

Subversion

NUMBER 10



Redistribution of wealth in Los Angeles.

**ALSO IN
THIS
ISSUE;**

**FASCISM
AND ANTI-
FASCISM**

**AUTO
WORKERS
IN USA**

**CLASS
STRUGGLE
IN MALAWI
AND MORE!**

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN L.A.

DEPT 10, 1 NEWTON ST,
MANCHESTER M1 1HW

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

When Capitalism is confronted by events which rupture the smooth facade of its peaceful order (the peace of slavery) and challenge the grip of its talons on our bodies and on our minds, it responds in a practised manner.

Just as an act of Class rebellion has two parts - both the physical fight itself and the salutary effect which that has on the consciousness of other proletarians - so is the retaliatory strike of our rulers also twofold.

Firstly, it uses physical force against acts of insurrection, whether they be strikes, riots or anything else. And secondly, the class nature of these struggles - these appeals in physical form for solidarity from the rest of the working class - are countered by lies, lies and more lies from the ruling class.

The recent riot in Los Angeles, with its echo in many other U.S. cities, illustrates this well.

RACE RIOTS - CRIME SPREE

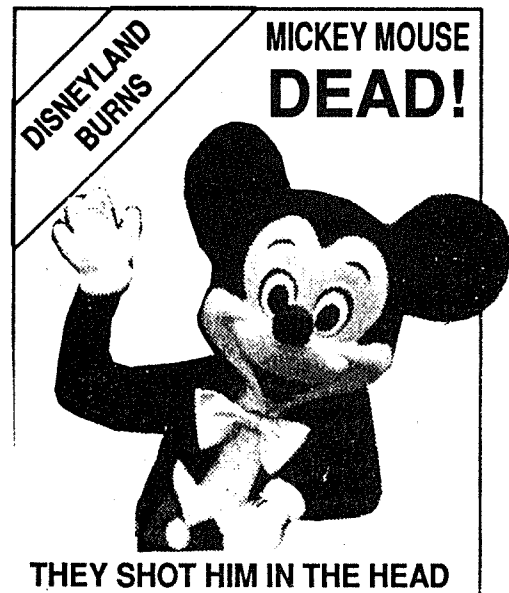
First we are told that it was a race riot, blacks attacking whites etc. Then we are shown the acts of "criminals" - racial assaults and looting of stores blending together in the image. And finally we are told it was the revolt of an "underclass" which has been left out of the prosperity enjoyed by "most Americans". Lies, lies and more lies.

What started on the night of Wednesday 29 April was an explosion of class anger such as happens all too rarely. The acquittal of a bunch of racist pigs of a crime which had been recorded for all the world to see was merely the spark for a generalised class action by working class people of all colours. Starting with the attack on the police station and

proceeding to the looting of everything from food and other basic necessities to things such as televisions, our class fought back against the system which oppresses it.

Workers everywhere should applaud this resistance.

However, this "carnival of the oppressed" had a goodly share of gatecrashers.



BLOODS, CRIPS AND OTHER SCUM

Riots, whatever their cause, often attract anti-social elements who swarm in like flies to a plate of uncovered food. The two major drug gangs, the Bloods and the Crips, have always been just as much an enemy of working class interests as the Police - their endless bloody conflict has taken vast numbers of lives, both their own members and innocent bystanders.

In the L.A. riot, these murderous gangs declared a truce, so they could devote their energies to participating in the riot. Not, of course, from a working class standpoint, but from an ethnic (anti-white and anti-Korean)

and from a business standpoint - they have put forward a joint programme of reconstruction of their neighbourhoods, involving a partnership between themselves, the state and business interests. If you didn't know already know it, this must convince you that the gangs are just another part of Capitalism - if anything came of these plans, the drug gangs would simply be an extra tier of the state machine. *The participation of these gangs in the riot was the participation of a faction of Capitalism fighting for its own sectional interests.*

What the presence of the gangs shows, together with that of other anti-social elements including a definite racist element (which overlaps with the gang element), both against whites and against Koreans, is this: rather than ONE riot, there were really TWO riots which took place simultaneously - the class riot and the "anti-social riot / pro-capitalist riot" which was parasitical upon it.

