, aligned itself with the conservatives and got to the point that they would even preach 'Killing is a sin but killing liberals isn't' and played an active role in war.

La Violencia reached one of its peaks in 1953 when General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla launched a coup d'état to 'pacify' the country, and it came to an end in 1958 when the treaty known as 'El Frente Nacional' (The National Front) was signed. In this treaty both parties agreed to take turns in power, a situation that lasted until 1978, when a liberal (Jalo Cesar Turbay Ayala) was elected president after another liberal presidency (Alfonso Lopez Michelsen). By that time the differences between liberals and conservatives had practically disappeared.

The signing of this treaty resulted in the breakdown of the most radical elements within the liberal party, and led them to look towards Marxist doctrines, which were fashionable due to the influence of the Cuban revolution. At the beginning of the 1960s, several communist groups were born, among them they chose the commune which became known as 'Marquetalia' in the central part of Colombia. This commune was bombed and destroyed by the army in alliance with the US army in (what is known as the LASO operation). The very few survivors of this massacre, among whom was Manuel Marulanda Velez aka 'Tirofijo' (Sureshot) funded what was later to be known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). These 'guerrillas' would later declare war on the government—a war that has yet to end.

The destruction of the commune led to the formation of several other guerrilla groups. Among the ones that can be mentioned are: ELN (National Liberation Army), M-19 (April 19th Movement), EPL (Popular Liberation Army), a co-ordination they tried to form in the 1980s called CSGB (Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Co-ordinator), and Quintin Lane (named after an indigenous guerilla group).

The 'Dirty war' was crude, seriously weakening several of these groups, which would enter peace talks and return (re-insert themselves) into civilian life, ending up as political parties. One of these peace talks, in the mid-80s, caused the re-insertion of M-19, that would then become the 'M-19 Democratic Alliance', and of certain sides of FARC, which would become the Patriotic Union (UP). Later, 'paramilitary' groups (ed. note: The term guerilla is reserved for the left-wing) would massacre...
Drug trafficking and the current political situation

Drug trafficking first appeared in Colombia at the end of the 1970s, centred on the northern coast, with what they used to call ‘Fiebre Marimbar’ (Wheat Fever), focused on the growth and distribution of marihuana. It also generated the first US intervention with the introduction of ‘Parrasquita’, a pesticide intended to eliminate illegal crops. Its consequence, as well as subsequent experiments in the Colombian countryside, was a huge ecological disaster in the fumigated areas, harming the health of the inhabitants of the area and destroying legal crops essential to economic activity. At the end of the 1970s the first cocaine exports occurred (mainly for the US market), and the most important distribution networks were created, which would later give birth to the drug cartels. With the rise of Pablo Escobar, the leader of the Medellin cartel, the Medellin cartel was the most important one of all. It had its headquarters in the medium Magdalena River, where the two main barons, Pablo Escobar aka ‘El Patron’ and Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha aka ‘El Mexicano’, had their headquarters. The first barons in the brains of the strategies of national liberation, they also opposed any talk of the ‘sacario’ (paid assassin) schools, security in the cities, and the legalisation of the distribution networks. The army was in charge of the security of the operation in the countryside since he was in command of the paramilitary groups in the area. Rodriguez Gacha had links with another member of the cartel: Fidel Castano, aka ‘Rambo’, also a radical anti- communist who started organising paramilitary groups in the areas of Cordoba and Uruma, near the border with Panama on the north-western coast.

Colombia’s groups are the most important paramilitary groups in Colombia at this moment. Both Castano and Rodriguez Gacha developed operations that included hiring Israeli mercenaries, such as Yair Klein, for military training of their troops. They did this in association with important banana export corporations such as United Fruit Company in Uruma, as well as with the support of rich cattlemen in the area. It all started as a retaliation against taxing the cultivation of strangers through ‘sacarana’ (vaccine) which was a tax on cattle raising, and ‘boletos’ (tickets) which was a tax on urban economic activities as a whole. Other commodities from the guerrillas included kidnapping (in fact Rambo’s father was kidnapped and, after the requested ransom had been paid, the media named them the ‘Blue Cartel’ after the colour of their uniforms), drug dealing, and ‘retaliation against taxing by the guerrillas on cattle raising, and ‘boleteo’ (ticketing) of black market. Important sicarios were often trained in the paramilitary. They were paid to commit crimes. With the drug dealing and the current political situation

Drug dealing is one of the few really profitable economic activities in Colombia.

It is also important to mention that drug dealing is one of few really profitable economic activities in Colombia. The government has been imposing a series of both political and economic policies of a neoliberal nature. These are aimed at the privatisation of state resources based on the argument of a lack of efficiency of the institutions in charge of the administration of these resources on the one hand, and the supposed efficiency and transparency of private organisations on the other. All this departs from a linear and economic model of development, which doesn’t take into account the cyclic and variable, which are always present in the world of war, and the unpredictability of the outcomes of armed conflict. The model requires the modernisation of the infrastructure of the country, which includes new ports, airports, river and road infrastructure, the training of paramilitary groups, and the modernisation of those now existing, and the optimisation of the conditions for foreign investment in the country.

Since guerrillas oppose these policies based on their anti-imperialist discourse, which gives arguments to their aspirations for the democratic development and investment and they have been systematically sabotaging these governmental operations. People migrate to big urban centres, stretching the shantytowns around these cities and worsening the situation of inequality that already exists. This could help take the army into an urban phase, one that the guerrillas have never been able to reach in more than 30 years of struggle, but now may help them regain the popular support they have been systematically losing. The paramilitaries are effectively helping the guerrilla groups gain this urban support, since they are mainly displacing those who they consider might be (or become) guerrilla supporters or sympathisers.

Plan Colombia

The government has developed Plan Colombia, with the idea of getting international support in their ‘War on Drugs’. This war is based on the following arguments: to fight ‘narco-terrorism’, therefore making evident their real goal – financing war on guerrillas – since they do not refer to other drug dealers, and do not address the question of the relationship between trafficking and the army, corrupt politicians and paramilitaries, even though it’s been more than proved (or as we have been admitted, for ages).

The money that the government is asking for is US $1.7 billion for the next two years. The US government has approved the giving of US $1.3 billion and the national government is lobbying around the EU to get the rest. More than 70% of this money is destined for the modernisation of the army (the biggest violators of human rights in the Western Hemisphere), including new tanks and aircraft, while the rest of the money will be invested in things such as ‘training on human rights’ for the army, or in other projects, such as the ‘School of Americas’, where most Latin-American dictators have been trained by the US Army. The direct effect of this plan will be the
The indigenous movements have a huge tradition of resistance.

The indigenous movements have created a more authentic identity, basically through the interchange of ideas with other groups from different parts of the world, especially from Latin America and Mexico. They have now begun to put their struggle in a more realistic context within the Colombian reality.

In Medellin, "Caminos", maybe the first anarchist collective in the city, reached a peak in 1992 within the resistance movement. Many of the people who celebrate the 50th anniversary of the so-called discovery of America. Then came TURRA, some kind of a RASH (Red and Anarchist Skinheads) in Medellin. Its main source of militancy was the punk and the skinhead movements in the city. It formed as a broad collective that best represented the mass of anarchist militancy. It eventually broke up because of the ideological differences between anarchists and certain Marxist groups (Leninists and Maoists) were impossible to reconcile as they were creating a sensation of insensitivity within the group.

