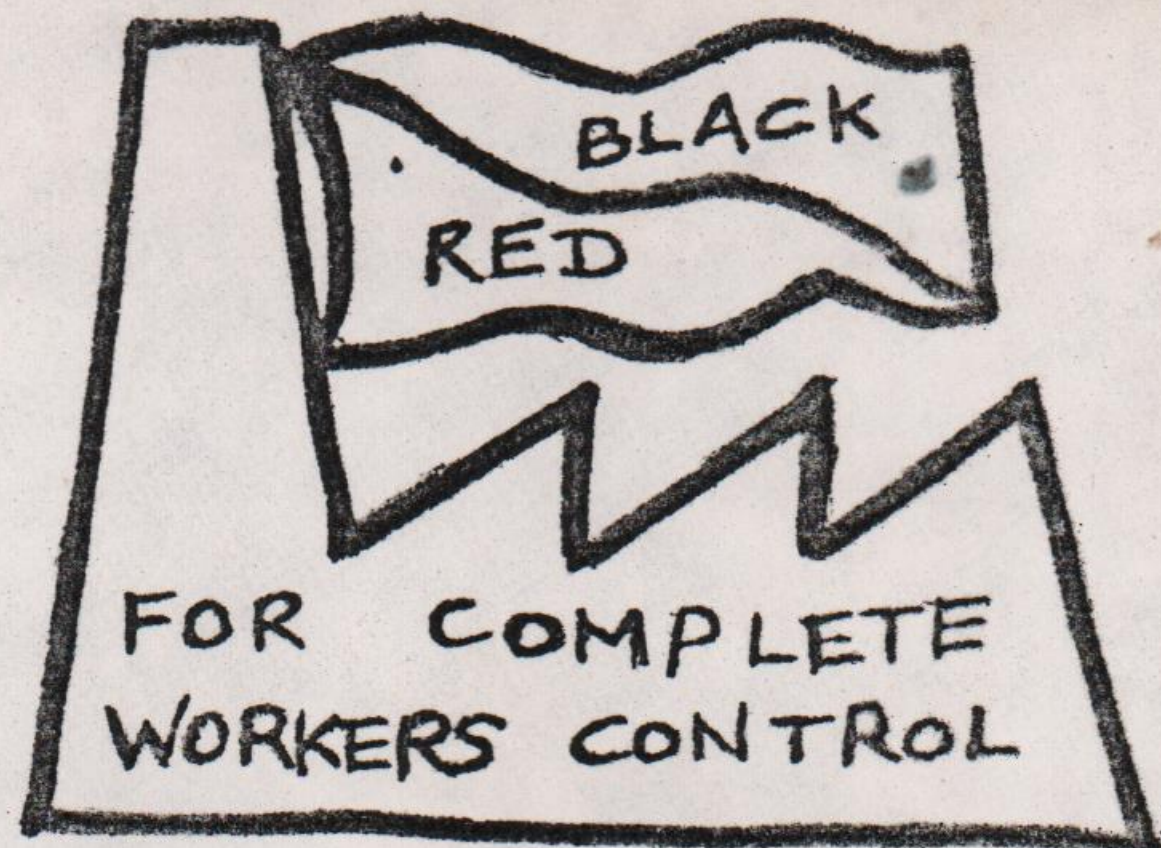


DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT



NATIONAL ADDRESS:
DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT.
164/166 CORN EXCHANGE BUILDING,
HANGING DITCH,
MANCHESTER,
M4 3BN.

BULLETIN ADDRESS:

ST,

INTERNAL
BULLETIN

april 1981



INSIDE :

MINUTES OF LEEDS DAM CONFERENCE.
REPORT ON UNEMPLOYED GROUPS (SUNDERLAND).
[REDACTED] ON SPEECH TO OCL.
NORWAY

CONFERENCE OF THE DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

LEEDS TRADES CLUB

SAT/SUN 28 Feb-I March 1981

AGENDA

Item; (I). Minutes of last conference (refer to last IB).

(a) secretary's report.

(b) branch reports.

(c) commission report.