ELEMENTARY

A similar confusion, a similar distinction between positive and negative elements exists in many social movements - a typical strike, for instance, will be imbued with Trade Union ideas which merely aim to reform Capitalism. An example is the 1984-85 Miners' Strike. Central to the N.U.M.'s strategy was the "Plan for Coal" which was an alternative way of running Capitalism "in the Miners' interest". This reactionary nonsense existed alongside a genuine class-struggle element.

THE CRUCIAL DISTINCTION

For revolutionaries it is CRUCIAL to differentiate between the class element and the reactionary element in all such cases, despite the capitalist media, both left and right, which will always try to merge the two parts into a single "phenomenon". The presence of counter-revolutionary, pro-capitalist organisations (whether the Bloods, the Crips or the N.U.M.) alongside workers engaged in class struggle, and indeed the presence of confused ideas in the minds of many of the workers involved, must not be allowed to muddy the issue. Revolutionaries take a clear, uncompromising stance - we support ONLY

the class element and oppose the reactionary element.

Aside from the attempts of the media to clothe the L.A. class rebellion in the anti-social garb of its "parasite-riot", they also tried the other tack of using the "underclass" theory.

WE'RE ALL MIDDLE CLASS NOW

According to this, the bulk of working class people are not, in fact, working class at all but middle class. Below the middle class is a small, impoverished, chronically unemployed class called the underclass. They it was who were responsible for the riot, so even if it was a class rebellion, the story goes, it has nothing to do with most workers, who are middle class in any case.

This theory is of course reactionary garbage. The working class is a single class united by its position in society of possessing nothing but its ability to work. Some workers may earn more than others but they are still powerless in any real sense - power is exclusively in the hands of the owners of society's wealth, the controllers of the state machine, namely, the capitalist class.

This divisive nonsense about an underclass is peddled not only by the capitalist mainstream but by the Left - this is but one example of the way the Left acts in practise as just another part of Capitalism.

95 MILES FROM L.A.

We said a couple of sentences ago that the working class is powerless. This is true in everyday life, but there is one situation in which workers DO have power - when they engage in class struggle.

A riot is not a revolution. Nor, for that matter, is a strike. We have a long way to go, but the Future develops out of the Present, and great struggles develop out of small ones. The L.A. riot is one of a number of signs of increasing class struggle from around the world in recent months. Let us take heart from it.

*I'd be safe and warm if I was in L.A.
California dreaming on such a winter's day*

ONE WORLD - ONE CRISIS

During the election, the opposition parties made great play of the claim that the current "recession" is a home grown thing.

The left wing press likes to repeat this message. To read their pages, you would believe that the unemployment and misery in Britain today is all the fault of the Tories in general and Thatcher and now Major in particular. Any look at the real world shows that this is just not true. All over the world capitalism is in crisis. All over the world the threat of recession is becoming a reality. The problem will not simply go away by choosing one lot of "good leaders" to replace the lot in power now.

As things get worse, we are told we must be more productive, that we must accept greater unemployment and cuts in public spending on health, welfare and education. Then we are told things will get better. This line has been spouted by politicians for at least the past twenty years. But could things get better? What is happening in other parts of the world? The example of the USA is a good one. The USA is the richest nation on Earth. It has the highest rate of productivity. Yet there too, workers are being told to tighten their belts, to make sacrifices in the "national interest", to make cuts today to get "jam tomorrow". The working class in the USA is under a threefold offensive. It is being attacked by a combination of employers, state and unions.

AUTO WORKERS IN THE USA

Auto workers in the USA are at the forefront of the class struggle once again. The automobile industry is facing heavy competition from Japan and other Far Eastern manufacturers. The bosses want to restructure the industry to make it more

competitive. They have launched an offensive against auto workers to cut wages and worsen working conditions.

