Subversion

Number 21

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In this issue: South Korea ... Liverpool Dockers Struggle ... "Green" Communism ... Thinking About Getting A Job? ... The JSA ... The IRA ... The Poor The Bad And The Angry ... And more ...

ALBANIAN SAVINGS SCANDAL

WISE WORKERS INVEST THEIR FUTURES IN THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Subversion 21

Introduction

Welcome to *Subversion* 21. This isssue contains the usual mixture of stuff... There are articles reflecting and opening up discussions going on within the Subversion group, including the piece on **Green Communism** starting on page 5 and **Thinking About Getting A Job** on page 9. Then there are contributions from comrades and contacts outside the group, like the update on the **Liverpool Dockers' Struggle** on page 3 and a piece we lifted from **The Poor The Bad and The Angry** on the back page. Plus an extra-long **Letters** section starting on page 11 with debates on the **JSA** and **national liberation movements**.

Back Issues

We have plenty of *Subversion* 16, 18 and 20 left. Other numbers are in short supply but send us an SAE and we'll see what we sort out. Alternatively we can provide some articles and our pamphlets on **Ireland** and the **Labour party** on computer disc (PC format preferrably).

The Best of Subversion is a pamphlet comprising a selection of articles from the first 11 issues of *Subversion*. It costs £1.00 inc. p&p. ***Coming soon*** (we hope) will be **The Best of Subversion 2** comprising (you guessed it) a selection of articles from issues 12 to 20. Advance orders welcome.

Appeal for funds

BIG thanks to everyone who has sent us money since the last issue of *Subversion* came out. Whatever you can afford to send is greatly appreciated - cash, stamps, cheques (made payable to Subversion) - we're not fussy!

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To contact us by email or on the internet, see "Surfversion" on page 15

Want to get involved in Subversion?

There are many ways you could get involved in Subversion. For instance:

☐ Correspond with us on issues raised in our bulletin
☐ Write articles for inclusion in our bulletin (let us know in advance an outline of what you're thinking of writing)
☐ Take extra copies of the Subversion bulletin to distribute to friends or at local meetings/events
☐ Copy and distribute relevant articles more widely
☐ Contribute financially on a regular basis

Ideally we would like to see Subversion grow and become more effective by joining up with other local active groups following a period of joint discussion and activity. But we recognise that at the present time many individual revolutionaries are fairly isolated. If you're in this situation and you already do most or all of the above list it would be a logical step to consider joining our group. If you live in or within easy travelling distance of Greater Manchester we would urge you to do this. If you live further away the practical benefits of joining would be less but we could still guarantee:
☐ Regular minutes of our meetings
☐ Access to material we receive
☐ Regular contact through letters/phone calls/email
☐ Draft articles for Subversion for comment

In this way you would have more influence on the direction and activity of the group.

Obviously if we had a large influx of individual members like this we would then all have to discuss new ways of organising that would more effectively involve everyone.

So - think about it!

What We Stand For

We meet regularly for political discussion and to organise our activities. The following is a brief description of our basic political principles:

-We are against all forms of capitalism; private, state and self-managed.

- We are for communism, which is a classless society in which all goods are distributed according to needs and desires.

- We are actively opposed to all ideologies which divide the working class, such as religion, sexism and racism.

- We are against all expressions of nationalism, including "national liberation" movements such as the IRA.

- The working class (wage labourers, the unemployed, housewives, etc.) is the revolutionary class; only its struggle can liberate humanity from scarcity, war and economic crisis.

- Trade unions are part of the capitalist system, selling our labour power to the bosses and sabotaging our struggles. We support independent working class struggle, in all areas of life under capitalism, outside the control of the trade unions and all political parties.

- We totally oppose all capitalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. We are against participation in fronts with these organisations.

- We are against participation in parliamentary elections; we are for the smashing of the capitalist state by the working class and the establishment of organisations of working class power.

- We are against sectarianism, and support principled co-operation among revolutionaries.

- We exist to actively participate in escalating the class war towards communism.

Korea Opportunities

A look at the role of Class and Democracy in the recent events in South Korea

Over December 1996 and into January/February 1997 massive strikes covering nearly all sectors of the South Korean economy - from shipyards and auto-manufacture, through public services to banks and even the stock exchange - were organised by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). Alongside the strikes there have been large demonstrations of both white collar and manual workers many involving violent clashes with the police.

The objective of the strikers was to overturn legislation rushed through by the ruling New Korea Party which makes sackings and employment of scabs easier and also expands the powers of the state's spy agency.

Enthusiasm for the strikes reflects the recognition by workers of the government's determination to weaken class resistance to attacks on wages and conditions, as this 'Asian Tiger' comes under pressure from newer 'Tiger Cubs' and even an old tiger like Britain where S.E. Asian capital has started to flow back to exploit labour knocked about by the recession here.

The action of workers has also drawn widespread support from other sectors of the population including students, the churches, university professors, journalists, human rights groups, 'citizens' groups and opposition parties.

Some of this support has been carefully and imaginatively encouraged by workers organising free health checks, car services and environmental clean-ups during the strikes. If it were simply a matter of tactical moves to neutralise potential establishment opposition amongst the general population then we needn't worry, but there is more to it than that.

Despite its calls for *international* solidarity the KCTU represents the struggle as one of national democratic renewal in which all "citizens" of the state have an equal interest rather than as it really is, a straightforward clash of class interests which is occurring world-wide irrespective of the political complexion of the national regime.

For instance much has been made by the KCTU of the undemocratic *way* in which legislation was brought forward (in the early hours of the morning with few opposition MPs present). The spectre of a return to South Korea's militaristic and dictatorial past has been raised. The KCTU has been concerned to push itself forward as the true defender of "trade union and labour rights" and to establish itself as the main vendor of labour power against its less representative and establishment oriented rival the FKTU. The KCTU has also made it clear that it is willing to enter into negotiations, alongside opposition parties for "genuine reform of the labour laws".

It is also ironic that the laws being 'defended' have been developed over a period including South Korea's 'undemocratic' past, whilst the present legislative onslaught is being carried out in the 'democratic' present. Indeed the changes are no greater than those long enforced by the 'democratic' west with the acquiescence of the west's free trade unions - the same unions who are now bleating about anti-democratic moves in South Korea!

The NKP has tried to split citizen

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South Korea

(continued from page 2)

support for the workers by raising the bogey of clandestine support for the North Korean dictatorship amongst strikers. Whilst this ploy has been rightly laughed off it is not entirely ridiculous in so far as some left wing support for the strikers is couched in terms of a movement for "democracy and reunification of the Korean Peninsula", positing (as the left always does) a diversionary national interest against class interests.

The government's response apart from this has so far been a mixture of repression (police violence and arrest of union organisers) and offers of negotiation which suggests a compromise against the interests of workers may be in the offing. Whatever happens more class confrontation is guaranteed in the near future.

The function of trade unions in the modern world as 'permanent' representatives of labour in the market place leads naturally to their support for legal recognition and a place in the 'democratic' structure of the state. From the workers' perspective the state, whether democratic or dictatorial is always our enemy. There are clear class interests at stake in the current situation in S. Korea but workers need to distinguish these from the democratic aspirations of the unions and political parties.

Footnote: Interestingly some of the 'Tiger Cubs' are having problems of their own. Workers at Sanyo Universal Electric in Bangkok, Thailand, recently set fire to one of the company's warehouses in a dispute over year end bonuses. There have also been militant protests by Bangkok bank workers and by garment workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia amongst others.

Workers in South East Asia are beginning to take the Tiger by the tail and give it bloody good shake. **More power to their elbow!**

"The dockers are not going away"

The latest in the series of reports written by a communist in Liverpool who has been active in supporting the dockers' struggle

It is now January 1997 as I write and the dockers are sixteen months into their dispute with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company over that company's summary dismissal of 429 workers and their consequent campaign for reinstatement. Concretely the latest development to report is the dockers proposal to the company to set up a 'labour only' cooperative [to be 45% owned by the dockers themselves] which would control labour conditions - wage rates, hours, overtime etc. So far the company has rejected the proposal, which was to be expected.