(2). Report on Ireland and the Dublin conference.

(3). Unemployment and redundancy (Rochdale).

(4). Internal bulletin.

(5). Policy committee (Rochdale).

(6). 'Direct Action' paper and propaganda.

(7). Structure (Birmingham).

(8). Day-schools (Leeds).

(9). A.I.T.

(10). Recruitment.

(11). Students' Unions.

(12). Membership breakdown.

ITEM 1 Secretary's report. - (i) DAM still unable to afford advert in Cienfuegos Press. Last known price was £15/¹/₄ page, six months ago.

(ii) Birmingham leaflet on sexism still to be written.

(iii) Finance - Currently DAM have £51.56 and approx £7.00 petty cash.

(iv) Membership - 86 currently. 2 new branches at Ashton (Tameside) and Rochdale, who have formed a Redundancy Action Campaign comprising approx 6 members. New individual members in Lancs Accrington, Clitheroe

(v) International - DAM secretary sent article to Sam Dolgoff for publication (New York). Martin Everett (Cambs) has contacted Polish Solidarity Union and has addresses of Polish Anarchists. CNT speaker tour to be arranged (Rochdale)

(vi) DAM related publications - South London branch has members in Lambeth Local Government, and they produce 'South London Stress' paper.

(vii) Members' Handbook - in process of being produced, although Secretary's involvement in informing/supporting other DAM groups has slowed progress. Should be out shortly. Local groups should send in membership sheets and contact telephone numbers immediately

Questions arising from secretary's report:

(i) DAM membership turnover - mainly in Cardiff, South Wales. Manchester virtually unchanged.

(ii) Problem of establishing whether members still active.

(iii) Contact with DAM - FREEDOM press/ proximity to local groups.

Posters - Manchester. But still mostly word of mouth. Paper should establish more direct means of contact with interested persons.

Need for specific contact addresses.

BRANCH REPORTS

1/ MANCHESTER - Having difficulty in enquiries to obtain an office. Help to Ashton branch. Flyposting for speakers coming to group. Also planning public meetings, but DIRECT ACTION paper is main concern. Has sent members to Dublin conference, and has leafleted at demonstrations. Most activity is work-orientated - one member has been elected shop-steward at the Royal Infirmary and Trades Council, another member is shop-steward at TNG (printing). Another member is branch chairperson of NATFE (Higher Education Teaching). Money has been sent to aid strike by the Housing Department.

2/ LEEDS - Membership doubled. Problem of poor communication with student members at university (9 here). Leaflets about Social Security Acts/ Peace March / (Huddersfield unemployment march - last leaflet distributed at Leeds job centre. At 6th December Peace March at least 35 Anarchists identified, with about 60 rallying behind banner - made contact with Kieghley Anarchist Group (non-DAM) - visit to them shortly. Failure of Irish H-Block videos- only 12 attended after inter-group controversy.

3/ SUTTON IN ASHFIELD - (secretary) speaker to local Conservative Club on NATO - alternatives.

4/ SOUTH LONDON (sec) - Mostly non - DAM activity, concerned with producing South London Stress.

5/ SUNDERLAND (sec) - Material for DA paper. Copied and distributed Leeds leaflet from 6th December Peace March.

6/ BURNLEY - Death of one member recently. Work mainly with Burnley Anarchist Group, but activity is at a very low level at present. Produced leaflet about British Movement in NE Lancs, and there has been involvement with the North East (?) Campaign against Racism. Will produce leaflet for forthcoming unemployment demo in Burnley on 28th March.

7/ HULL - Hull Libertarian Collective has reformed, comprised mostly of students. Since there is little specific DAM activity in Hull at the moment Dam members are mostly active in HLC. The group is pushing the Students Union to open its doors and facilities (sports hall and bars) to outsiders, especially the unemployed. This has involved flyposting and slogan-painting of 'the palace'. It is intended to push for an open the doors policy to be adopted by the next Union meeting. Several candidates were stood in the presidential elections (urging people not to vote), producing an Anarchist manifesto and many suitably irritating leaflets for the hacks. Some members (one in DAM) are sussing out the local Unemployed Workers Union. The group has leafleted demos in Hull and Glasgow with joint HLC/DAM leaflets. Some successful paper selling of 'Xtra' and 'Direct Action'. We intend to leaflet dole official in the future. We are also going to get a video from the Belfast Anarchist Collective, which will provide our first public meeting. We are producing this IB.