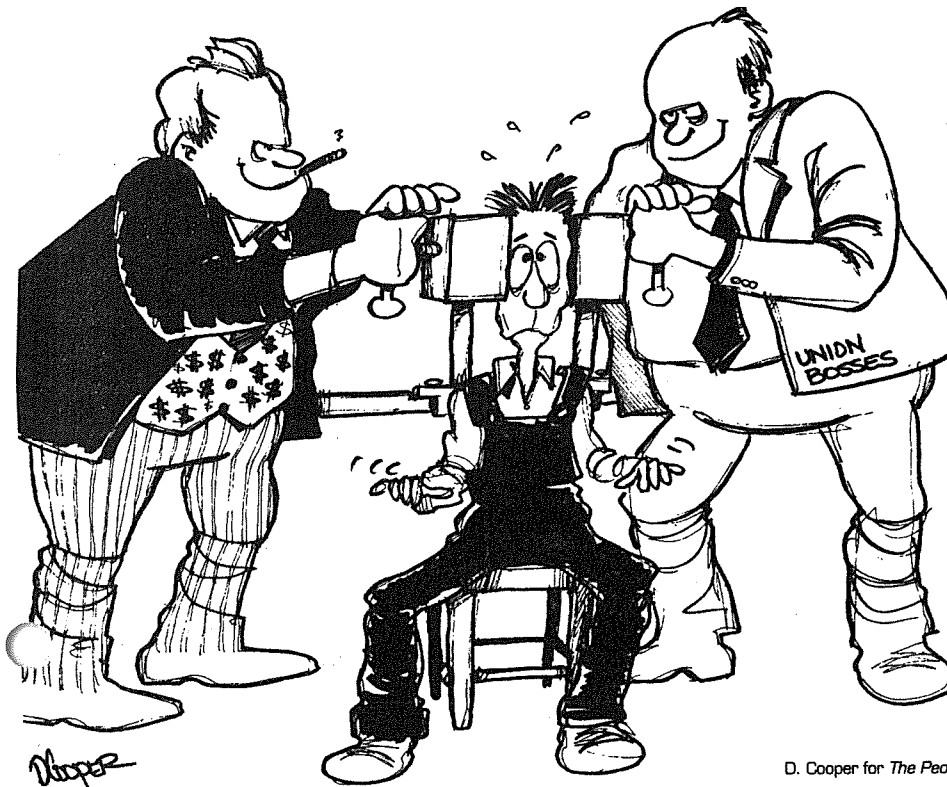
The heavy equipment giant Caterpillar Inc. was the centre of a long strike, which ended on April 15th.

The strike began last November after Caterpillar demanded wage and benefit cuts which averaged \$3.50 an hour. The United Auto Workers (the main car workers union) responded by calling a limited strike at just two factories, with workers at those two plants voting 95% in favour of taking strike action.

Caterpillar retaliated by locking out 5,600 workers at two more plants. The company had hoped that locking them out would turn them against the strikers. When the opposite happened, Caterpillar quickly sent them back to work.

Such was the resentment against the company that this measure caused that the two plants joined the strike and were soon followed by another. By the beginning of April, 12,600 workers were on strike against the company.

All of Caterpillar's UAW workers were on strike by the beginning of April with the exception of 3,400 at two plants where the union had signed no-strike deals. Rather than escalate the action, the UAW preferred to insist that these workers did not join the strike. So the union in fact limited the strike's effectiveness, allowed Caterpillar to maintain production and weather out the strike. One official of General Motors (one of the 'Big Three' auto producers) was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* as saying "We're quietly cheering for Caterpillar".



The unions, meanwhile acted to limit solidarity. The UAW kept them isolated even from other Caterpillar workers and the Teamsters refused to order their members not to cross picket lines.

On April 1st, Caterpillar announced that it would begin hiring permanent replacements for workers who did not desert the strike and return to work by April 6th.

Despite this threat *and the fact that Caterpillar were inundated with calls from potential scabs*, less than 600 workers returned to work by the company's deadline. The other 13,000 were determined to continue, knowing what a return to work would mean in terms of future working conditions and wages. Meanwhile other groups of workers were beginning to show their solidarity. (See insert)

The UAW's response was to order its members back to work on April 15th. It did this on the basis of an offer made by the company three weeks earlier which strikers had already rejected. The union was making it clear that it had only been in the fight to save duespayers. As soon as the fight risked losing these, it ordered members back to work. As one striking Caterpillar worker said, "The union has saved itself at the expense of the workers."