I believe the dockers reasons for making such a proposal [and it did come from the docks stewards and not the union] were largely tactical and did not stem from any commitment to the ideal of 'cooperativism' itself whatever that means today. We have enough experience in this country of such forms of organisations to understand that they do not imply any real change of the workers' position in the scheme of things. It was tactical, in my opinion, for several reasons.

Among them, firstly, it got the pressure of the union's demand for a 'secret ballot' over the company's latest 'final' [that is in fact the fourth 'final'] offer off the dockers backs. The dockers policy is as far as possible to keep control of their dispute in their own hands - the union's demand for a secret ballot [and only of former employees of MDHC] would have left around 100 of them disenfranchised and could therefore have split the united front the dockers have shown so far. One of the principles they constantly reiterate is that there will be NO settlement until ALL settle. Undoubtedly the TGWU will come back to insist on a demand for a 'secret ballot'. The dockers ability to resist this is outwith their control for the moment, since there exists no movement independent of the union to which they could turn.

Secondly by introducing a seemingly possible basis for a settlement, it was hoped to isolate the MDHC from the major shipping lines, who were affected by the latest world wide week of action in areas not directly trading with Liverpool, and especially in the Pacific rim where the majority of world trade is now concentrated. Shipping lines are used to dealing with cooperatively or municipally owned ports, so the MDHC could be shown to be an extremely obdurate employer - which no doubt it is. Any dock company that bites the hand of the union that is desperate to extract itself from the situation by handing the dockers bound and gagged over to the tender mercies of the employer is guilty of lack of imagination at best and more probably in MDHC's case, outright stupidity.

Thirdly and I think this is the most revealing, the proposed 'co-op' would have allowed those militants back 'onto the dock' after those dockers near retiring age could have accepted the redundancy and pension terms which are their legal due. How realistic this is given the past sixteen months I leave you to judge, but it does show that for some of the militants there is a major problem in understanding the changed nature of their struggle and the consequences of these changes for their own movement.

Many of the stewards and other activists long to get back to the kind of class struggle they were used to - that of sectional disputes 'on the job'. Alongside others in this dispute, including it must be said some dockers and some stewards, I have argued that things have changed and it is impossible to go back to that kind of

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Dockers Struggle *(continued from page 3)*

movement. I argued in my last report that perhaps one of the reasons preventing the appreciation of this reality lay in the very form of organisation adopted by the dockers. All the major questions are debated in private [and these debates have been heated and at times violent] so that a common policy can be laid before the dockers mass meetings.

I am more and more convinced that this way of proceeding is a dead end. It is all very well for individual militants and activists to accept that reality has changed, but such a realisation, such 'consciousness' [how I hate that word] must become the property of the movement itself and not the private property of the 'leadership'. This whole question opens up so many issues that I shall simply have to assert my conclusion for the moment. Even in the supporter's group in Liverpool [I cannot speak for other groups round the country] it is extremely difficult to get individual activists to accept the need to think and consider wider issues - any contemplation for instance, of the possibility of the dockers being defeated is met simply with outright refusal to discuss it.

This brings me on to a consideration of more strategic issues. No-one who has been around this dispute for any length of time can fail to be struck by one thing. And that is the tremendous sense of collectivity, loyalty and practical concern that these people show to one another. Secondly compared with the prevailing 'morality' [I can't think of any other word], what these people have done is perverse. On at least four occasions now they have rejected, what are to many working class people, major sums of money in order simply to continue their struggle. Even in this city with its long history of working class struggle, many people shake their head in disbelief at the dockers continued rejection of the MDHC's cash offer to abandon the campaign.

It is this aspect of the dispute that is so utterly new in my opinion. Right at the beginning of the dispute the stewards were quite frank in saying that they did not have a clear idea of the way forward. They asked people to come forward and make a contribution - some have, many have not. What is quite clear is that no-one has a blueprint or a manual as to how they should proceed. As one of the stewards said 'if there is a manual that shows us how to do things then give us a copy. We'll make another 500 and then distribute them.'

The dockers know that they must make it up as they go along. Some of us here have been involved in that process. If our ideas and suggestions have not been taken up we know it is not because they have not been considered and discussed, but because, for whatever reason they have not seemed practical at the time. Times change, circumstances change, and it may be that the dockers will return to reconsider many of the options which they had previously rejected. One thing is for sure, I do not believe that this dispute will be 'resolved' in the near future, whichever way it turns out. And the dockers for their part are not going away. DG.

Subversion footnote

Some dockers and their supporters *have* questioned the usefulness of the proposal for a workers' co-op or company in solving their current problems and have recognised the potentially diversionary nature of the proposal even as a supposed "tactic" (see the article 'Bollocks to Clause Four' in *Subversion* 16). There has also been some discussion of the need for dockers to use their collective organisation and experience to both protect themselves against the attacks of the state on their social benefits (including the effects of the JSA etc) and act as a potential catalyst for action by other unemployed workers.

Green Communism

The following text is a revised version of a talk given at a Subversion discussion meeting held in Manchester. The title was "Green Communism? - aspects of social transformation". This article represents a point of view within Subversion on issues which we are continuing to discuss and which we will return to again in future issues.

In the early 1970s I joined an organisation called the Socialist Party of Great Britain. It had and still has many faults, but there are two aspects of those early politics of mine that I want to pick up on.

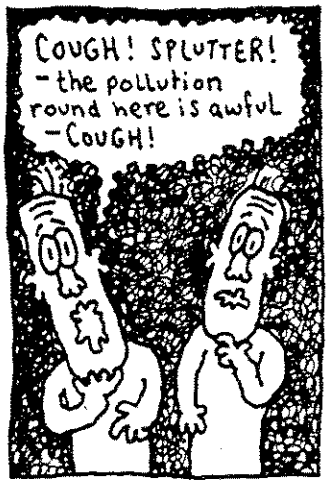
Firstly the positive side. The great strength of the SPGB was, and is, a very clear understanding of the basis of capitalism and similarly an understanding of what communism could be. Those are ideas that I have held since those days. So when I talk about communism, what do I mean? Well, I start from an understanding that capitalism is not dependent on private or any other formal legalised ownership of property. The basis of capitalism lies in the control of the means of production and distribution by a minority, and the exclusion from that control of a majority. The majority are then forced to work for the minority. To do so they sell their ability to work to the minority, the ruling class. In return they receive sufficient money (wages/salaries) to keep them in the standard of living to which they are broadly accustomed. This never equals the value that they produce when they are working for the ruling class. Thus the majority, what we call the working class, are exploited. In modern society it is futile to try and see who is exploited and by how much. Capitalism has evolved to the point where we are exploited collectively as a class. What we produce as a class is sold at its value on a market. At this point, surplus value, or what we usually refer to as profit, is realised collectively by the ruling class. So their whole position of wealth and power derives from production for profit, exchange and the wages system.

Communism is the negation of these fundamental laws of capitalism. It involves social control of the means of production and distribution, production for use - because things are needed - and the abolition of wages and the whole money system of buying and selling. People will freely associate together to produce and will freely take from the common store according to their needs.

To survive, to regulate itself, capitalism utilises the state. This is an instrument not only to regulate production, distribution and exchange, but also to defend the control by the minority over the majority. The state has existed in various forms as long as class society has existed. At every stage of class society it has existed to support the minority in power over the majority. It follows that communism will only exist when we have got rid of the state, for we will then have no minority whose position needs defending. The actual process of establishing communism will involve the destruction of the state.

We dreamt of communism as a kind of science fiction society much like Star Trek portrays to this day...

There is one negative aspect of those politics that I want to talk about. Along with many others in the movement at that time I held a view of communism as technology triumphant. We believed that communism would base itself on the technology of existing, capitalist, society. Thus, we would have unlimited power - from nuclear power or we believed from non-polluting nuclear fusion. Everything possible would be mechanised, freeing people for a life of leisure. Freed from pollution (weren't we naive!), industry would produce an



abundance of all the things that people could want. True, production would no longer rely on built-in obsolescence - things would be made to last and consumer durables would be shared. Nonetheless, it wouldn't be too much of a caricature to say that for many of us then, communism was dreamed of as a kind of science fiction society much like Star Trek portrays to this day.