8/ ROCHDALE - Formed Oct 80. Five members at present, most of whom are in engineering.

Rochdale branch report contd.

Held informal meetings. Held a debate on problems of redundancy with [redacted] and a social democrat shop steward (who preferred an independent chairman and wrongly believed DAM to be Trotskyist). [redacted] presented Labour Party/T.U. view. The debate proceeded amicably, and a non-DAM convenor proposed setting up a redundancy action committee. Gardeners convenor [redacted] was arranged to speak on the 4th Feb to Rochdale DAM in collaboration with Manchester DAM. However [redacted] was unable to attend, which was unfortunate as over 50 people had turned up. [redacted] did come to a later meeting at the end of February, but attendance was not as great as before. There was also a discussion of the situation at McNaught's with a delegation from here present..... In December 80 at the annual wage negotiations, it was agreed that no wage rise would be pushed, and in return the management would curtail any further redundancies. Workers were on a 4 day week at this time. The agreement would be reviewed by management in April. However, three weeks ago, 8 workers were instantly made redundant without any forewarning, paid in lieu. Due to this break of agreement by management, the possibility of a sit-in was discussed. [redacted] was contacted, a mass meeting was held, and it was decided that as a result of the management's action a substantial wage claim should be pursued, and as yet unspecified industrial action taken to fight these redundancies. However the convenor at McNaught's appears worried at being put at the head of list for possible future redundancies, as happened at Bridge's recently. This may hinder a militant approach. The Redundancy Action Committee (including DAM members) printed a statement describing the situation and proposals for action. Police harassment over Redundancy Action Committee flyposting.

8/ BIRMINGHAM- Have had difficulty in getting a suitable venue for public meetings. Group meetings are the only current activity. As yet lack facilities to produce a leaflet on sexism. Membership currently four.

Item 1c/ COMMISSIONS-(Publications Committee not in attendance at this conference).

Item 2/ IRELAND-

Refer mainly to last IB

(i) Conference agreed to exchange IB's/Papers with Belfast/Dublin groups, and where possible, invite Irish observers to DAM conferences and also to send delegates to Ireland when appropriate to do so.

(ii) 'DIRECT ACTION' should print regular Irish views and news. Due to the varying opinions over Ireland within DAM itself, the only agreement we reached was to consider articles within a class struggle context.

(iii) Attention was drawn to the problem of unemployment and its effects of promoting recruitment to the army amongst young people who cannot find jobs in their localities.

Item 4/ INTERNAL BULLETIN-

(i) It was agreed that the responsibility for producing the next IB, and subject to review, subsequent issues if trial period proves successful, should be mandated to Hull.

(ii) IB to appear monthly as from next issue.

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE FOR IB TO [redacted] ST, HULL. (ta)

Item 5/ POLICY COMMITTEE-

(i) First policy committee to be based at Rochdale to formulate policies on unemployment.

(ii) Mode of operation- Intend to contact factory convenors and invite them and other sympathetic people to a meeting, which could be organised as a debate. Invite social democrats etc as well as syndicalist supporters.

(iii) IB- Policy committee agrees to send monthly report to Hull for inclusion in IB.
(iv) The following points of Rochdale DAM's ~~report~~ written proposals were passed:

a/ The formation of a policy committee to draw up a framework of policies for conference on topics decided by conference.

b/ The development of Redundancy Action Committee or Groups, as is being done in Rochdale, in other areas where conditions are favourable.

c/ Discussion of the Rochdale formula for setting up Action Committees or Groups.

d/ The inclusion of the redundancy issue as a priority topic for debate by Conf. with the intention of referring it to the Policy Committee.