Meanwhile General Motors have announced that they plan to close 21 plants and axe 74,000 workers by 1995. They also said that they would not announce which plants it was closing until later. They did this in the attempt to start a bidding war where each union branch tries to offer greater concessions - supposedly in an effort to save its members' jobs.

The UAW has done nothing to stop this process. As *Business Week* recently put it, after GM made their announcement, union branches "at underused plants scrambled to offer concessions".

In February the UAW branch in Ypsilanti, Michigan took part in a rally. The purpose of the rally was to try to persuade General Motors to close down its plant in Arlington, Texas, and consolidate production of its large rear-wheel

drive cars at the Willow Run plant in Ypsilanti!

This rally was well attended by UAW local officials. Not one word was said in criticism of GM. Not one word was said about the other 71,000 jobs that stood to go in addition to the ones in the Willow Run/Arlington squabble. Not one speaker suggested that the Arlington and Willow Run workers would be better off acting together!

In the event GM announced that Willow Run would be one of the plants to close. According to *Business Week*, "Arlington workers agreed to discuss working three shifts instead of two, while Ypsilanti workers didn't".

Clearly the way forward for workers at Caterpillar, GM and the other auto workers is for them to unite and to fight together. Clearly their fight is the same. Both are fighting the efforts of the auto manufacturers to restructure their companies to screw still more profit out of their workforces. What the union is doing, and it is the same union in both cases, is to isolate workers from each other within the same firm, let alone across the companies. Once again they are showing that their

interests lie hand in glove with those of the employer. They see the fight as already lost and seek to maximise their opportunities to have a role in the new organisation of Caterpillar and GM.

PRODUCTIVITY

This effort at restructuring is taking place in what is already the most efficient capitalist nation in the world.

Between 1972 and 1990 output per hour of labour grew by 18.3 per cent. Yet average real weekly wages (wages adjusted to allow for the effects of inflation), dropped at least 17.6% during the same period. Effectively the bosses have screwed an extra month's wages out of the workers over this period.

During the 1980s the incomes of those getting more than \$1 million went up by 2,184%!

Greater productivity does not improve the economic condition for workers generally. All it means is more joblessness, lower wages and increased workplace injuries.

WELFARE CUTS

Faced with its massive budget deficits, the US state has had to try to cut spending. This it has done most effectively in the area of welfare. Last October in Michigan the state, with 437,000 unemployed, *completely eliminated* its general assistance welfare programme. Eighty thousand people were simply cut off from their sole or principal means of support.

In doing this, Michigan became the seventh state to get rid of its welfare payments to single adults. Others were set to follow, while still more have slashed benefits to starvation levels.

The People reports, "And general assistance welfare is hardly the only target. From the federal to the local level, governments are viciously slashing social programmes that the poorest and neediest segments of society depend on for survival. Cuts in programmes for the homeless, hungry children, the disabled, the mentally ill, elderly shut-ins, those without health insurance, and more, are

killing people - if not from actual starvation, then from the accumulated effects of prolonged malnutrition, exposure to the elements, untreated illnesses and other forms of neglect."

All this in the richest, most powerful country on Earth. The expression goes that when America sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold. We can only suspect that in the case of Britain it will be a case of double pneumonia.

NOTE: the information for this articles comes from **the People**, published in the USA by the Socialist Labor Party, 914 Industrial Avenue, Palo Alto, 94303, USA.

The following comes from **the People**. We have disagreements with it, but it describes the role of the UAW as scabs very graphically.

UAW Traitors

Rank-and-file auto workers attempting to organize a collection for striking Caterpillar workers while the strike was still on found their efforts blocked—and Caterpillar had nothing to do with it.

Rank-and-file members of UAW Local 110 in St. Louis, after trying for three months to get the local's officers to establish a food and money collection for the support of the striking Caterpillar workers, finally formed an ad hoc group to organize the effort.