All this ignored one thing. That was the nature of capitalist technology. Capitalism is a society with another basic law. That is expand or die. All businesses have this imperative. They must constantly be searching for ways to produce more and cheaper, to compensate for the tendency of the profit produced on individual items to decline and to steal a march over their competitors. So, capitalism constantly seeks to replace living labour (people) with dead labour (machines), to increase the amount produced by individual workers and screw more surplus value out of them. As a result it increases the level of production and is constantly searching for new markets. It is this search for new markets that has led to this increasing domination of every aspect of our lives by commodities. It is the reason behind such essentially useless commodities as Walkmen and Gameboys - essentially anti-social artifacts that isolate us from our fellows. It is the reason behind the

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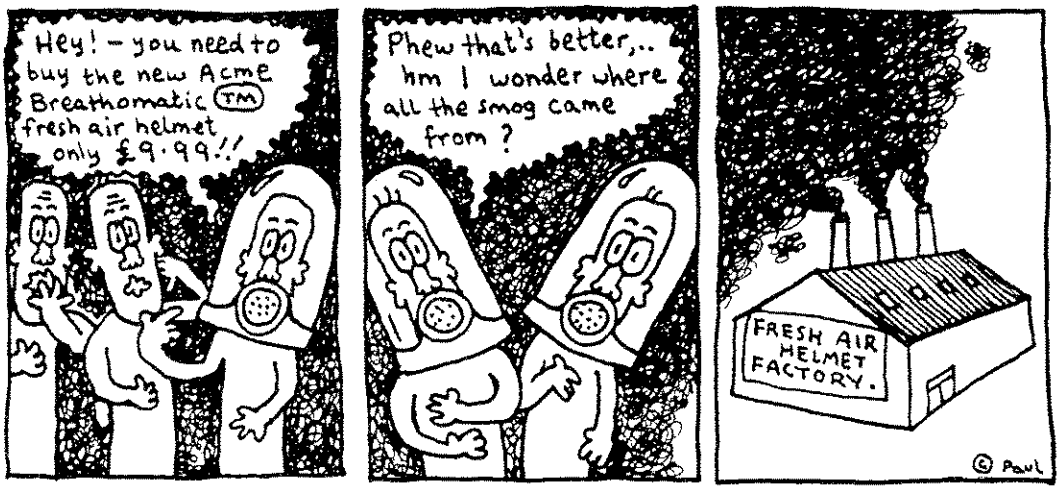
Green Communism *(from page 5)*

commodification of children's lives.

The technology of capitalism was created to aid this process. They call it progress. Pre-capitalist societies hardly changed their technologies from century to century. For a thousand years, the greatest advance in military technology was the invention of the stirrup - the Romans conquered most of Europe without the aid of it. Gunpowder was known of for hundreds of years before anyone saw any military advantage in it. Clocks took hundreds of years to become widely used. The list goes on. Today, we live in a society where change of even more fundamental natures happens several times within our own lifetimes. As I am writing this I am using a computer and listening to a CD. Just 20 years ago, knowledgeable insiders were speculating that computers might one day come down in price to around £5000! A modern American car has more computer power than the first Apollo spaceship to land on the Moon.

Today both science and technology are fully integrated into capitalist society. Science is the last, but after human labour, the most important social property to be turned into an adjunct of capitalism. The story of its conversion from the province of amateurs, philosophers, tinkerers and seekers after knowledge, to its present highly organised and lavishly financed form is the story of its incorporation into capitalist industry. The kind of technology that emerges from this alliance is one which, when applied to the work process, is spurred on by the need to remove control of that process from the workers. The consequence of this is known as "deskilling". Technology is designed to centralise control in the hands of managers and engineers reducing the amount of understanding of it needed on the part of the workers. This, together with the application of science to the management of the work process (sometimes called Taylorism) where every bodily motion is classified and timed, eliminating time spent "inefficiently" and reducing contacts between workers, has led quite literally and systematically to the exploitation of people as cheap and interchangeable parts of machines.



There can be no future for our species if the damage capitalism brings is not halted.

One thing that's clear is that technology and science are not independent variables in history but social forces which adapt themselves to the needs and exigencies of capitalism. Furthermore the imperatives behind technology to control us are no longer confined merely to the workplace. The application of science to organise our 'leisure time' as consumers (with theme parks like Alton Towers etc) is a growth industry.

In the last twenty years or so, capitalism has created a new movement of opposition - often called the 'environmental movement'. This is simply because it has so messed up the world that many of us can see that there can be no future for our species if the damage it brings is not halted.

This movement can take a number of directions. Capitalism would like it to head in the direction of self-imposed austerity. Working people gladly accepting cut-backs - to save the planet! (While the bosses continue to live in luxury). Or working class people in the North blaming poor people in the South - for destroying rain forests for example. Or more subtly, for working people in the North to blame themselves for being part of a society that forces poor people in the South to destroy rain forests! It likes us to be green consumers - buying Ecover products because that way we avoid guilt for the destruction of the planet - meanwhile, of course, spending more for the things we need - preferably at Tesco's or Sainsbury's, but feeling oh so good and sanctimonious about it.

Alternatively, those parts of the 'green movement' that are actively resisting capital can be revolutionary. They can recognise that the cause of environmental destruction is the very imperative of capital to expand or die. To recognise that it is the very existence of the buying and selling culture that causes the destruction we so abhor.

Now, capital has many strategies to recuperate the struggle against it. It deploys any number against the environmental movement. One of these is to attack from within the movement itself. In this it finds willing allies in the likes of the Green Party and Friends of the Earth. More alarmingly, it finds allies in some of those who claim to be anarchists.

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Green Communism

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Over recent years there has developed a tendency, calling itself anarchist, who have fallen for the lies of capitalism hook, line and sinker. Capital would like us to think that the problem does not lie in the control of production or the existence of wage labour. Rather we have constant talk about the dangers of technology - usually foreign technology, like clever japanese with their computers and robots putting our workers out of jobs.

Latching onto this, not recognising that particular technologies are the product of particular societies, have arisen a new brand of anti-technological anarchists. The most obvious examples of these are grouped around journals like Green Anarchist. Recently they published an extract from the Unabomber's Manifesto (and distribute it in full) - in this he rambles on about technology being the problem. The need is, he said, to get rid of technology. Not technology as it exists in capitalism, but all technology. This view is supported by the likes of John Zerzan who asserts that humanity was better off when it was primitive - he says, for example "Prior to agriculture, in other words, humanity existed in a state of grace, ease and communion with nature that we can barely comprehend today". He wants to go back to that state. (I can only echo the view of Murray Bookchin, who asserted that at least one benefit from the kind of non-society Zerzan envisaged was that nobody would be able to read the crap he wrote!).

They talk about being anti-civilisation.

Green Anarchist say that the problem is "mass society". They say "it is too complex to work without specialisation". They go on to suggest that "mass society must be replaced with communities small enough for each person in them to be respected as an autonomous individual." They say "mass society alienates people from earth. By controlling the Earth's resources, the state controls society. We must end our dependence on the state by taking back the land and living self-sufficiently". They advocate a revolution (?) by landless people in the south because when they take back the land, "less resources [will be] imported from the Third World [and] mass society won't be able to come up with the goods in this society." Their strategy for change here is as follows:

"*We must support the revolution on the periphery by making our own here. We must share skills needed to survive without the State, create a culture of resistance to free us from the alienation of mass society, live free of exploitation by boycotting banks and multinationals, building an alternative economy and defending ourselves and the Earth by taking direct action against military bases and labs, developers and industry, exploitation and bigotry.*" ('Autonomy Now', part of their article "This Is Green Anarchism").