Another important point in Antimilitarismo Sonoro is breaking away from state-sponsored campaigns against the war that intend to blame it all on the guerrillas and do not take into account the role of the army and the paramilitary groups. That's why we are very clear about our opposition to any kind of army.

How to help us

The current plan is to get a second-hand sound system with 16 or 24 channel mixer and at least 5,000 Watts of power to do concerts for the defence of our projects. We need your help and also the help of other people. People from different groups such as the AF and RTS all over the UK, the Rainbow Centre in Notting Hill, the Autonomous Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow have already expressed willingness to help us with this, and any further suggestions are welcome at this email address: corazon69@hotmail.com, or this postal address (No name please): A.A. 54413, Medellin, Colombia, South America.

There have already been action and demonstrations against Plan Colombia in Britain - check the AF web-site News Directory for full details. You can also find information from the Colombian Refugee Association (CORAS), 36 Vauxhall Street, London SE11, Tel: 0207 924 0647, Email: coras@refugio.finet.net.co.uk.

Organised
Humans and animals: To kill or not to kill?

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS ANIMALS has been rightly challenged by a movement of activists, many of whom consider themselves anarchists. They have campaigned around a variety of issues including animal experiments, the fur trade, vegetarianism/veganism, endangered species and fox hunting. Many of these causes have found support from a wide range of people, affecting lifestyles as well as politics. We are beginning to realise that animals have their own claim to this planet, independent of their use to the human species. This political movement appeals to people’s emotions. Most people love to see funny creatures and they can feel soppiness from the most macho hardman. A typical example is the way that we regard dwellers because the only form of wildlife we might come across is the neighbour’s rabbit. The sight of a fox or a kite, or even visiting ducks in a park, can give the resident of a concrete jungle a lot of pleasure. Naturally, people don’t want to see the alternative!

It has been the horror stories about the treatment of animals that has caused many to become vegetarians or vegans and to argue animal life should not be taken for the use of human beings. (There are, of course, other reasons for not eating meat eg land use and health risks.) It is claimed that animals is ‘morally wrong’ and for some this is an absolute principle, just as some people are pacifists and hold to the belief that human life should never be taken, no matter what the circumstances.

It is very difficult when political issues enter the realm of morality and ethics. Such issues require us to ask, “Why is it wrong?” and “Who decides?” Anarchists have great difficulty with these questions because we have no doctrine from either the Christian or Leninist church to tell us what’s right and wrong. Some issues are clear, but many are not so clear and the answer of whether something is right or wrong often depends on the circumstances.

However, these issues do need to be discussed and debated so that we can work out an anarchist ethics. In the case of killing animals, I would argue that it is ‘wrong’. It would be ‘nicer’ not to, but it is not a moral wrong.

As anarchists, we would agree that we want to create a society where animals have a respected place. The whole relationship between human and animal can be transformed, just as the relationships between people will be. However, we mean that animals will cease to have any role in the satisfaction of human needs? Will they just hang around where they want and get on with their lives? Will humans never again have to kill an animal? Though I do not want to rule out this scenario, I do not think it is a realistic option. There are a number of contexts in which humans kill animals, including research using animals and factory farming, that are very dodgy and have been much discussed in many animal welfare publications as well as in our own Ecocology pamphlet and Manifesto. In this article I will be looking at the killing of animals in the “wild” and relating this to other issues such as reservation and land management and land ownership that have been discussed in the series on ‘Land’ in the past two issues of Organise!

Animals have their own claim to this planet, independent of their use to the human species.

Wild animals as food

Human beings have been killing wild animals for food and other products very early on in their emergence as a species. Rituals and forms develop around the theme of the hunt. Prehistoric rock paintings and carvings invariably feature the animals that are being killed. Domestication of animals and the advent of raised livestock have meant that hunting wild animals has been less important.

Capitalism has reinforced this with the profit-driven factory farming system where animals are force-fed, packed together and slaughtered on an assembly line. However, in some parts of the world, hunting is still the main way of obtaining a food source, as well as many other essential products. Traditional communities do not yet have access to Tesco’s and other ‘benefits’ of global capitalism!

Also, even in western societies most people lived on the land until very recently. Killing deer, rabbits or fowl was an important way of supplementing a rather meagre diet. Puffins and fish were about the only things available to the inhabitants of the very bleak and barren St Kilda’s island off the coast of Scotland.

Poaching has had a long tradition amongst the rural working class as a way of gaining some power. Food is power in this society and we are at the mercy of the landowner. This is one reason why landowners have always cracked down on the traditional rights of commons, etc. The landowner and land ownership that have been discussed in the series on ‘Land’ in the past two issues of Organise!

Scotland, the failure of potato crops would have not had such a devastating impact.

Bad design

Unfortunately, all life forms have to use other life forms to provide shelter and for play. The mere fact that we exist means that other species have to die. Humans have been a particular problem because of our success in expanding our numbers. This fact, together with the development of exploitative economic systems and destructive technologies, has resulted in the loss of habitat for countless animals and other species. And loss of habitat means death. This doesn’t mean that we avoid doing any impact (population control is an unpopular subject but needs to be addressed) but, unless we cut down on the species, we have to accept that our existence depends on the death of others on the planet. Therefore to kill an animal is not ‘wrong’ but unfortunately necessary.

I have already mentioned examples where people have had to eat meat or starve. We could still limit our food consumption to the so-called lower life forms. But who decides what is higher and lower? And then again the lower life forms aren’t present on the Siberian tundra in winter! Isn’t it preferable that people living in these different areas are able to provide their own food supplies rather than relying on imported vegetables? Even if we stopped eating meat, what would be our best bet? It is not certain whether or not we can turn all animals into vegetarians. People can at least choose to not eat meat, carnivores cannot. In addition, there are a number of people who actually like eating meat. There may be many things like rape and murder and other ‘corporate evils’ that we would want to ban, but eating meat is still too morally contentious to be included in the proscribed activity list in an anarchist society. In our Manifesto for the Millenium, the question was delicately left open.

However, certain principles should be adhered to with regard to life. Firstly, the animal/bird/food should not be endangered. In fact, we should take what we need from those animals that are maybe too abundant. In this country deer and rabbits are considered a threat to many other species and therefore would make the ideal source of meat. Secondly, the animal needs to be killed without cruelty. Those doing the killing must be extremely skilled and able to kill the animal in one shot. And, finally, there should be respect. Though accounts may be over-romanticised, Native Americans and other traditional peoples have an approach to killing animals which honours them and thanks them for giving their lives so that humans may live. Now this may seem pointless because the animal will still be dead regardless of the attitude of the hunter, but an attitude of respect and reverence will help ensure that life will be given in a less unduly killed way. Anyone who does eat meat should have the experience of either killing or witnessing an animal being killed, at least once. They will then have to confront directly the consequences of being a meat-eater and gain respect for the animal.