Local and international bureaucrats, apparently concerned that the group was connected with the New Directions Movement, a caucus within the union seeking to oust the UAW's current administration, had collection tubs removed from factory gates, and had Chrysler tell one worker to stop collecting or face suspension. When he continued, Chrysler called police. International officials drafted a letter for the Caterpillar bargaining committee to sign, asking that "any support we receive should come through official UAW channels."

As it turns out, the ad hoc group wasn't even connected with New Directions, so the bureaucrats' scorning of solidarity with the Caterpillar workers stands revealed as not only treasonous but inept. Despite the threats and harassment, the ad hoc group succeeded in delivering \$1,900 and a pickup load of food to two Caterpillar locals.

THE MENACE OF ANTI-FASCISM

Going Fishing

The low level of workplace struggle in Britain over the last few years left the anti-poll tax movement as one of the few fishing grounds open to left wing groups. With the partial success of that movement and consequent decline in organised opposition to the Poll Tax, left groups have been cast adrift looking for new pools from which to recruit. It has proved a difficult search.

Anti-apartheid doesn't provide good campaign material since the ANC started playing footsie with the National Party. Other foreign adventures were considered a bit risky since 'liberation' movements generally began falling over themselves to court western politicians and bankers. A few esoteric groups have chanced their arm at reviving interest in support for Fidel Castro's Cuban dictatorship, but it isn't much of a crowd puller these days.

The general election campaign provided a brief respite from the left's desperate search, but now that is out of the way, the problem has returned.

In the absence of any new and exciting campaign material the left have fallen back on to some of their old tried and trusted formulae for conning workers into supporting them.

Last Time Round

The left played a significant part in the 30s and 40s in rallying support for "democratic" CAPITALISM against the forces of fascist CAPITALISM in Europe. 'Communist' parties and even trotskyists gained themselves

considerable credibility by attaching themselves to the coattails of various western governments whom they had previously dismissed as vile enemies of the working class. Even anarchists on the fringe of left politics came out of the cold and fell into line by supporting Republican capitalism in Spain against Franco's fascists.

"Play It Again Sam"

So today, thinks the left, if we shout loud enough about the new fascist menace in Europe and hark back to the horrors of World War Two, perhaps we can create a new 'anti-fascist' movement and round up all those footloose labourites and liberals reeling from another Tory election victory.

So that's exactly what they have done. Time energy and money have been diverted into various organisations and activities previously quite low on their list of priorities. Unfortunately for them, not only is it difficult persuading most workers that there really is a fascist menace, but competition for the footloose is so intense amongst these lefties that each has decided to set up their very own 'anti-fascist' or 'anti-racist' front. Incidentally this sectarian promotion of different groups, all supposedly fighting the same enemy, is in flat contradiction to the trotskyists oft repeated, if false theory, that fascism in the thirties made such headway only through the failure of all the left groups to create a genuine 'united front'

Disunited Fronts

To our knowledge there are at least five ostensibly national anti-fascist/anti-racist fronts

in Britain alongside dozens of other local alliances. Of the national groups some are straightforward extensions of one particular group. Militants **Youth against Racism** and the SWP's **Anti-Nazi league** are examples of these. There's the moderate **Anti-Racist Alliance** made up of Labourites and their hangers on. Smaller political groups like *Red Action* and the anarchist *DAM* have clubbed together in the more radical sounding **Anti Fascist Action**. The participants in AFA have made a virtue out of necessity, by proclaiming non-sectarian principles against the 'opportunism' of the likes of Militant and the SWP.

Them and Us

Well, you might say, this is just sour grapes on the part of an even smaller group like **Subversion**, who couldn't extend themselves to setting up their very own anti-fascist front in competition with the others or haven't the stomach for in-fighting in AFA. But **Subversion** is not in the business of trying to manufacture opposition in the absence of genuine working class struggle. Neither are we interested in recruiting on the basis of single issue politics.