(v) Whilst Rochdale is directing its efforts towards people in work, Leeds proposed the establishment of an UNEMPLOYED LIBERTARIAN GROUP, similar to the CP unemployed organisations, but based on libertarian principles. It is important that the Anarchist movement as a whole should pre-empt Labour or TU involvement in organising people who are unemployed. Information for a ULG could be passed by leafletting at dole offices/Job Centres. The proposal to establish a ULG could be brought up at, say a public meeting on unemployment with a guest speaker. It is important that a ULG should NOT simply become a front organisation for DAM (like the Right to Work or RAR is for the SWP), our function is to help the unemployed organise themselves, and suggest means of organisation on Libertarian lines to them.

Item 6/ DIRECT ACTION PAPER AND PROPAGANDA -

(i) Paper fund - £185 in paper fund, after £15 deduction costs. Some printing costs free as have DAM member as printer.

(ii) Deadline - Members should send articles well in advance of deadlines - most materials from members outside Manchester arrived only in the last two weeks.

(iii) Content - Not all articles submitted have been included in this issue, although satire/ foreign news etc. OK, balance must be in favour of British industrial/ agitational material. More is required on various strikes / industrial actions that have ended and can be analysed, and conclusions/lessons drawn from them.

(iv) Current state of paper - Should be ready by Monday March 2nd: Has been sent to Cardiff for printing.

(v) Requirements for next issue - Graphics, cartoons, articles with photographs. Attack on Prince Charles and costs of Royal Family/ State wedding. More articles from DAM members outside Manchester please.

(vi) Colour Logo - Proposed colour red, but cost is currently prohibitive at £20 for plate, although this may be considered at a later date if finances permit.

(vii) Distribution - Five to each member and five to each bookshop. Total 1,000 copies. Problem of censorship (possible) by certain bookshops. Put aside a number for demonstrations

(viii) Sale price - 15p

(ix) Breakdown of costs - approx £100 printing

£24	Distribution
£15 (33%)	Shop costs
£10	Other costs

Total Approx £150.

Will probably have to subsidise, but if all are sold we should break even. Must ensure that money has no problem in getting back to DAM

(x) Frequency - To appear monthly.

(xi) Contact address Each DAM Branch should rubber stamp its allocation of DA

with local contact address

PROPAGANDA

(i) Need for leaflet/pamphlet describing DAM - Current small leaflet insufficient

(ii) Identified a need for some kind of co-ordination for collective general propaganda, e.x; on redundancy, although some members felt that content should have some specific relevance to maintain impact.

(iii) National Unemployment Leaflet- Need to formulate DAM policy on this. Redundancy is an integral part of unemployment, so leaflet/pamphlet should treat these synonymously. Content should go beyond reformist tactics of just sit-ins etc, to stress ultimate anarcho-syndicalist objective of complete workers control/non-capitalist co-operatives/production for need not profit etc- this should prevent discontinuity between short and long-term propaganda.

(iv) International examples- DAM members need to research examples from abroad e.x ; Italy, concerning successful attempts to fight redundancy. It is important that propaganda shows what can be done as well as what should be done. Include this research in leaflet/pamphlet.

(v) Trade UNIONS- The relative ineffectiveness of Official Trades Union-s in combating redundancy should be dealt with in propaganda. More detailed pamphlets could be used to back up essentially agitational leaflets.

(vi) Themes Of Propaganda- Agreed that continuous themes should be pursued in successive issues of 'Direct Action'.

(vii) Identified discontinuity between our principals/actions and the reality of the industrial situation. Based on areas we ourselves are active in, there is a need for the collective formation of DAM policies which we can apply to real-life situations, as opposed to just abstract propaganda. Also anarchist history needs to be re-interpreted to have relevance to modern industrial scene. Rochdale proposed conference-mandated committees to deal with certain matters of policy in order to build up a (constantly changing) policy structure. Such a delegation would operate on a regional basis to work on a separate specific issue over a period of time. Lack of time at DAM conferences makes policy formation on topics such as unemployment etc impracticable, hence need for policy committees. However, policy committee(s) will be delegated from DAM conferences who will be able to issue reports on/ amend information/ and have power of recall over committee delegates... (unlike marxist-leninist policy committees which are a power unto themselves). Policy committee activity to be publicised through IB which should appear regularly. Policy committee mandate given to members of a particular group, but any DAM member able to attend policy committee meetings has the right to do so.