Animals and land ‘management’

We live in a very sanitised and safe environment in Britain. Most natural ‘enemies’ have long ago been wiped out. The dangers that do exist have been created by our selves: cars, pollution, viruses and each other. Therefore, it is understandable that today many argue for humans to not intervene, we’ve cause enough problems already, let ‘nature’ get on with it. However, it’s not so simple. We can only take such a position because we don’t feel threatened by the natural world. When we do, spiders in our houses, being bitten by mosquitoes, rats in the courtyard of a housing estate, most of us would take drastic action. Recently, Central Park in New York was saturated with insecticide because of a deadly virus-carrying mosquito. In the last 300 years, parts of the world has changed, where nature has not yet been covered in concrete, there is much more intervention, often needed to combat disease. Humans, like all other species, adapt their physical environment to suit their needs. Beavers build dams, birds build nests. If nature is to be hospitable it is itself a natural process.

Protect and survive

Therefore, the idea of ‘land management’ is no longer tenable. There is a very unfortunate term that is currently being used to refer to any conscious modification of the environment by humans. And a key part of this alteration process is taking the lives of other species. Farmers and shepherds have always killed animals to protect their crops and flocks. Anyone would do the same: whatever is necessary to protect the food supply. The polluting of growing food is more complex than many of us urbanites would think. There are many obstacles to overcome, some of which are caused by animals and birds eating the crops at various stages of growth.

The other area for intervention is when some species threaten other species’ existence. You could argue that we should let ‘nature take its course’, but the reason some species are so vulnerable is because hum man has already made a mess of the situation in some way. For example, the RSPB is quite willing to kill foxes and crows because they are a serious threat to the almost extinct capercaille. Rabbits cause enormous problems in woodland areas, as do red deer. Gardens on nature reserves therefore have to make a choice: will they kill the rabbits or allow a rare aspen grove to be destroyed? (This issue was discussed at length in the last Organise!)

Recognising that humans may need to kill animals as part of a land management policy does not mean that an anarchist/communist society could not do things better. The problem is not how to adapt the environment as such, but its quality, and quality, driven by the need for capital-
kinship to produce profits and be 'cost-effective'.

A society not governed by the profit motive could develop alternatives where human interests were safeguarded, whilst at the same time allowing animals to keep being killed because of the desperation not to lose any part of the crop or flock. When the world food productionsystemis organised differently then we can allow animals to take a bit without worrying that there won't be enough for us. Organic farming techniques, at the sametime allowing animals to keep being killed, are being developed. They don't mean that wolves shouldn't be reintroduced but that we need to be aware of the consequences. It's still based on human choices and values of what is thought important. In Britain, it has been discussed, but the problem is lack of habitat for the wolf. The first priority must be to create more forests for them to live in.

As can be seen from the wolves' example, there is no quick fix to the moral dilemma of not wanting to kill animals but having to nevertheless. Therefore, though there is much we could do now, and even more we could do in an animal rights society, it will take time and much practical experience to work out new ways of doing things that don't involve the death of other species.

Wild animals: killing for fun?

Whereas we might just accept that there may be circumstances where animals need to be killed in order to defend human interests, it seems impossible to justify the killing of animals for sport. Therefore, sports that involve the killing of animals should be banned. Or should they? The issue is actually more complex and therefore the solution not so straightforward. First, we need to distinguish between hunting and shooting. In other parts of the world, hunting is the general term used for the killing of animals in the wild. In Britain, the term 'hunting' is only used for killing stag and hound dogs, 'the people who participate in the sport of shooting would agree that this is cruel. The animal is chased for prolonged periods of time and experiences intense fear. A small animal such as a fox may be killed quickly once caught, but a big stag will inevitably take time to die. Shooting does not cause suffering in this way. Shooters take pride in making a clean shot. The stag is killed without even knowing it was being stalked. So whilst it makes sense to ban foxhunting on the grounds of cruelty, the same argument cannot be applied to shooting.

Second, stereotyping anyone involved in the sport of shooting as a bloodthirsty brute is unhelpful. There certainly are people like that, but most would say that it's not the actually killing that they enjoy. It is the process that they enjoy: the getting to know the animal and its habits, the being part of an animal rights society, it will take time and much practical experience to work out new ways of doing things that don't involve the death of other species.

The ruling class and shooting: animals as trophies

The origins of killing animals as a form of recreation lie clearly with the ruling class. It is generally agreed that this is cruel. The animal is chased for prolonged periods of time and experiences intense fear. A small animal such as a fox may be killed quickly once caught, but a big stag will inevitably take time to die. Shooting does not cause suffering in this way. Shooters take pride in making a clean shot. The stag is killed without even knowing it was being stalked. So whilst it makes sense to ban foxhunting on the grounds of cruelty, the same argument cannot be applied to shooting.

Queen Victoria gave an added impetus to the sport when she and her hunting confreres started coming up to Scotland for the 'season', a great event. The Scottish landowners cordoned off and called 'Deer Forests', areas of land designated for the keeping of deer. These woods were the private property of landowners, that is, of the ruling class. The big event is the Glorious Twelfth (August) when the grouse-shooting season begins. The shooting season begins. September and October are popular for the stag shooting. In Scotland and on the grouse moors of Yorkshire, the landowner invites his/her cronies for a shooting holiday. It is a form of recreation that symbolises belonging to an elite. Though the stag or grouse might eventually be killed, the stag is part of the countryside, part of the land's economy. The big event is the Glorious Twelfth (August) when the grouse-season opens. The deer season begins in September and October are popular for the stag shooting. In Scotland and on the grouse moors of Yorkshire, the landowner invites his/her cronies for a shooting holiday. It is a form of recreation that symbolises belonging to an elite. Though the stag or grouse might eventually be killed, the stag is part of the countryside, part of the land's economy. The big event is the Glorious Twelfth (August) when the grouse-season opens. The deer season begins in September and October are popular for the stag shooting. In Scotland and on the grouse moors of Yorkshire, the landowner invites his/her cronies for a shooting holiday. It is a form of recreation that symbolises belonging to an elite. Though the stag or grouse might eventually be killed, the stag is part of the countryside, part of the land's economy.

Friends and neighbours

If you like what you read in Organise!, you might be interested in these: Counter Information. Quarterly newsletter produced by independent collective, Information on struggle worldwide. Free copy with SAE from Pigeonhole Cl, c/o Transnationals, 29 King Street, Glasgow, G1 6SB. Black Flag, £1.50 per 50 copies, Socialist Club, 256 Summer Street, SW19 3XX. SchNEWS. Weekly direct action news sheet. Send stamps to PO Box 2600, Brighton BN2 2DX. Direct Action. Anarchist-syndicalist magazine produced by the Solidarity Federation. £1.50 per 50 copies, 34 Kingsley Street, Bristol B1 2U. Earth First! Action Update, monthly news from Earth First! ES for 12-issue sub. PO Box ITA, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE9 1TA. Collective Action Notes, Bulletin produced by CAN. Information on struggles worldwide. Contact PO Box 22902 Baltimore, MD 212, USA.
form of wildlife that threatens their grouse is considered a legitimate target. Keepers have been known to poison golden eagles; 

they are the only ones who know what to do, instilling a certain contempt for the landlord. Their wages are very low and they often work incredibly long days, for no extra pay, during the season itself.