Some Important Questions

Then again you might think we're being a bit unfair on the lefties motives or political reasoning. After all, even if it is accepted that the left's claims are a bit overblown, surely it's still true that for some workers even a tiny group of self-proclaimed fascists or their supporters can make life a misery? And isn't it true that the fascists on the continent are much stronger than here - shouldn't we be working together to stop that happening here?

And the Answers

Well, on the first point we agree that, for instance, if some bunch of fascist thugs is harassing black workers then they deserve a good beating and we should support those workers organising themselves to sort the fascists out, in whatever way we can. Such groups of self-organised workers should, wherever necessary, link up over as wide a geographical area as practicable. Of course in

any physical confrontation with fascists in this type of situation we don't stop to ask if the individual next to us is a member of the SWP or Red Action, but this shouldn't stop us from questioning the politics of such groups.

Historical Roots

On the second point, it is true that self-proclaimed fascist groups are stronger in some other European countries and that alongside these groups are much larger and more influential extreme right-wing organisations like the *National Front* in France which the working class needs to oppose.

Here we come to the 'heart of the matter', politically speaking. It is essential that we understand the emotive and non-historical use which the left makes of the term *fascist*. Fascism (or Nazism, and there were some important differences between the Italian and German variants of what is commonly described as Fascism in popular usage) was a very particular combination of nationalism, racism and state corporatism which the ruling class supported in Germany and Italy in a specific historical situation.

Other combinations of the same elements were found to be more useful elsewhere - Stalinism in Russia and Eastern Europe for instance. Yet stalinism was aligned with the so-called forces of 'democracy' against fascism! Furthermore, we would argue that it was 'democracy' and the democratic parties of capitalism in Germany who effectively paved the way for the rise of the Nazis to power, in particular through their political and physical attacks on the working class rebellion in central Europe between 1917 and 1920.

Democracy and Dictatorship

Capitalism as a system is neither naturally 'democratic' nor 'totalitarian' in its political forms. Whatever the political form, it is however, always a dictatorship of the capitalist class over the working class. The nation states of capitalism will at different times pass through a whole range of right wing 'democracies' and 'dictatorships' and left wing 'democracies' and 'dictatorships'. The

particular political form will depend on the perceived needs of the national ruling class to deal with their competitors abroad and their enemy at home- the working class. It is also at least arguable, that political 'democracies' have perpetuated as much violence against the world's workers - through wars, starvation, enforced poverty, ecological disasters, industrial 'accidents', civil repression, etc. - as have political 'dictatorships'.

Let us not forget such current or recent examples as the Gulf War, Serbia's 'ethnic cleansing', famine in Africa, Shoot to Kill and Bloody Sunday in Ireland, the Chernobyl and Bhopal disasters, to name just a few.

Back Home Again

So returning to Britain today, we can see that there is a huge difference between sorting out a bunch of local fascist thugs and building up a whole campaign focussed on some supposed national or international fascist threat.

The real enemy of all workers, black or white, at the present time are the everyday institutions of capitalism and the people who run them - the courts, police, jails, immigration office; the established political parties of capitalism, Labour, Tory, Liberal, SNP etc.; the media and the churches; AND right in the heart of the working class, the unions and the bureaucracy which runs them.

The State of Things Today

It's the state which enforces a rigorous policy of racism throughout society, especially in times of recession. (It's the Tories with the tacit support of Labour who have introduced the racist Asylum Bill not the fascists.)

It's the state through its police and army which tries to break our strikes and occupations.

It's the established political parties which seek (able assisted by the left) to channel our discontent into harmless parliamentary pursuits and dependence on leaders. It's the media which reinforces racist and anti-working class values. It's the churches that divide workers and preach subservience to the

system "on earth as in heaven". It's the unions who divide workers and divert our energies.

Left Fronts

Yet the left in their "Broad" fronts and alliances say 'fear the fascist menace vote Labour!' Instead of fighting the sham of capitalist democracy they either openly or covertly encourage participation in the system 'in order to keep the right wing and the fascists out' or just to minimise the fascist vote. This despite the fact that it is often workers' confused rejection of capitalist democracy which tempts them to support the fascists.