There are many problems with this approach. Firstly, it ignores the fact that environmental destruction is not new to capitalism. Their much-vaunted wild human beings were responsible for burning and clearing vast tracts of the world's forests. Australia is a case in point. Capitalism is just much better and faster at it. Secondly, it offers little more than saying - go and live in communes, farm a few poxy bits of land, wait for millions to starve after the peasant south have taken control of 'their' land, whilst boycotting banks and getting involved in LETS schemes.

By getting rid of useless work, by escaping the cash economy, we will be able to produce enough to feed, clothe and house the planet's population.

This is, of course, just another example of militant, liberal reformism.

The problem with militant reformism is that it fails to tackle the underlying reality of capitalism - that it is based on buying, selling and hence profit. It fails to recognise that it was from small scale production that modern capital grew - spurred on by the needs of capital to expand or die.

A while ago, I asserted that the green movement could take on a revolutionary character. Why? Because the destruction of the environment is the result, not of civilisation, not of technology, but of the domination of the planet by capital. No society has destroyed so quickly or efficiently. No society has exploited

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Green Communism

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nature so ruthlessly or with such disregard for the consequences. At least when the indigenous people of australia were destroying the forests, they weren't aware of the long-term results of what they were doing.

Now we see corporations destroying vast areas of rain forests. We see roads ripping up mile upon mile of countryside and polluting the air we breath. We see the food we eat being mixed with all sorts of additives, farmed with fertilisers and pesticides, animals pumped full of hormones, genetically engineered foods being forced on us. In the past 100 years, 250,000 people in Britain have been killed in auto accidents. Yet more cars and roads are built. Countries in the south are indebted to the West, forced to farm for the market, in order to pay for the debts they owe. Millions die each year, killed by poverty and starvation that would be avoided without these debts. Vast areas of the world are polluted by oil companies.

Capitalists and the State don't do these things because they are nasty people. Though of course it is quite likely that many of them are evil bastards! They do it because it is necessary for their system to survive.

So when we struggle against the effects of capital's destruction of the environment, we are struggling against capital itself. We are, actually, engaging in acts of class struggle. These can only succeed when they merge into a struggle to get rid of the system that causes them in the first place.

This is what frightened the state so much over the Reclaim The Streets action in Liverpool. Dockers and eco-activists seeing their struggle united and one! It's hardly surprising the police attacked the eco's with such ferocity.

As communists, we have much to learn from this movement. Not least, it reminds us of the true nature of technology. It reminds us that technology is not neutral. It reminds us that any society must count the ecological impact of any decisions it makes. There is truth in the idea that regions of the planet should be as self-sustainable as possible.

It is just not conceivable that a communist society could base its transport on the mass use of individual motor cars. It doesn't matter whether they be petrol driven or some green alternative. The sheer quantity of power and raw materials involved would continue to be destructive, whether they be petrol or electric. Neither is it conceivable that there would be an obsession with travelling as quickly as possible. It is only the needs of capital that dictate that we have to get from here to there by yesterday. It is likely that we would try to be self sustaining, and where we cannot be, that food and other resources be transported the shortest distance possible. As a result it would suggest a move towards vegetarianism and the end of strawberries in the winter and flowers flown in from Zimbabwe.

We cannot conceive of cities going - overnight or possibly ever. But we can conceive of greening them. Of planting trees, of breaking them down into more human size, of reducing the power of the centre. We can conceive of people choosing to live in smaller communities where they can know and support each other.

Will technology go? Will we return to the wild? Hardly. We have no wish to see a return to backbreaking labour, a continuation of the ridiculous number of hours we work. However, any technology a green communism chose to use would have to be long lasting and designed not to pollute, not to destroy. It would tend to be smaller scale and more manageable, less reliant on specialists. By getting rid of useless work, by escaping the cash economy, we will be able to produce enough to feed, clothe and house the planet's population. To provide enough of what people really need, rather than artificially produced wants. For all to live a life that is worthwhile, freed from the fears that surround us today.

Then we could see a new kind of progress. A progress towards a real human society, where we live in harmony with the planet and can begin to restore it from the destruction wrought in the past.

Note: I was greatly helped in writing this by reading two recent publications from AK Press. They are *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm?* by Murray Bookchin (£5.95) and *Eco-Fascism: Lessons from the German Experience* by Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier (£4.95). Available from AK Press, PO Box 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland.

CONSERVE ENERGY

BURN A BUREAUCRAT

Subversion/ACF Joint 'Day School'

Subversion and the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF) are jointly organising a day-long discussion meeting for members and close contacts of the two groups, to talk about various topics arising from the general theme of "Beyond Democracy: For Revolution and the Future Society". The meeting will take place in Central England on Saturday, 7th June. If you are interested in coming to this meeting, drop us a line for more information. It will be possible to provide a creche, so if you would like to bring children along, please ask for a creche registration form as well.

For those of you thinking about getting a job...

A Modest Suggestion Regarding The Targetting Of Key Economic Sectors By Troublemaking Types

This article expresses the thoughts of one member of Subversion and is not to be taken as a kind of "Subversion group policy". [There was some discussion within the group before publishing this article. We decided to publish it, but also to add a number of points, reflecting the discussions that took place, at the end].

By the clumsy term "key economic sectors" I simply mean jobs where workers appear to have a continuing, or burgeoning, collectively confrontational role with their bosses. Of course, highpoints in class struggle are always shifting (slowly or suddenly), but it should be apparent, to those who care to look, which jobs are likely to put one closer to industrial action. (If we had one revolutionary postie in every town...)

The bosses and the State would rather we used our skills and insights as social workers, personnel officers, managers, academics, designers, programmers and experts than as shit-stirrers on the shop floor. There must be a lesson for us in this.

"*The lowest ebb* [of the situationist project of the 1960's and early 1970's] *has been an intellectualized reading born of the inability of a large number of people to destroy what can only be destroyed (through sabotage and subversion - not occupations) by the workers responsible for the economy's key sectors.*" R. Vaneigem, **The Revolution of Everyday Life**, reprinted 1983, p.214.

"*Those who already feel the need for communism, and discuss it, cannot interfere in [...] struggles to bring the communist gospel, to propose to these limited actions that they direct themselves towards 'real' communist activity. What is needed is not slogans, but an explanation of the background and mechanism of these struggles. One must only show* what they will be forced to do. *This cannot be done without participation in such movements whenever this is possible, though not by wasting one's time.*" J. Barrot, **What Is Communism**, reprinted 1983, p.39.

"*Scientists and the like have to* think *for their bosses, they have to* work out the ways *that profit is to be made and control maintained. They are not forced to do this, they could always get a job in a restaurant.*" **Proletarian Gob**, #6, p. 6.

I find it an increasingly sad fact that most of the radical milieu with whom I have a passing acquaintance in Britain, and in whom I find the most intelligent criticisms of this society, do not have what may be termed "crap working class" jobs.

Instead (if they are not idling comfortably as "claimants"! - I'll come back to this sector later) they have fairly cushy well-paid and what some would term "middle-class" jobs. Now, it is **not** the *cushiness* or the *pay* that I have an objection to, it is the fact that the jobs themselves mean that the radical person in question has, at the daily point of the production of value, little or no contact with the very strata (roughly speaking) of the population that we are relying on to kick out capitalist economics.

If we want to help workers wake up to the systematic misery of their exploitation, and to do something about it then it seems fairly logical that we have to be amongst them. This approach, of course, entails looking for the sort of job in which one might have the most influence and in which there seems a good potential for ongoing class struggle (i.e. look for a job where you have a good contact with other workers on the same level of pay as you and where there is a history of troublemaking by those workers).

Of course the problem with working in these sort of jobs is that it is not usually as pleasant as whiling your day away at a computer terminal, or wandering through the halls of academia, or supervising things in an office, or doing something "meaningful and worthy" on behalf of the local state for the poor and distressed of your borough. The problem, perhaps, is that some radical types are just too well educated! And they just can't resist letting their brains and initiative being picked by a well-paying boss who guarantees that they won't have to get their hands dirty.