Keepers look down on the guests for not being able to shoot with their horses loading the gun for them and telling them which way to point. On some estates, the stalkers come into regular conflict with the guests, which stig to shoot at a certain point. The guests have the option to shoot at non-game animals that they believe need to be killed for land management or can be killed and eaten because they are not endangered. This does not mean that all working class shooters are exemplary. Like their ruling class counterparts, there will be many who are cruel and kill with total disregard for the consequences. In the Alps, ex-soldiers-machine-gunned marmots and chamois for no reason whatsoever. Native Americans played their part in the demise of the buffalo. The almost exclusive male characteristic of the sport can lead to much macho posturing that is quite sickening.

There are therefore two issues to consider. Are we in favour of creating a society where all animals are valued and respected? If we do not value them as individuals, then we have a responsibility to look after them. If we do value them as individuals, then we should do what we can to help maintain their numbers. This is already happening on some estates. There is an example of one foreign owner who won an auction to shoot anything and wants it all to stop! So, instead of saying we want the shooting to stop, we should argue for the end of the private landowner and for the estate workers, together with people in the community and even those from outside who visit the area, to manage the estate themselves. If this was the case, then we would see a transformation in land use and use. This is happening to a certain extent in Chipping Campden, and though they are not yet revolutionary, the John Muir Trust on their Skye properties has attempted to show that it can be done to be successful.

The second question is particularly important in the current period. The Countryside Alliance has managed to mobilise many of the rural working class under their umbrella and for their objectives. The Gamekeepers demonstration in Edinburgh in July against the Watson Bill illustrated this. The Watson Bill is explicitly aimed at foxhunting, which is only in the Borders on a very small scale. But the landowners have instilled the idea that it will first be foxhunting and then shooting — something Watson himself has categorically denied. This has put the fear of job loss into the workers themselves as well as other rural residents. We could dismiss all these workers as counter revolutionary, but I would much rather that the rural working class on our side both during the revolution and in the constructing the new society, we can bring our experience on the land will be vital.

No moralism

First, moralistic arguments about how awful it is that these 'bad' people are killing animals is completely wrong. Most people, including the keepers themselves, traditionally lived with the landed and historically have a role in catching poachers and keeping people off the land. Gamekeepers are stewards. To do this they need to know like farmers or form a syndicate. They might shoot roe deer or hinds, but if they do not have to be killed for land management, or those that are not endangered for their own pleasure, then it is quite different. As long as they actually use the animal for something, though, we cannot see how we can force people not to. Instead we would hope that as the new society developed, people would become more interested in looking at and observing wildlife than shooting it. This process has already begun. Many shooters have become wildlife photographers instead and a majority of people living in rural areas are not at all interested in shooting. The children of gamekeepers have learned much from them but are using their knowledge and appreciation of wildlife in different ways, some of them working for conservation organisations, while others work together with people who live on the land. If the workers see that there is an alternative, one which is better paid and where they have to kow-tow to landowners and rich Americans, then the alliance which has been cleverly constructed by the ruling class will fall to bits. This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t campaign against the killing of wildlife and the landowners. But the focus should be on ruling class sport, the killing of endangered species and cruelty. In addition, it would be linked to a general campaign for a transformation of the way land is owned and cared for and should be based on debate and discussion with other members of our class in order to construct a united movement that can create a better world for both human and other species that we share the planet with.

We need the rural working class on our side.

Is there a difference?

Though both involve the killing of animals, there are important differences between ruling class and working class shooting. The ruling class obsession with the size of the ‘bag’ and with trophies has led to the extinction and near-extinction of many species. Because they are shooting purely for sport and not for practical purposes, there is no concern to consider the effects of their actions on the land as a whole or on the local economy.

For the working class, killing animals has traditionally been done for a purpose: to put food on the table. And today, that legacy remains intact. If there is a difference, it is that actually animals that they believe need to be killed for land management or which can be killed and eaten because they are not endangered. This does not mean that all working class shooters are exemplary. Like their ruling class counterparts, there will be many who are cruel and kill with total disregard for the consequences. In the Alps, ex-soldiers-machine-gunned marmots and chamois for no reason whatsoever. Native Americans played their part in the demise of the buffalo. The almost exclusive male characteristic of the sport can lead to much macho posturing that is quite sickening.

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In an imposed world, instead of life consisting of meaningful pursuit, our core humanity vanishes without trace, devalued and obliterated. Technology is reshaping us, us as worthless consumers. Being thieves and deteriorate is now the only thing our society can produce. It might be time to ask if we can produce anything else. The system is being rebuilt from corner to corner in the insane process of becoming more and more the system that we are living in. But if the workers see that there is an alternative, one which is better paid and where they have to kow-tow to landowners and rich Americans, then the alliance which has been cleverly constructed by the ruling class will fall to bits. This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t campaign against the killing of wildlife and the landowners. But the focus should be on ruling class sport, the killing of endangered species and cruelty. In addition, it would be linked to a general campaign for a transformation of the way land is owned and cared for and should be based on debate and discussion with other members of our class in order to construct a united movement that can create a better world for both human and other species that we share the planet with.

Alarm clocks and buzzers

When this writer came out of work by virtue of a third redundancy in an over-long working life, it wasn’t with the explicit aim to enjoy it, but only that it not turn into a negative experience, depressing or limiting to the quality of life either physically or mentally. The longer the system, by its own shortcomings, kept me at arms-length from employment, with not even the hint of a half-decent job showing its face, the easier it got to see through all the lies, the deceit and illusions upon which capitalista foundation is based. The need for someone who live on the land. If the workers see that there is an alternative, one which is better paid and where they have to kow-tow to landowners and rich Americans, then the alliance which has been cleverly constructed by the ruling class will fall to bits. This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t campaign against the killing of wildlife and the landowners. But the focus should be on ruling class sport, the killing of endangered species and cruelty. In addition, it would be linked to a general campaign for a transformation of the way land is owned and cared for and should be based on debate and discussion with other members of our class in order to construct a united movement that can create a better world for both human and other species that we share the planet with.

### Feature/Workplace Notes

**Out of work:** Workplace notes

FOUND YOURSELF OUT OF WORK? The exploitation of the workers has no longer has any use for you? Time on your hands, short of things to do? No problem. It could turn out to be a golden opportun to work your way up to the top. The world is more to life than the tyranny of the workplace.

In an imposed world, instead of life consisting of meaningful pursuit, our core humanity vanishes without trace, devalued and obliterated. Technology is reshaping us, us as worthless consumers. Being thieves and deteriorate is now the only thing our society can produce. It might be time to ask if we can produce anything else. The system is being rebuilt from corner to corner in the insane process of becoming more and more the system that we are living in. But if the workers see that there is an alternative, one which is better paid and where they have to kow-tow to landowners and rich Americans, then the alliance which has been cleverly constructed by the ruling class will fall to bits. This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t campaign against the killing of wildlife and the landowners. But the focus should be on ruling class sport, the killing of endangered species and cruelty. In addition, it would be linked to a general campaign for a transformation of the way land is owned and cared for and should be based on debate and discussion with other members of our class in order to construct a united movement that can create a better world for both human and other species that we share the planet with.

**Organise! Index**

A list of the articles, reviews and letters from Organiser issues 14-43.