The Anti Racist Alliance seems to be made up of assorted left wing Labour Party types and various Black 'community leaders', all loyally working within the system, promoting reforms and offering advice to those in power. The last Manchester meeting we attended had as its honoured guest speaker a black community policeman from the USA, who was particularly strong on the benefits of working within the system.

Even the AFA, which many consider the best of a bad bunch for its members willingness to 'get stuck in' still trawls the polluted waters of the trade union bureaucracy for support and produces election leaflets with propaganda aimed only against tiny local fascist groups.

Right Wing Resurgence

That nasty fascist and extreme right wing groups are able to make any headway amongst workers today is a reflection of the depth of the economic crisis, the visibly worn out policies of the established parties of capitalism (including the so-called 'socialist' parties) to deal with it, and the disunity and demoralisation of the working class following the defeat of a wave of strikes and other struggles in the seventies and eighties.

Class Struggle

The reemergence of working class struggle and the increased unity and self-confidence across racial and other barriers which comes with it, cannot be artificially manufactured by small political groups through the medium of

campaign style politics.

Struggle will re-emerge. It always does. There are already at least some small signs of this which the media prefers to hide news of beneath a barrage of false debate over capitalist issues and the latest demoralising news of massacres in Yugoslavia etc. To have any chance of success, the struggle as it reemerges needs to know its enemies and not be diverted into capitalist battles between left and right, democratic or dictatorial, black or white etc.. We will not assist this process by promoting cross class alliances under the banner of anti-fascism

Fascism and Anti-Fascism by J Barrot. A classic critique of anti-fascism in the 30s and 40s. Available from **SUBVERSION**, price £1.50 inc postage and package. Expands on a number of the points in this article.

Malawi Workers Fight Back

During May there was an unprecedented wave of massive strikes and demonstrations in Malawi against poverty wages and conditions, little different in many workplaces from colonial times.

Tea and tobacco plantation workers were at the centre of the strike movement which spread to railway, sugar, clothing workers and others.

As far as we can tell this was an independent movement of the working class unmediated by capitalist opposition groups, although exiled Labour and 'pro-democracy' leaders were quick to try and capture the situation.

Police were used to disperse demonstrations and riots but the size and force of the movement caused Banda, the authoritarian head of state in Malawi, to try and open a dialogue and at least talk the language of concession.

Given the dire economic situation in Malawi it remains to be seen how far any concessions will go.

Green Racists

The following text comes from the journal **CARF**. We have serious disagreements with the politics of this journal, but believe our readers will find this very interesting.

The Greens, who used to be the only West German party in the 1980s whose programme included 'the right for every refugee to stay in Germany' and who were part of the struggles against deportations, voted at their 1991 party conference to give up their former policy. They claim that the increasing conflicts between the German population and more and more foreigners coming to live in Germany show the need for 'new' political solutions. Instead of using their resources to support the anti-racist movement, the Greens promote a reactionary immigration law – with quotas to be set by the state according to the needs of private capital for cheap labour – as a progressive step towards a peaceful multi-cultural German society.

A new consensus

A large number of trade unionists go along with the idea. The new political consensus between the ruling conservative party and the liberals, the opposition social democrats and the Greens is that something must be done about the burden of an increasing number of asylum-seekers.

While some Green politicians still oppose a constitutional change, Bjorn Engholm, the social democrat candidate who might replace Chancellor Kohl after the 1994 general elections, made the policy of his party quite clear. In interviews, he has admitted openly that he will not defend the German asylum law if a European-wide solution can be achieved. That there is nothing left of a liberal asylum law anyway – since the leading parties decided in January on a new bill that includes collection camps, cutting the decision-making process to six weeks and restricting appeal rights – is no longer a matter for political debate. Nor is the racist aliens' law that defines German citizenship by blood relations and withholds the most basic democratic rights from millions of people born in Germany.