(continued on page 10)

Thinking About getting A Job?
(continued from page 9)
Now, I'm not going to blame anyone for wanting to get out of "crap" low-paid jobs and into something easier and that will give you a better standard of living. This is not the point I'm trying to make. What bothers me is that the most radical critics of this society are often not in any position to have any impact on the working class. Added to this, of course, is that they often end up, through their job, putting a large part of their **creativity** (as opposed to just **time**) at the service of the administrators and managers of this society. This fact can be rationalised and justified no end but it is still a fact.

One false impediment many radicals might use to their getting "crap" jobs is that they are overqualified and already have a job history that would exclude them from most "crap" jobs. However, this can be overcome by **lying**, job histories and education are not looked into by employers as much as you might think it is. If you're unhappy with unsupported lies get a couple of references off a dodgy builder or cowboy cleaning firm, taxi firm, etc - use your imagination. If you are worried, with your posh accent and all, that you'd never be accepted by other low-paid workers you needn't be - you'll soon discover the amazing variety of backgrounds of the people you'll be working with, and anyway there is no need to tell them that you have a PhD in Nuclear Physics or whatever.

Most importantly, at your job on the railways or Royal Mail or wherever, you will learn so much about the class struggle it will make your head hurt. You will see things differently, things you thought were straight-forward will become more complex and things that were once shrouded in fog in your head will become clear. Your new *non*-career will engender a lot of serious and independent thought on your part, you will learn about what the awareness of ***subordination*** does to you and others and you will learn about your complete and utter ***expendability***. Of course, you will have to have at your disposal an open mind, in this regard the reading of a few fiction books by B. Traven probably wouldn't go amiss.

Apart from those comrades who are in work there are the ones who aren't at all. Being unemployed is also not an ideal way to be amongst the "key sectors" of our class. Naturally, in some geographical areas getting a job is extremely difficult, but this is not the case everywhere. I don't blame people for trying to avoid getting a job, I've done it for long periods in the past too. Used wisely, the amount of "free" time that can be gained from not working can be used to involve oneself deeply in unemployed struggles, squatting, and general propaganda work. However, anyone with two short planks to rub together is aware that the unemployed are not a powerful sector of the working class, they usually have no labour to withdraw - this may change with workfare though! - and the difficulty this sector has in defending itself and making concrete demands is legendary.

So, what I'm saying is that it might be a good idea to put it about that getting a job in an industry which has the potential to "hold the country to ransom" is a good idea. The logical extension of this idea of ***targetting industries that we think are important to the class struggle*** is also targetting areas of the *world* in which class struggle is escalating, S.E. Asia, or Brazil, for example. Getting a job as a car worker in S. Korea might be a bit too difficult to achieve though - let's not go to extremes!

The above suggestions are *not* born out of any "Lord high and mighty", misplaced moral highground, "I'm better than you because I was born in a council estate and the cops once looked at us", type of self-justifying whingebaggery. Neither am I jealous of anyone. I'm not advocating any sort of "immersion" in "working class culture", to the extent where you pick what you think is an absolutely true and honest working class lifestyle and try to live it. I'm **just** saying that maybe we should try getting jobs in industries that we think are most important to the class struggle.

I might also be accused of "workerism". If people want to justify their non-acceptance of the above text by labelling it "workerist" then so be it. For me it will only prove that these people have little understanding of the class struggle and its essential role in our future liberation.

"*The organization of insurgent workers - the only revolutionary organization needed henceforward - must be the work of the insurgent workers themselves.*" R. Vaneigem.

Further reading:
Postie article in issue 20 of *Subversion*.
All previous stuff on *class* in *Subversion*.
Communist Headache, especially Volume 5, available for large SAE from C. H., c/o ATX, PO Box 298, Sheffield S10 1YU.

Some comments

1. Although some members of the group have disagreements of a serious nature with the article, nonetheless we feel that it is a useful starting point for a debate.

2. We all feel that revolutionaries should seriously consider all the implications of a job before taking it. It is not enough to merely state that we need the money. However, we are not all sure what makes a particular sector a key one or not. This changes as the years go by. Further, once you get trapped in a job, and have made decisions to raise families or get sucked into the housebuying trap, for example, it becomes difficult to move from one job to another. Undoubtedly there are other reasons which make changing jobs difficult.

3. We feel that a revolutionary group should represent all sectors of the working class. At the moment, when groups are small, it is inevitable that they reflect a very small cross-section of the class. Should they ever get bigger, we would hope that they would not be restricted to just blue-collar workers and would be horrified if they were only made up of post-university types in white-collar jobs.

letters

Dear Subversion,

Regards the JSA and all that, here are a few points I would like to add.

Claimants are not the same thing as workers who are unemployed, and not all claimants are necessarily working class. To the contrary, in areas like Brighton or London quite a large number of claimants are middle class. Claimants do not struggle they just make claims, just like commuters do not struggle they just commute and TV viewers do not struggle they just consume TV. It is proletarians who struggle (in the social revolutionary sense of the word struggle). The term "claimant", like "commuter" or "TV viewer", is a term that integrates individuals into a capitalist citizen role under the system while concealing class differences and contradictions. It is unemployed proletarians we should be interested in rather than "claimants".

Also, to focus primarily on the JSA is in practise a nationalistic approach, even if this is not consciously intentional. It delineates struggle around the specific technicalities of the national bureaucracy only. Maybe this has to do with a continuing patriotic sentimental attachment to the british imperial welfare state. This immediately cuts the struggle up and undermines the possibilities for internationalism. The JSA doesn't necessarily mean a thing to unemployed proletarians in Los Angeles or Paris or Johannesburg or Seoul or Mexico City. But things like casualisation and workfare and prison labour are immediately international things for proletarians in many parts of the world. Why therefore an insistence on focussing so heavily on "claimant" issues and the "JSA" by people like groundswell and brighton autonomists?

If unemployed workers are to coalesce and fuse together with other workers in struggle, it is a thousand times more important for them to do so with workers like the dockers and their community or striking transport workers or prison work strikers than to waste time with the complete red herring and diversion of linking claimants to civil servants. Indeed the process of subordinating the struggles of unemployed proletarians to "claimant" activism and campaigns and then subordinating these campaigns in a verticalist and corporatist way to the narrow sectionalist demands of their immediate supervisors in the bureaucracy's chain of command (dole officers) is the surest way of keeping unemployed proletarians isolated and weak.

Yours for social revolt, P (Reading)

Reply

We are not sure about P's use of the term "middle class", which is often used to describe people who are simply white collar workers. Most "claimants" are people who would ordinarily have no access to the means of existence except through selling their labour power for a wage or salary, which defines them as working class at least in economic terms, if not in a revolutonary sense. Workers, waged or unwaged, need to go beyond the categories of their job, or identification as "claimants" or "consumers", to identify as a class with common interests against the whole capitalist system. But this is not just a matter of language. It is something that can only be forged through practical struggle.

Many groups may call themselves "anti-JSA", since this is what spurred the present round of resistance, but this doesn't automatically restrict them to a narrow (potentially reformist) outlook. Some of the groups, including many involved in the Groundswell network, have recognised their common interests with, for example, the French unemployed workers who recently occupied "dole" offices in France, or the Liverpool dockers fighting casualisation. In this last instance they have made useful contacts and engaged in joint acivity.

We in Subversion would not suggest that any section of the working class should "subordinate" its struggle to the struggle of any other section. We support attempts by unemployed workers and dole office workers to fight together where this is practical, but agree that it is important not to prioritise this over linking with other workers in struggle.

letters *continued*

Starting here and continuing over the next three pages we are publishing an exchange of letters with a member of London Class War, on the subject of our opposition to "national liberation" movements and the IRA in particular.