**No. 54**

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Busyness? Social approval? No thanks, things that can never be empathised with, its confines. Where was the attraction in called factories, or in the sterile isolation of indeed anywhere where life has become a homogenised. No more reluctant submis-

sions and the constant fear of job insecurity. Some (safe and warm in the comfort-zone)

money 'earned' by the cult of the self-

dreams of ordinary, decent, hard-

worthless scum manipulating the filthy

town and country. He also painted interiors of bourgeois houses where

a peculiarly good year that of St Tropez, the following year that of Collioure, the following year that of Portieux. A lover of the sea, he visited the Mediterranean coast in 1892 and discovered St Tropez. Like Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, the exiled Jewish American anarchists who lived here in the 1920s, he found St Tropez a place that had seemed to him and not at all the den of the rich that it is today.

In 1888, Signac discovered anarchist ideas by reading Eliezer Recht, Kropotkin, and Jean Grave, who all developed the ideas of anarchism as the basis for his art. With his friends Anarchist Cross, Luce and Pissarro he contributed to Jean Grave’s paper Les Temps Modernes (New Times). His financial support was considerable; he settled regular cheques and made a gift of his works for five lotteries between 1897 and 1912. But the art of the militant did not attract him

and, unlike Luce, he only provided five drawings and two lithographs to the paper. He thought that the subject did not count for much and that the word revolution was the search for harmony which he thought, contributed to the struggle against ruling class conventions. He felt that many great artists had been maltreated in the past and saw the history of art in a political manner. He advocated the need for social revolution alongside the need for artistic freedom. He saw anarchism as the best guarantee of the latter. He thought that it was up to each individual artist how best they served their movement. The anarchist painter is not the one who will create anarchist pictures, but he who, without desiring for recompense, will fight with all his individuality against official bourgeois conventions by means of a personal contribution.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to study two anarchist paintings that are a reflection of his ideas. One of the ‘Organisation Workers’, two workers are demolishing buildings representing society, whilst on the horizon the sun of anarchy is rising. In 1899, the year in which individual attacks on anarchists by members of the boss class were at their height in his work, activities of work and leisure are peaceful and in total harmony, though Signac can be criticised for his typcaste roles for the sexes.

Signac’s work would have an influence on the new art, on the Fauves and the Expressionists. The Fauvisme came to paint with him at St Tropez.

The First World War

The First World War was deeply traumatic for Signac. He was disgusted by the way Kropotkin died in the trenches (a minority in the movement) had become supporters of the war. These were people he had greatly admired. He was militarised and could not paint for three years. He took part in activities for peace alongside the writers Barbusse and Romain Rolland, considering himself an international.

In 1917, the Russian Revolutions filled him with hope. After the war he began to paint afresh, with landscapes of Brittany, Normandy, the Atlantic coast and Corsica. He became President of the Salon of Independent Artists, which permitted young artists to exhibit. A year before his death he was mobilised with other artists and writers like Gide in the Vigilance Committee of Anti-fascist Intellectuals. His last paintings represented great sailing ships, witnesses, like Signac, of a fast disappearing world.
The potential for protest is chiefly determined by a number of factors. Firstly, the extent to which formal political institutions are open or closed to participation by groups on the margins of democracy and the presence or absence of repression. Most bourgeois democracies used to be closed to dissent but have learned the lessons of 'inclusion'. Levels of repression are comparatively low, but the capitalist state keeps its armoury of repression well maintained: witness the Anti-Terrorist and RIP Acts. Secondly, opportunities present themselves as capitalism restructures and political parties realign in response. Thirdly, conflicts between elites signal weaknesses and create potential allies for the radical groups; the conflictual consensus of modern politics contributes to disenchantment and protest but important political differences just do not exist. The political system may be decaying but is not (yet) beginning to reel. Protest begins when interests and values are not being represented and when the incentives to protest outweigh the cost and risks involved. The probability that people will use disruptive direct action depends on the depth of their grievances, the availability of alternative means of expression, the perceived costs and risks of collective action and the presence or absence of prospective organisers. When social conflict acquires a visibility and symbolic 'langauge' people can understand and identify with, collective action will develop, especially when the justifying culture of society is weak due to rapid economic, industrial and social change. But when grievances have been aired but not advanced, when the repertoire of peaceful protest runs out, when repression raises the price we all must pay and if we have not greatly increased the numbers of skilled and active organisers - what then? People cannot for long sustain campaigns on behalf of their rights or benefits without identifying them with general values and reaching out to other, exhalation frameworks of understanding. Does this explain why (in those islands at least), environmental protest after protest developed a mass base: the wave of protest spread to other groups and interests (such as housing, policing, work and so on)? And if it does not develop a mass base, how easy for the state to isolate the 'trouble-makers' by making concessions to the 'common sense majority'?

Organisation

What role did 'organisation' play? In Italy at least the most successful groups were decentralised and provisional, and between both decimation and repression, always on the defensive. But what structures exist and throw up new forms of collective action. But as these groups tried to intensify disruption to gain mass support, they come under pressures from outside and within which demand greater co-ordination, more control over constituencies and are abandoned. New actors (organisations) fail their members and other agents and the movement into bureaucracy, and included a repertoire of peaceful protest runs out, the state has the resources and the guile to concede where it must and compromise where it can't, using institutionalised mediators (like the unions and social democratic parties) to moderate demands and recuperate what they can, and to join with it in a process of stigmatisation, isolation and condemnation. New Labour attacks on J18 and N30 protesters is in a long tradition of such actions. As in Italy, protesters look for issues and campaigns they can link with or which are connected in some way, for instance engaging with women's and neighbourhood groups to protest the health effects of roads pollution.
A very good example would be Lotta Continua in Italy. It was initially a loose coalition of radicals from a variety of 'left' groups and splinters who rejected the positions taken by the organisations they belonged to on questions of the vanguard, autonomy and working class orientations. Chieftain, militant workers and students in North Italy (especially Turin), they coalesced around the slogan "The Struggle Continues" through a series of strikes (especially the 1969 FIAT strike) and 'encounters' and rejected the idea that it was chieftain only or chiefly within the factory that the working class became revolutionaries. For them, what was important was not where the class struggle took place or over what issue but what the working class learned about itself and the development of the working class through struggle. In its finest moments Lotta Continua not only told people where the action was, it was part of the action and most closely resembles groups too such as Earth First! and RTS.

Lotta Continua attempted to broaden the vision of the struggle through its slogan "Take the city!", opposing urban oppressions and exploitation as well as industrial ones with new tactics (the rent strike, can't-carry campaigns and so on), unifying them into one agenda and programme in a highly successful way. But Lotta Continua adopted a movementist strategy rather than staying on in the unions or forming an electorally-based party. From then on it had to generalise its ideas and tactics or lose its one advantage – the capacity for disruption – that could bring it new support and continue to challenge existing institutions. Its movementist principles and tactics led it to seek an explosion, not mobilisation and organisation of the masses.

This was fine as long as mobilisation and participation were increasing, but without a base de-mobilisation left only the rhetoric of revolution and violence. The new movement organisations 'led' the masses as long as there were masses to be led, but they failed to launch themselves where they did not wish to go, a danger the environmental movement and anarchism together face today. In Italy, workers had woken up to their economic power just as the post-war political consensus was unravelling, creating opportunities and allies. Proletarian politics rose to a peak just as mass mobilisation was beginning to decline, the workers bought off by economic and social concessions. The shifting pattern of conflict and campaign prevented a single coalition for change developed and allowed the elite to segment the movement by a strategy of piecemeal reform and repression.