Bookchin and Green Anarchism

Veteran American anarchist, Murray Bookchin, visited England in May on a brief four-date lecture tour. His talk on "Social Ecology" in Leeds was attended by a packed audience of 3-400 - testimony both to Bacon lasting popularity among those who first came across him through books such as Post-Scarcity Anarchism (1971) and The Limits of the City (1974), as well as to the enduring resonance of his ideas for a younger generation who he has reached in the very different climate (in more ways than one!) of the 1990s.

A concern with the environmental consequences of capitalism's insatiable lust for profit has always been a central theme of Bacon involvement as a writer and activist in the anarchist movement since he joined it in the 1950s. If he appears now as a pioneer of currently fashionable Green politics, it is because capitalism itself has already fulfilled and surpassed even the most distant warnings sounded by Bookchin in articles and books, such as Out Synthetic Environment (1962), written thirty or more years ago.

Bookchin terms the brand of green anarchism he has developed over the years "social ecology". His point of departure is not 'nature' or 'the planet' but human society. Destructive exploitation of the environment is the outcome of a similar relationship between people. So, "The only way to resolve the ecological crisis is to end the domination of human by human. A precondition for living in harmony with each other" (from an interview in Leeds Northern Star 14.5.92.)

Bookchin likens the capitalist system to a vehicle accelerating towards ecological catastrophe. This vehicle is powered by a "grow or die" imperative, in which the profit motive takes precedence over all other considerations. It is no use appealing to bosses or politicians to change direction; they are not driving the vehicle, it is driving them. By all means engage in single-issue campaigns, Bookchin says, but be under no illusions that these can do anything more than apply slight pressure on the brake; what is really needed is to remove the engine.

Where we part company with Bookchin is not over his basically revolutionary analysis of the problem but with regard to the gradualist strategy he proposes as its solution. Bookchin advocates "libertarian municipalise", the steady building up of political and economic power by communities at a local level within capitalism.

This approach appears to stem from a rejection of the conflict between Capital and Labour as the crucial relationship which determines the nature of present-day society, and from a dismissal of the working class's potential as the only force capable of bringing about a fundamental transformation of society.



In America the strategy of "libertarian municipalism" is prompted by the "Left Green Network", a grouping strongly influenced by Bacon theories. But from what we have seen of the Left Green Network's ideas, it is far from being a revolutionary organisation. Alongside its "long-term goals", the Left Green Network's programme also contains a large number of "immediate demands", which consist of a mixture of worn-out policies peddled by traditional left-wing parties and measures which could quite comfortably be adopted by capitalism without bringing about any real change in the system.

By seeking to attract support on the basis of such a programme the Left Green Network is less likely to achieve its aim of creating "a force which can challenge the destruction of our humanity" than it is to end up channelling discontent with capitalism towards the cause of a slightly more 'eco-friendly' version of the same old system.

* A more detailed 'Introduction To The US Green Anarchists' can be found in the April-June issue of **Organise!**, magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Several basic texts of the Left Green Network have been published and debated in recent issues of the **Discussion Bulletin**, PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501, USA.

NEW PAMPHLETS COMING SOON FROM SUBVERSION.

**Nationalism and Imperialism in
Ireland - the myths exploded**

**Labouring in Vain - why Labour has
never been a working class party.**

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.

Want to Get Involved?

If you agree with our basic principles "What We Stand For" and are in general agreement with the views expressed in articles in this and other issues of **SUBVERSION**, then why not get involved?

There are a number of ways you could do this.

1. Join **SUBVERSION**. You can do this if you are in agreement and live in the north of England. We have members in Manchester, Leeds and Oldham.
2. Write to us and let us know you are out there!
3. Take extra copies of **Subversion** to give to friends or distribute at meetings (be realistic, though not pessimistic, about the number you might be able to pass on).
4. Try writing short articles for future issues. We will happily give you advice on what the right length is, and will make suggestions about topics if you want.
5. Send us some money! Cheques and POs payable to **SUBVERSION**.
6. Arrange to meet us.
7. If meeting us is difficult, you might like to have a local contact address published in **SUBVERSION** and use this to find out if there are others locally of a like mind.

Write to: **SUBVERSION, Dept 10, 1
Newton Street, Manchester M1
1HW.**