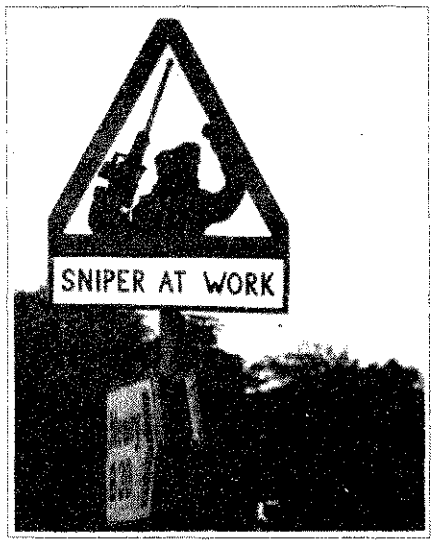
Open Letter To Subversion

Subversion: you can't tell the difference between tactical interventions in the working class i.e. the Class War paper, & our political beliefs. You also try to grossly simplify a really complicated situation, & never attempt to see any positive actions (in e.g. the IRA) because this upsets your ideological purity. You also never comment on loyalism & its loyalty to the British capitalist state. For example during the recent wave of riots loyalist mobs were attacking working class catholic areas with UVF gunmen for safety. The word got back to the boys (IRA) & out came the rifles & the loyalist mob was taken out of the area. The IRA recently historically armed because of this very reason in the late 1960s. So, we see that the working class are at least part of the IRA & also call on it for support in certain situations. What would Subversion suggest doing in the situation above on the streets of Belfast? Call the IRA "murdering scum" like you have before? Excuse me while I laugh.

Not being personally clued up on the nature of the entire republican movement I dare say there may be some "bourgeois nationalists" in it, but the ruling classes will split in any revolutionary situation. The IRA is a broad church (a bit like Class War) & it is unrealistic to condemn it or write off the militants within it as you do. At its core Class War supports "independent action by the working class for its own, independent class interests" but also realises that social life is complicated & that interventions must be made on a realistic basis. We do not support counter revolutionaries ever. What we do support is working class people defending themselves & their communities by whatever means they see fit & realisable, & offer conditional support to working class people in struggle everywhere. "Cool" is a euphemism for "conditional support", & we don't print stuff like you write because it has no relevance to people's daily lives in war torn Belfast. In an individual capacity, DC (a member of London Class War)

Subversion Reply

1) If you say something for "tactical" reasons that is not what you actually believe, then this is lying to the working class, the sort of thing we expect from Trots and Stalinists and is absolutely unacceptable for revolutionaries.



2) It doesn't add anything to the debate to accuse us of "ideological purity" simply because we disagree about something, or because we think an issue is more crucial than you do. For instance, if there was a radical organisation around that believed in supporting the British Army (or maybe had some people who supported it and some who didn't) you would condemn such a view without hesitation, as we would. You would not be impressed by the argument that this was a tactical question, and that you should abandon your "ideological purity".

In Subversion, we firmly believe that the IRA is every bit as reactionary as the British State and its army. We see no difference in supporting either of them. It's just that one of them has the support of the Left for its anti-working class programme. This is no different from supporting the Bolsheviks against Kerensky, or Labour against the Tories.

This is the crucial question that we disagree on, and if we are right, then this is clearly a *major issue* dividing a revolutionary position from a counter-revolutionary one - not a question of "obscure pedantry" or "ideological purity", so you can't logically accuse us of that as part of your argument, only as part of your conclusion, which you have to establish beforehand by *concrete argument.*

3) We don't write about the Loyalists for the same reason we don't write about the Tories - our readership is highly unlikely to include closet Tories or Loyalists, and we don't want to waste time preaching to the converted. Our readership does, however, include some people who are at least partially sympathetic to Labour, and to Irish Republicanism, so these are important issues to tackle.

4) In a situation of wholesale sectarian division like Northern Ireland, working-class people will often in desperation find themselves forced to turn to the paramilitary power of "their" community for self-defence - this is just as true of Protestant workers relying on Loyalist paramilitaries as it is of Catholics relying on Republican ones, so in itself this is not an argument that the IRA is different from the UVF etc. Similarly, most working class people in Britain, when faced with anti-social attacks by e.g. burglars, muggers or rapists, would turn to the Police for (the vain hope of) protection. In all of these cases it is the apparent absence of an alternative that makes people seek help from those quarters - but none of this means that those bodies are not anti-working class.

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5) The working class is most certainly not "part of the IRA". It is a wholly bourgeois organisation. It is NOT a "broad church". The fact that members may come from a working class background does not change this, otherwise we would have to say that at least some fascist organisations, not to mention the Armed Forces of many countries, were working class organisations!

What determines the class nature of any organisation is its political nature, i.e. what its programme is, what it is striving for. The IRA, like all other national liberation movements in the world, aims at a capitalist society, differing from their enemies only in where the borders are going to be, or which faction of capitalism is going to be calling the shots in "their" territory.

6) The ruling classes will NOT split in a revolutionary situation. Far from it - it is in periods of class peace that factional differences within the ruling class have greater expression; when the capitalists feel their very existence is under threat, they will forget their internal quarrels and unite against the working class.

7) You say that although you support class action for class interests, life is "complicated" and we must be "realistic". Such talk is the age-old language of opportunism, behind which countless former revolutionaries have betrayed their class and ended up supporting the vilest, bloodiest reaction. You are on a slippery slope.

8) You say you don't ever support counter-revolutionaries and in the very next paragraph admit that you give "conditional support" to those vile capitalist scum, the "cool" FLN of Algeria.

You need to think about what it means to give "conditional support" to the kind of political movement which has oppressed and slaughtered members of our class in country after country around the world.

To conclude:

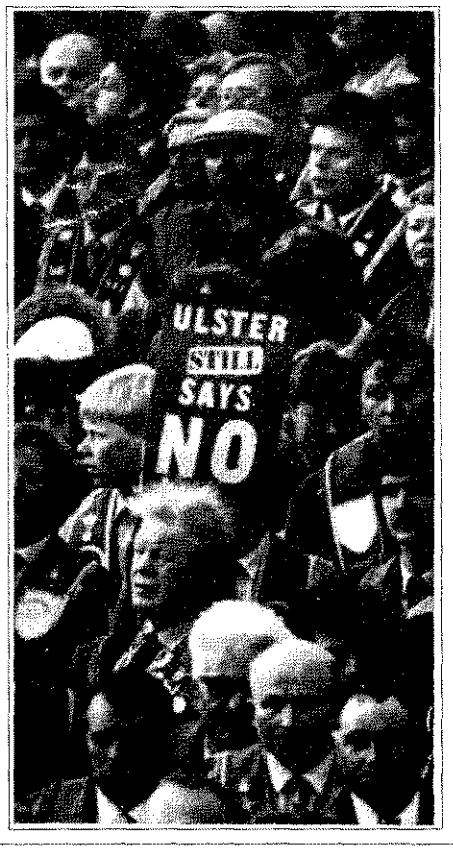
People like Mandela, Arafat, Ho Chi Minh, Gerry Adams, you name it, have been prevented by the particular circumstances in those countries from using electoral means to achieve their aims. So they have had to use military means - to achieve REFORMIST objectives.

You can see clearly enough that the opposition of parties such as Labour is merely Tweedledum aiming to replace Tweedledee. But you are easily suckered by parties and organisations whose ONLY difference is that they use guns and bombs to achieve similar ends.

Stop looking at their guns and take a look at their politics. Then you might wise up to the fact that these bastards are our class enemy.

Reply To Subversion

Hello again, thanks for the reply but you did not answer my other questions about prisons, crime & football hooliganism (not an abstract question



of support for all hooligans, but a look at the good things some hooligans do). To get to your points on Ireland. I used "IDEOLOGICAL PURITY" to summarise many points. I will develop these here below. When I said "tactical reasons" this meant that we do not believe in writing people off before finding out what the real conditions are like. You do not get into people's real worlds by being an outsider & that is what Subversion are doing. For you to say that we should only be "pure revolutionaries" puts you into a fantasy realm of separation from concrete struggles. & also means that we would have to question things like signing on because it implies support for the capitalist state!