Spontaneity

The peak of mobilisation contains a combination of spontaneity and organisation and as protests diffuse through society, established groups themselves adopt more aggressive forms of activity, institutionalise them and begin to reclaim supporters from the new movements. But as mass mobilisation declines tactical revolutionary and will only become so when people acquire the will and the means to destroy capitalism by its expropriation. Capitalist groups naturally defend their position of power, their means of profitability and their mode of exploitation. They have thecid, police repression or authoritarian education in schools (for instance) could not halt the decline in the intensity and spread of the class struggle either here or in Italy. The revolutionary tide ebbed. Small groups of agitators and half armed groups are what remain, keeping the flame alive and memories bright, striking where they can but increasingly isolated from the mass of the people: 'islands' of autonomy, radicalised neighbourhoods and tiny campaigning groups which continue to be attacked by Italy's repressive state.

Compromise

The Italian protesters of the 1960s and 1970s made non-negotiable demands but were unable to press them home. The State was able to compromise – but not with them. While some demanded fundamental change, the majority did not connect the way they presented their material demands with any need to fundamentally transform society. The workers won major concessions through rank-and-file and autonomous action and, as importantly, forced the unions to adopt their demands as their own. The industrialists and government caved in (knowing that the gains could be recouped later), for the unions had managed to contain the unrest within the ranks and keep their historic base. The nature of industrial democracy changed for a while but not the nature of the system itself. For institutional concessions by the state robbed them of their raison d'être. We face the same problem. Many campaigns are infused with a fierce critique of institutions, but do not connect their demands with the need to defend and develop the autonomy of the state. But autonomist, grass-roots campaigns being waged across the world are not necessarily
Give up activism

This article is available on-line as part of the Reflections on 18 discussions. It is a contribution to the discussion between activists and the working class. It takes as its starting point the anti-capitalist demonstrations of 18 June 1999. However, it could just as easily apply to any of the recent demonstrations. The author writes from a viewpoint supportive of the activists. We think it is well worth reading and includes it here in the hope of furthering debate. It is our intention to continue the discussion in the next issue of Organise! The author's address is at the end of the article.

ONE PROBLEM APPARENT in the June 18th day of action was the adoption of an activist mentality. This problem became particularly obvious with June 18th, precisely because the people involved in some way identified the people involved on the day tried to push beyond the limitations. This piece is no criticism of anyone involved in the June 18th action. The activist identified with their job as a doctor or a teacher, and the same way, some people will identify with their food and make their clothes.

Experts

By 'an activist mentality', what I mean is that people think of themselves primarily as activists, and as belonging to some wider community of activists. The activist identifies with what they do and thinks of it as their role in life, like a job or a career. In the same way, some people will identify with their job as a doctor or a teacher, and instead of it being something they just happen to be doing, it becomes an essential part of their self-image.

The activist is a specialist or an expert in social change. To think of yourself as being an activist means to think of yourself as being somehow privileged or more important than others. The fundamental division between mental and manual labour. The division of labour is the foundation of class society, the part of the division of labour being that being between mental and manual labour. The division of labour is the foundation of class society, the part of the division of labour being that being between mental and manual labour. The division of labour is the foundation of class society, the part of the division of labour being that being between mental and manual labour.

The tension between the form of 'activism' in which our political activity appears and its increasingly radical content has only been growing over the last few years. The background of a lot of the people involved in June 18th is of being 'activists' who 'campaign' on one issue. The political progress that has been made in the activist scene over the last few years has resulted in a situation where many people have moved between different issues, between different activist campaigns against specific companies or developments to rather ill-defined, yet nonetheless promising, anti-capitalist campaigns. Yet, although the content of the campaigning activity has altered, the form of activism has not. So, instead of taking on Monsanto and going to a protest and then going to another issue, we have now seen beyond the single facet of capital represented by Monsanto and so on.

Activism, like all expert roles, has its basis in the division of labour — it is a specialised, separate task. The division of labour is the foundation of class society, the part of the division of labour being that being between mental and manual labour. The division of labour is the foundation of class society, the part of the division of labour being that being between mental and manual labour.

The form of activism has been preserved even while the content of this activity has moved beyond the form that contains it. We still think in terms of being 'activists' and act in terms of that. The separation of tasks means that other people will grow and make their clothes and supply your electricity, while you get on with achieving social change. By 'an activist mentality', what I mean is that people think of themselves primarily as activists, and as belonging to some wider community of activists. The activist identifies with what they do and thinks of it as their role in life, like a job or a career. In the same way, some people will identify with their job as a doctor or a teacher, and instead of it being something they just happen to be doing, it becomes an essential part of their self-image.

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Activity is based on the misconception that only activists make social change.

The Situationist International developed a strategy of identifying as an activist and as belonging to some wider community of activists. The activist identifies with what they do and thinks of it as their role in life, like a job or a career. In the same way, some people will identify with their job as a doctor or a teacher, and instead of it being something they just happen to be doing, it becomes an essential part of their self-image.

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Activity is based on the misconception that only activists make social change.
We don’t need any more martyrs

The key to understanding both the role of the militant and the activist in this sense is the sacrifice of the self to ‘the cause’ which is seen as being separate from the self. This, of course, means that the real power with real revolutionary activity, which is the seizing of the self. Revolutionary martyrdom goes together with the identification of some of the cause separate from oneself. An action against capitalism, which identifies capitalism as ‘out there’ in the City, is fundamentally mistaken – it means that capital is right here in our everyday lives.

We re-create its power every day because capital is not a thing but a social relation between people (and hence classes), mediated by things.

Of course, I am not suggesting that someone who was involved in June 18th shares in the adoption of this role, and the self-sacrifice that goes with it, to an equal extent. As I said above, the problem of activism was made particularly apparent by June 18th precisely because it was an attempt to break from these roles and our normal ways of operating. What we are outlining here is a ‘Worst case scenario’ of what playing the role of an activist can lead to.

The extent to which we can recognise this as part of our own movements and the indication of how much work there is still to be done.

The activist politics dull and sterile

And drives people away from it, but playing the role also fucks up the activist herself. The role of the activist creates a separation between goals and means: self-sacrifice means creating a division between the revolution as ‘out there’ in the City, is the extent to which we can recognise this as part of our own movements and the indication of how much work there is still to be done.

The activist makes politics dull and sterile

As an activist, you have to deny your home and do something else. Because it is not all there representativeness of all the various different causes or issues in one place at one time. It is a division between the activist and the citizenry.

The activist role is a self-imposed isolation

From the people who are being ‘organised’ (who are you referring to when you say ‘we’) as referring to some community of activists, rather than a class. For example, for the character of Blackadder, it has been popular to argue for ‘no more single issues’ and for the importance of ‘mak- it to see anyone else for themselves while she is suffering. She must drag everyone down into the muck with her – an alienation of self-sacrifice.