Item 7/ STRUCTURE-

(Enquiry from Birmingham). Full details of structure to appear in forthcoming Members Handbook.

Item 8/ DAY SCHOOLS- (Leeds)

(i) suggested by Leeds that these could be held between conferences to discuss specific issues, although other members felt that policy committee would fulfill this role adequately enough.

(ii) Any day-school should be preceded by detailed research for discussion amongst members and interested guests, and results published in IB. Day-schools should be used to formulate tactics, and members could play 'devils advocate', posing questions as if they were from other Left-wing groups.

Item 9/ A.I.T. - Refer to last IB, article by A. Meltzer.
The majority of DAM members present at conference were in favour of DAM affiliating to the A.I.T. It ~~would~~ was decided to defer the final decision until the next conference, so as to allow further debate between DAM members and also in the IB.

Item 10/ STUDENTS UNIONS

DAM member at Hull University, along with other anarchists, is trying to get the Students Union to adopt an 'open the doors' policy; that is allow the public, and particularly the unemployed, use of the facilities (which at present tend to be for the exclusive use of students and occasionally their guests). This state of affairs is absurd especially when these facilities (bars, sports halls, libraries etc) are underused by the students themselves. An especially winnable demand is the opening up of 'student-only' rock concerts, which make losses, because of poor student interest.

DAM would appreciate info from any other members about other attempts to introduce 'open the doors' policy into Students Unions. Write to IB address

Supplementary- Conference agreed that the nearest group to a demo should act as host, co-ordinating meeting places, finding out times etc, and deal with accomodation if necessary.

Supplementary- Donations are required for Manchester's P.O. box which cost's them £57 per year. Secretary will in ~~many~~ any case deduct a total of £25 from funds towards this. The deductions totalling £25 in all will be made at regular intervals.

NEXT CONFERENCE - Date to be fixed for last week in June. Venue to be responsibility of Birmingham. (Rochdale standby).

Please address all correspondence for IB to....
[REDACTED] STREET,

REPORT FROM SUNDERLAND

Member attended anti-bomb rally in Leeds. Along with Leeds branch sold 'Black Flag' and distributed leaflets. Using same leaflet (modified) we leafleted first meeting of Sunderland C.N.D., and a fortnight later leafleted a demo organised by Tyneside Against The Bomb, protesting at the existance of a fall-out shelter under Sunderland Town Hall.

The branch has recently affiliated to the Durham Street Press (County Durham's alternative newspaper). Affiliation gives us the right to put forward motions and vote on the papers policy. An article on the POLITICAL LEVY has yet to appear.

We are currently working on a general leaflet and are keeping up a regular correspondence with the local rag.

REPORT ON THE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS UNION.....

Re: Unemployed groups and DAM.

A lot of discussion has taken place at conference and in the IB on the subject of unemployed groups/ T.U.C Unemployed Union etc, and on the possibility of DAM setting up their own group.

One such group does exist and warranted a closer look.....the Unemployed Workers Union. This group was set up on Tyneside a couple of years ago. Its activities centre around campaigns for free social facilities, bus passes, and more jobs. It also gives claimants advice on benefits. Since its founding the U.W.U. has spread to other towns around the country.

Along with Newcastle Trades Council it recently organised a national conference on unemployment. In attendance were community groups, tenants associations, and various political parties. It was hoped that the conference would be instrumental in forming a national network of unemployed groups, basically along the lines of the U.W.U. Unfortunately, as yet I haven't recieved the results of the conference.

On Tyneside where the U.W.U was formed the union is dominated by the Labour Party and the Trade Union movement. The activists hail mainly from the Militant Tendency and the Young Socials. There's also a small but vocal S.W.P presence, keeping the Revolution going, fighting for the 'right' to work, and boldly going where no man has gone before. Local Labour Party m.p's and councillors also give their support, why not, every unemployed worker over eighteen is a potential vote to fleece the lining of their cosy careers. Recently the Northern District Committee of the C.P.G.B (Eurocommunists) gave its stamp of approval and pledged its support ! And its rag 'the Morning Star' (or was it Daily) did a large spread.