You mentioned that the IRA have an "anti working class programme". Where is it & what does it consist of, or are you implying it (making it up)? If all members of the IRA would agree on one, I would be surprised. Also, do you really believe the IRA has a chance of establishing itself to become a government in a united Ireland (because this appears to be the logic of your position). Given the huge dominance of the British state this appears unlikely unless in a period of a highly intensified class struggle in England, Scotland & Wales we can force the ruling class with its imperialist mind set to get out of Ireland. If so, I would imagine that revolutionary fervour would have gripped the Irish population so it would not tolerate authoritarian government (or any government).

A revolutionary position recognises the legacy of 300 years of British imperialism & the necessity of entering into debate with the oppressed. Our intervention is designed to find out what are the possibilities given the historical reality of imperialist oppression. You still refuse to talk about loyalism & its scabby loyalty to the British capitalist state. What a perverse logic you have. You assume your readers like the IRA (god knows why given your record), & you refuse to talk about the transplanted loyalists & their political beliefs & allegiances.

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So we have it complete. You've no strategy & no full political discussion (& possibly indirectly a hatred of working class Catholics). By not looking at the British capitalist state's imperialist history YOU CAN SAFELY ignore loyalism's allegiance to the anti working class (Catholic) ideology of the British state. You do not distinguish between what sort of actions are the ones we would support in response to the violence by the British state. I find your emotive language to be amusing because you are obviously would be intellectuals with elitist views who have found themselves a niche. From your safe little homes you deny 300 years of Imperialist history, intervention or research into the resistance in the North of Ireland. What's more, YOU are not interested.

If Germany had won World War 2 & we were subject to imperialist occupation, & we had managed to get a huge bomb to go off in the financial heart of Berlin. Would you be happy? I know I would. I know it is not working class self activity on a mass scale, but imperialist occupations do create exceptional situations. WHAT ARE the actions you would support against the next example of British Imperialist aggressions that always lead to working class catholic deaths or injury? OR DO YOU DENY THE OPPRESSED THE RIGHT TO RESIST? It is not that we are gun worshippers, but it is the concrete actions of the working class to Imperialist aggression on a mass level from which we draw our respect for these people e.g. Free Derry, & the widespread rioting this year. Now you have no respect & do not want to consider the concrete reality of life in the North of Ireland. What you present is a picture of "IRA Scum" in an abstract, ahistorical (without history) manner. Quite like that presented by the British media, & this is not a Marxist or Anarchist position (so who are you?).

In answering your point 5 you say that

"the class nature of any organisation is its political nature". However, you have only to look at a a lot of "revolutionary groups" to see that this is not true. Middle class people who are in a "revolutionary working class organisation" have been one of the greatest barriers to revolution because REAL working class people can see them to be the fraud they are. Therefore it is the class composition of the organisation, plus its political programme which determines the class nature of any organisation. I happen to recognise that working class people make a lot of ideological choices. Unfortunately, a lot join the police, or are born into loyalism, or form many armies around the world. But this does not alter the fact that continued allegiance to the British capitalist state (or any state) makes them the enemy of the revolutionary working class in whichever country. It is time that a lot of people realised that working class people carry with them a lot of ideological beliefs which inform the decisions they make. Often you have only got to look at your own family to see that this is true. The loyalist working class have chosen to ensure their relative economic dominance by continued allegiance to the British state, a bit like scabbing.

Our "conditional support" does not mean we support the slaughtering of our class & it's crass ignorance & stupidity to assert that it does. Generally, "cool" as a word meaning "conditional support" means we respect the initiatives taken towards self management & violent resistance e.g. to the Imperialist capitalist British state (or any other state). Mainly by the people, & not their political leadership. This is not "opportunistic", but is designed to discover what is the real meaning in real conditions for the people concerned & what is the potential for revolution. This is the real strategy of liberation. What you are advocating is a type of ultra left imperialism whereby you indirectly end up supporting the British state, it is Subversion who are on the slippery slope.

DC (London Class War)

Subversion Reply

1) The phrase "pure revolutionaries" is yours, not ours. We DO NOT believe in separating ourselves from concrete struggles, but we support ONLY the concrete struggles of the working class, fighting for working class interests. The IRA is a capitalist force fighting to maintain the slavery of our class under new bosses. What you are doing is supporting an anti-working class proto-state in the name of being "tactical" - this just underlines the points we made about opportunism in the first reply.

2) Sinn Fein published their programme (Eire Nua) long ago. Besides, even if you haven't read it, you can't seriously doubt that the Republican Movement is nationalist. It hardly matters if they disagree about this or that detail. So do Labour, or the Tories, about their own programmes. Your problem is that you don't think nationalism per se is counter-revolutionary.

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3) As to whether the IRA has a chance of coming to power, this is indeed extremely unlikely, but so what? After all, we agree that Fascism should be opposed even though Fascist groups in Britain have even less chance of ever coming to power. The point about revolutionary fervour preventing an authoritarian government coming to power is clearly not true, because there have been many "revolutions" of the sort dominated by nationalist ideas such as the IRA's and authoritarian "revolutionary" governments are the norm as a result. Even more radical upsurges, involving a major element of independent class struggle, such as the Russian Revolution, give little grounds for complaisancy. The Bolshevik party was far more plausible in its radicalness than the Republican Movement (which is why even many Anarchists joined it during the revolution) and yet we all know that Lenin's government created a brutal state-capitalist regime almost unrivalled in its savagery.

4)There's little to add about Loyalism except that you yourself are an example of one of our readers who is soft on Republicanism - we have yet to see any evidence of Loyalist sympathisers among our readership. As to the point about us hating working class Catholics (a contemptible remark) it is perhaps worth pointing out that I myself, the author of these two responses plus our original Open Letter, am a working-class, part-Irish, Catholic (by upbringing).

5) The points about Germany are a dead giveaway. The logic of one form of nationalism does indeed lead onto other forms! You admit that if Germany had won the war you would support Britain! For the record, no we most certainly WOULD NOT support British bombing of Germany, regardless of whether the German ruling class dominated Britain. We repeat: we ONLY support struggles of the working class (regardless of country) against the ruling class (regardless of country).

6) When you "define" the Marxist and Anarchist positions and say "who are you?" you give a good illustration of why we disdain labels. They encourage people to put everyone in neat categories or boxes that can be dismissed without actually listening to what they are really saying. We have never claimed to be Marxist or Anarchist, and if that means people find it harder to put a neat label on us, tough. (For a good summary of what in Subversion's view distinguishes revolutionaries from the Left (in all its varieties), see the article "The Revolutionary Alternative to Left-Wing Politics" in *Subversion* 16).

7) You are right that the class composition of an organisation as well as its political programme determine its class nature, but we might disagree about who is middle-class and who is working class (see correspondance on this issue in previous issues of Subversion). But who are these middle class people in revolutionary organisations who you say have been such a barrier to revolution? If you're referring to Trot groups, they are in our view capitalist organisations (with a state-capitalist programme).

8) You then repeat the same points about "conditional support", contradicting yourself by saying a) you don't support the slaughtering of our class, and b) "...'cool' as a word meaning 'conditional support' means we respect the initiatives taken towards self management & violent resistance to [capitalist states]. Mainly [!] by the people, & not their political leadership." This correspondance was started by Class War's use of the word "cool" to describe the FLN of Algeria. Their "initiative towards self-management" etc. was to crush the working class and create a new capitalist regime (which, to my knowledge, even the most gullible of Trots have never called a "workers' state"!). It is this casual blurring of the line between struggles of the working class and the actions of bourgeois states or proto-states (such as all national liberation movements) that cause us to describe Class War as opportunist.

9) Your final point about ultra left imperialism is not totally clear, but if you mean that to fail to support one side in a war necessarily means to support the other side, then this surely applies in all wars. Is this not tantamount to saying that the only choices that exist are between this group of capitalists and that group, with us workers as nothing more than cannon-fodder on one side or another? Is this not an utter denial of the existence of a class, the working class, with its own independent interests separate from those of the capitalist class? For all that they may sometimes make war on each other with the utmost savagery, our rulers' interests are fundamentally and diametrically opposed to ours. We should never abandon our class interest by siding with any of our enemies. And for all that they make war on each other, the capitalists are in every country united in support of their class interest, which they pursue when necessary with single-minded fervour. We should be as single-minded in support of ours!