The old religious cosmology, the successful martyr went to heaven. In the modern worldviews, successful martyrs can look forward to going down in history. The greatest self-sacrifice, the greatest success in creating a role (or even, better, in the whole world! One of the worst examples – eg the eco-warrior) wins a place as someonespecial and different. People become ‘special’ and different. People become ‘special’ and different. People become ‘special’ and different.

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Support the right to organise
Boycott Colgate Palmolive

THE MISSOURI PRISONERS Labour Union (MPLU) is initiating an international boycott of all products produced directly or indirectly by Colgate Palmolive. This is in response to their failure to support the Missouri Prisoners Labour Union's campaign for a minimum wage for all Missouri Prisoners, abolition of all forced labour and abuse perpetrated by the Missouri Department of Corrections and the State Government, and Colgate Palmolive's active involvement in persuading the State of Missouri Legislature to impose a moratorium on all executions in the state.

In a letter to Colgate Palmolive, MPLU National Communications Officer Michael Lee stated, "Let me reassure you that neither myself nor anyone directly associated with the MPLU earn any money through causing physical harm to either Colgate Palmolive employees or property. Our tactic is to simply fold our arms and turn a blind eye to your products."

The mass industrialisation of prisons is creating an army of doubly-exploited people.

The letter goes on to reiterate what MPLU's elected leadership stated in their 24 Organise! No. 54 edition:

"...we realise that your company didn't put us in prison, but Colgate Palmolive [is] reaping immense profit from our incarceration and you have a social obligation to us. The situation I am outlining in the same argument organised labour has used to oppose sweat shop labour employed by Kathy Lee Gifford, Nikes, etc. I would also like to add that we are not asking for anything from society except that we be treated in a fair manner as defined by the United States Constitution and numerous legal cases. We are not advocating a costly lifestyle but simply a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and a safe, non-abusive work environment."

For better conditions

The MPLU is a 500-member organisation, which was created by prisoners and supporters. It was legally chartered by the State of Missouri in 1998. MPLU's aim is to better the living and working conditions of Missouri prisoners in particular and two million US prisoners in general. In its own words, it: "provides a much-needed political forum from which to promote the principles of social justice, economic and political issues confronting Missouri Prisoners and workers. Our commitment to non-violence has been demonstrated continuously. One of the linchpin principles of the MPLU is that there is nothing more powerful then a worker with arms folded, refusing to pick up tools or perform any labour. Since our inception, members have been subjected to all forms of abuse and harassment propagated by the Missouri Department of Corrections. We are not just a step away from a different kind of hell. Consumer boycotts will not change the fundamental nature of the system but simple acts of solidarity like this done in a mass way, can bring relief and amelioration to those who suffer intensely in the way MPLU members have and continue to do. Think about it, the next time you buy a simple bar of soap."

Acts of solidarity

Until the walls are razed, the creation of solidarity both within and across them is both the least and the most we can do. The mass industrialisation of prisons, whether private or state-owned, is creating an army of doubly-exploited people and the ruthless punishments handed out to those who resist within and against the system. We are all just a step away from a different kind of hell. Consumer boycotts will not change the fundamental nature of the system but simple acts of solidarity like this done in a mass way, can bring relief and amelioration to those who suffer intensely in the way MPLU members have and continue to do. Think about it, the next time you buy a simple bar of soap.

Someday the earth will shake with the stamp of our feet as the sleeping giant of the masses arises to deal with them, the air filled with our battle cries as we come! Let one of the battle cries shouted be "Colgate Palmolive, we will not take this any longer! The world will not be decided by you!"

Dear Organise!

I send warmest anarchist greetings and friendship from the belly of the beast! I hope this finds each of you in good health and spirit with everything well. I'm in fair health and morale with things going in the usual toppy-horryfashion of the galag. Coalition like when others had no choice but to thank the Anarchist Federation and other British anarchy comrades for their display of solidarity, support and love shown by their contributions to the Friends of Harold H. Thompson Support Campaign which I use to fight our sworn enemies in their own backyard, the battlefield of the courtroom, on my own behalf and on behalf of other prisoners.

Soon I will be filing a civil rights complaint against the prisoncrats which I hope will benefit all anarchist prisoners in the States as it will directly address confiscation and seizures of anarchist materials by jail mailroom personnel and the recent trend of the prisoncrats labeling imprisoned anarchists as belonging to a "security threat group" or "STG" as justification for anarchist material seizures.

For many years I felt as if I was struggling alone and am overjoyed to feel the presence of my beloved anarchist comrades as we indeed have the same goal even though we engage from different aspects in the struggle. I specifically want to thank anarchist comrades Eddy W., Frankie Dee and Katherine K. who have made the Campaign to a reality when others had no choice but to voice only a willingness to support me. The only way we will ever rid ourselves of the sting of capitalism is for the many whose only motivation in life is greed and whose kind have done for many generations before us!

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In Anarchist Struggle and Solidarity
Harold H. Thompson,

Friends of Harold Thompson whose address is PO Box 375, Knutwall, Woking, Surrey GU21 2XL. England or aplanhar100@hotmail.com. Confusion to our enemies! They will never get us all.

This is the latest pamphlet from the Justice for Mark Barnsley Group.

Now infamous 'Pomona Incident', when freelance writer Mark Barnsley was viciously attacked by 15 drunken students out to celebrate the end of their exams.

The letter goes on to state that these students, who later perjured themselves in court and admitted that they didn't really know why they attacked him, first abused a friend in the Pomona pub in Sheffield while he was inside and then attacked Mark with bottles, knives, glasses and bricks, following him for 150 yards as he tried to escape, repeatedly jumping on him and kicking him whenever he fell.

Yet, it was Mark Barnsley who was charged with assault and jailed for 12 years, an unprecedented sentence for this kind of case. Or is it? Mark is not liked by the local police for a variety of reasons and the way in which evidence was withheld (and is still being withheld), stories changed or concocted and the attitude of the judge at the trial is a savage indictment of policing in South Yorkshire.

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This is the latest pamphlet from the Justice for Mark Barnsley Group.

It is a comprehensive account of the infamous 'Pomona Incident', when freelance writer Mark Barnsley was viciously attacked by 15 drunken students out to celebrate the end of their exams.

For those not familiar with the case, these students, who later perjured themselves in court and admitted that they didn't really know why they attacked him, first abused a friend in the Pomona pub in Sheffield while he was inside and then attacked Mark with bottles, knives, glasses and bricks, following him for 150 yards as he tried to escape, repeatedly jumping on him and kicking him whenever he fell.

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Miscarriage of justice

This publication sets out the facts in great detail and makes the valuable point that middle class people like students, are able to commit very serious offences and get away with them while the working class can be abused, fitted up and jailed on a whim. One of its best parts is the advice it gives to those wanting to help or protest such miscarriages of justice.

This is the story of determined people: Mark for one, his many supporters for another and should be read by everyone who cares.

£2 from Justice For Mark Barnsley, c/o 145-149 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1LJ.
LITTLE KNOWN AND LESS DISCUSSED in the mainstream media is the terrifying experience of prison caused by the state's increasing reliance on imprisonment. Attempts are 'successful' in a year. Five young lives snuffed out every year, premature and very needlessly, five out of a growing army of teenagers held in dire conditions and facing blighted lives, many unconvicted, not a few detained illegally.