Surfversion

You can find our postal address on page 1. The email address given in previous issues of Subversion is no longer in use. To contact us by email now, send your message to:

knightrose@geocities.com

You can also check out Subversion's very own site on the internet at:
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/8195

Subversion Recommended Reading

In *Subversion* 17 we reviewed a book about the struggles and ideas of the anarchist-communists in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s and mentioned a pamphlet on "The Anarchist Movement in Japan" written by the book's author John Crump.

This pamphlet has now been published by our comrades in the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF). Many fascinating photographs and illustrations have been added to the text, such as a very graphic cartoon from 1923 captioned "The anarchist farmer is blowing snot at the landlord"!

The pamphlet costs £1.00 from the ACF c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. Definitely worth getting hold of a copy.

The ACF's quarterly journal *Organise!* is available from the same address.

We also recommend:

Wildcat
Write to: BM Cat, London WC1N 3XX (don't mention Wildcat on the envelope)

Aufheben
c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

Aut-op-sy is an autonomist/communist discussion list on the internet. To subscribe, send the message "subscribe aut-op-sy" to majordomo@lists.village.virginia.edu

To contact *The Poor, The Bad And The Angry* (whose article 'Our Antipolitics' is published on the back page) use this address only: PO Box 3305, Oakland, CA 94609, USA. Ask for the publication by name on a separate note inside the envelope. There is a Poor Bad & Angry website at: http://www.webcom.com/maxang/

The Poor, The Bad and The Angry

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No national liberation movement has ever led to the rise of a society without exploitation; all regimes produced by "people's wars" and "wars of national liberation" have been and always will be the voluntary or involuntary lackeys [agents] of imperialism and the world market against the needs of the local working classes and indigenous people. A Turkish proverb says it best: "When the axe came into the forest, the trees said: the handle is one of us." Any support for national liberation movements or for nationalism in any form is support for the murder and exploitation of the poor by capital. The FMLN, IRA, PLO, ANC, etc. are capitalist and counter-revolutionary organizations having more in common with the mafia than with the armed actions of an authentic revolutionary movement.

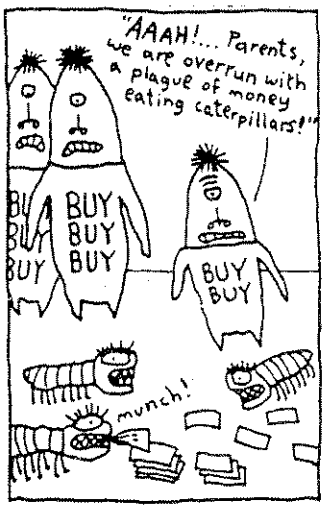
Throughout the 20th century, labour unions have served capitalism both as labour merchandizing outfits and as police organizations, specifically against the struggles of unionized workers and more generally against the working class and poor as a whole. As 20th century states have become more frequently compelled to intervene in the economy, labour unions, regardless of ideology or the subjective intentions of their members, have tended to become mechanisms of the capitalist state. Working class people have to fight outside of and against all unions and unionist ideologies.

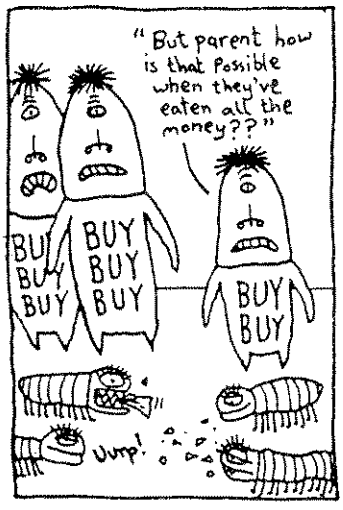
The abolition of capitalism has nothing in common with democracy, nationalization of major industries, power in the hands of leftists or workers' self-management of the economy. The goal of an authentic, anti-statist communist movement is the abolition of wage labour, the eradication of all forms of market relations, the destruction of all states and national borders, and in necessary unity with this negation, the emergence of new social relations where poverty and unnecessary toil are abolished and work no longer rules social life.

In spite of their flaws and limits, the defeated social revolutions of the 20th century, and the mass collective violence of the poor in revolt from Los Angeles to Kurdistan, are the embryonic expression of the future anti-statist and unyielding class dictatorship against capital worldwide: what must become a consciously communist movement without frontiers or compromises, a new world trying to come alive. Communist revolution, and class struggles that tend towards communism, imply the despotism of the exploited against exploitation and exploiters, the violence of the poor against their violation by poverty.

For us, communism is a real and living movement that tends towards the abolition of existing conditions. The destruction of commodity relations and the birth of authentic human community aren't simply waiting to be brought about as a series of measures consciously enacted "The Day After the Revolution." These communist urges live today as a repressed impulse in collective struggles, and in many small gestures and attitudes. We fight for this. We seek companions in this effort.

THE CONSUMERS





The cartoon above, and the strip used on page 5-6 to illustrate the Green Communism article, are from the *excellent* cartoon book called **The Consumers** by Paul Petard. Write to F19, 30 Silver Street, Reading, RG1.

The Poor, The Bad & The Angry

The following article was written by the publishers of a magazine called *The Poor, The Bad And The Angry*. We are reproducing it in Subversion because it develops at greater length some of the points we express in our own set of basic principles (see 'What We Stand For'on page 1). Details of how to contact *The Poor, The Bad And The Angry* are given in the 'Recommended Reading' column on page 16.

We live on a planet devastated by social relations based on money and market exchange. Regardless of the rhetorical or physical violence they offer one another in their fight for power, regardless of leftist or populist verbiage, every government and government-to-be, every politician and police force on this planet exists to defend and maintain this system. Different politicians and parties propose different management strategies for capital, but regardless of their jargon Yeltsin and Mandela, Time-Warner and MTV, Fidel Castro, the ecology lobby and the most bedraggled college campus socialist groups are all in agreement on this: the world of wage labour is to be maintained at any cost, and what capitalism is is never to be identified in clinically specific, clear terms. Seemingly normal and inevitable facts - that an individual has nothing but her or his labour power, that they must sell it to an enterprise to be able to live, that everything exists to be bought or sold, that social relations revolve around money and commodity exchange - are the result of a long and violent process.

The world we live in is the world of capitalism. Imposed and maintained by terror, mystification and inertia, capitalism is the historically specific form of class society based on the exploitation of human labour power as a commodity, on wage labour, money, and commodity production. Modern capitalism, in its free market and its statist forms, is a totalitarian system that has conquered the world, devastating human life and the planetary environment in an ever accelerating manner. But capitalism has also given rise to social forces that could bring about the revolutionary destruction of this system, and the rise of a new way of life; chief among them the mass collective actions of proletarians fighting against the conditions of their exploitation and impoverishment.

The class struggle is the primary liberatory force of our time. By class struggle, we mean not only the fight of wage-earners against their employers. The class war includes all the struggles of exploited and dispossessed people all over the world against their conditions of exploitation and impoverishment, wage-earning and unwaged, urban and rural, low-paid and high-paid. It encompasses our fights against racism, sexism, and homophobia, but not as separate reformist issues. Class warfare involves both fights for concessions from capital and the fight for our own power outside of and against capitalist social relations.

So-called Socialist and Communist parties, social democracy, Leninism and all its mutant children, are the left wing of capitalism's political ensemble/ideological spectrum. Any and all political groupings that aren't openly and explicitly committed to the fight against work and wage labour are counter-subversive efforts. We are against any cooperation or collaboration with leftist parties and groups.

National liberation movements are movements in which the exploited are marshalled to fight and die for the political ambitions of the local bourgeoisie or a substitute bourgeoisie of guerrilla chieftains or intellectuals.

(continued on page 16)