Cell nightmare

Once inside it's usual to spend 23 hours a day locked up and isolated in a cell, hundreds of miles from home. For a young person brimming with creative energy this must be a nightmare and it isn't difficult to understand why so many make serious attempts to end it. The irony is that fully forgoing the state will exact when we face, most often alone.

Sterotypes

This book, written by a teacher of cinema studies at the College of Staten Island in New York, exhibits an unusually deep understanding and wide knowledge of the historic movement and the political arguments within anarchism. The author in fact sets out to consciously deconstruct the stereotypes of anarchism and anarchists that have appeared in both mainstream and 'alternative' cinema.

Little-known facts

Critics might suggest that this is a simple academic exercise and that the cinema is Spectacular representations of it. However, to have such a clued-up and sympathetic text in circulation which may bring revolutionary ideas into areas where they don't usually happen, may be of great value.

Anarchism in Japan

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 between the World Wars that numbered tens of thousands. £1.80 plus SAE from AF c/o 846 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7DX.
Dear Organise,

I am writing in response to the points raised in Organise! #53 to our Seattle WTO report [reprinted from We Dare Be Free!].

I basically wanted to say that this article was not able for the first-hand account of the frontlines of action, written from a militant anarchist perspective.

Outside of the small minority of explicitly revolutionary anti-capitalists (black bloc anarchists, wobblies, Peoples' Assembly, Revolutionary Socialists, etc.), the Seattle WTO protests contained thousands of demonstrators whose politics were based on a conservative protection to a well meaning (if not slightly confused) liberal reformism.

It is entirely false to claim that the protest movement that came out of Seattle was solely backed by the class-based, anti-capitalist, anti-State political framework. However, rather than following the lead of the mainstream counterparts, many of the participants, many revolutionary anarchists have made it a priority to organise within the main action wing of the movement (which, though typically more radical than its mainstream counterparts, still contains a high level of political ambiguity and liberalism, even among many so-called anarchists), and agitate for the sort of revolutionary framework we would like to see this movement eventually embrace on a large-scale.

To some degree, we can begin to see some positive results stem from these efforts. Many seemingly liberal practitioners did indeed walk away from Seattle radicalised, and subsequently, as can be seen in the A16 protests that occurred in Washington DC last April, the globalisation debate has shifted from being simply anti-capitalist to questioning all aspects of the capitalist system.

Another point that was raised in your editorial was over our acceptance of autonomous acts of resistance that are somehow divorced from the experience of the working class. Not being one to objectify the working class as some abstract, homogenous entity, I do find it difficult to differentiate the appropriateness of a certain action from such an ambiguous gauge. The United States has a long and illustrious history of class violence, however, I would think that this history is also "divorced from the experience of the working class", as it is composed of autonomous acts of resistance that are somehow divorced from the experience of the working class.

In my opinion, this is a very important point to clarify, since there has been ongoing controversy on both sides of the Atlantic around this subject.

Basically, for me, the left designates a fairly broad tradition of progressive social movements and ideas that embrace some form of progressive social change, economic democratisation (socialism), or social justice. To some extent, this could include everything from revolutionary anarchism to classical liberal to Marxian socialism to single-tenor advocacy groups (anti-poverty, environmental, human rights, prison reform, etc.).

When I speak about the left, I am speaking about a whole range of left groups and tendencies that are struggling for some form of social justice or progressive social change (even as fucked as most Marxist-Leninists are, they still convince themselves that they are fighting for an egalitarianism of classes and some form of socialistic economy). As far as I know, the actual usage of the term predates Marx by at least 50 years.

In this country, there is a growing tendency within the anarchist movement (mainly in the primitivist, green, post-situationist, and individualist anarchist milieu) which calls for an abandonment of the left. What this essentially translates to, as far as I can tell, is an abandonment of direct participation within social movements or popular struggles, in favour of... well, to tell you the truth, I can’t quite tell what rights of options are presented as viable revolutionary alternatives to ‘leftism’ (other than isolated acts of random rebellion).

Basically, publications such as Fifth Estate and Anarchy, and writers such as John Zerzan, Hakim Bey, Jason McQuinn, Alex Trotter and Bob Black have used their anti-left position as a platform to attack class struggle anarchism (or ‘social anarchism’), specific revolutionary anarchist organisations (Love & Rage, syndicalists (IWW, IWA), social ecologists (Murray Bookchin), and essentially anyone who according to them carries the residue of Marxism (or classical politics)."
Dear Organise!

A few thoughts inspired by the moments of working class the Revolution of 1918/19 until Germany in the 1930s.

I think part of the problem in trying to find worthy moments of working class resistance to Hitler and the Nazis after it, on the one hand, was the neglect of a proper understanding of events in Germany from the Revolution of 1918/19 through that date (ie, not going back far enough).

The Weimar Republic

The Weimar Republic existed because of the revolutionary insurrection of the German working class at the close of the war. It was, of course, a symbol of the defeat of a revolution, but it was the best that the capitalist class could get away with. It is significant that the Weimar Republic had not been created, then Germany probably would have faced an extended civil war against the Weimar Republic, which in 1923 had failed to re-establish itself. The Republic was a kind of expression of the fear that German capitalists had of the class that had given them such a shock at the end of the war.

The capitalists were afraid of any kind of buying off of the liberals (ie, the SPD); they got political power, but in return they knew they had to regain control of the working class and create a situation where the economy could get back on its feet again.

Indeed, the economy did start to get on its feet for a while, partly as a result of the war reparations paid to those in the Republic responsible for paying war reparations (I think). It wasn't enough (especially with the Wall Street Crash) and the very existence of the Weimar Republic itself started to become a liability. Things needed to be speeded up, and revenge had to be had.

The capitalists had waited for over a decade to get their own back and to finally take the working class away from labour struggles. Political events in the early '30s allowed them to do it. The working class had not even organised themselves many years previously. In the case of targeting militant workers, Hitler and his party were merely carrying out mop-up operations for the boss class.

By the time Hitler became the democratically elected Chancellor there was little hope for the working class resistance and as he tightened his grip there was even less chance. We could compare the situation to Northern Ireland in recent years, where due to the good policing of the working class by the IRA and the British government, there has been virtually no possibility of working class resistance. An unarmed working class will usually find itself at a loss in the face of an aggressive (armed) State (in the case of VI the working class was/is subject to the repressive arms of both the IRA and the UK government).

Of course, there were actions against the Nazis while they were in power, but they were small and isolated and no one would presume that they could have been a topping of the Nazification by a suddenly rejuvenated working class, who had found some kind of security in a lock-in just outside Hamburg. But this doesn't mean that their reports of resistance to tyranny aren't inspiring, as the Edelweiss Pirates shows.

Weimar Republic

The Weimar Republic lasted from 1919 to 1933. It was a democratic republic that was established after the end of the First World War. The Weimar Republic was established after the victorious Allies forced Germany to sign the Treaty of Versailles, which imposed huge reparations and territorial losses on the country.

However, the Weimar Republic was never able to establish a stable form of government. It was plagued by political instability, economic problems, and social unrest. The party in power was the German National Socialist Workers' Party, known as the Nazis. The Nazis gained power through elections, but their rise to power was largely due to the economic and social conditions of the time.

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