Financially the U.W.U has no problems, as it is funded by the Trades Council, Trades Union branches and the local Labour Party, and can afford the luxury of full-time salaried staff workers !

I feel that if the DAM is going to get involved in unemployed groups we should stay clear of the U.W.U. We can do without the dictates and influence that go with this kind of backing.

There is no reason why DAM should not organise its own Unemployed Group, and establish contacts with other groups not structured on authoritarian and bureaucratic lines.

SUNDERLAND DAM

NB. Hull DAM would like much more feedback for the May IB. We are determined to get the thing out on schedual, but we want it to be a nice thick issue full of the right things.....in short the IB should begin to fulfill its true purpose of providing info and being a forum for debate. But more and better contributions are needed. So come on, use 'your' IB! If you put any contributions you think might be includable on a roneo stencil before sending it, this not only cuts down the work but also means that thing appears the way you wanted it to originally. Thanx.

SPEECH

The following document is the 'speakers notes' used by a Manchester member, [redacted] as a basis for a talk about DAM which he gave at the O.C.L. camp in France during August. He believes it to be a good idea for other members to know what was said on their behalf, although the speech was given in a personal capacity.

s Speech:-

Direct Action was formed about 18 months ago as a broad-based working class Anarchist movement. We are at present about 100 members. The members came from different leanings: anarcho-syndicalist, industrial unionist (IWW), Anarchist Workers' Association, local groups and others. It was felt that such sectarian approaches were inappropriate in the British context. It was felt that setting up Anarchist unions was not possible, whether desirable or not. Whether people call themselves anarcho-syndicalists, industrial unionists, autonomists or whatever, their tactics are largely determined by the options open to them.

Such groupings are needlessly sectarian in the British context and such concepts are largely alien to the British working class. That workers' organisations compromise with the state is not in doubt, but all society and everybody in it, including advocates of revolution, are forced to do so. If there are islands of purity, the Direct Action Movement is not one of them.

Industrial Policy:- In Britain over 50% of workers are organised in unions, almost all federated to the Trades Union Congress, which is affiliated to the Labour Party. The Labour Party is largely controlled by a small number of trade union bosses, though Labour Party M.P.'s are largely autonomous in office. The Labour Party exists to channel harmful political issues in the unions into harmless political channels.

Until recently this has been successful. The result is that the workers remain unaware of the political consequences of their actions and therefore of their own importance on the political scene. What is lacking as much as political awareness is confidence in each other. This confidence is constantly undermined by the union power struggle. Workers are usually effective at looking after their sectional interests in the workplace but they tend to leave larger-scale co-ordination to the union bureaucracy.

Shop Stewards :- We believe the only position Anarchists should take in unions are those which are directly revocable by the workers. The role of Anarchist shop stewards should be to encourage the participation of workers and combat the reliance on leadership. The Direct Action Movement sees the need for networks of contacts at work, to circumvent union bureaucracy. DAM seeks to build a large anarchist lever to separate legitimate workplace organisation from the parasitic bureaucracy which preys on it. We would seek to break artificial barriers that exist between workers.

We also see it as our task to harass and expose corrupt officials at every opportunity. We would oppose participation on any tripartite employer, state, union committee. We would seek to promote political awareness in the workplace; by political awareness we do not mean boring everybody to death with pedantic and dogmatic propaganda. Workers are motivated by what they think serves their interests best. We would strive to show them anarchist direct action and democracy would serve them best. The Labour Party is financed entirely by the unions by means of the political levy; the DAM recently launched a campaign to cut off this levy. The struggle against authoritarianism takes place on all fronts: sexual, educational, environmental, ad infinitum. Although the economic struggle is more immediate and is where the working class makes itself felt, it would be a mistake to consider other conflicts as secondary. Conflict cannot be compartmentalised-all affect each other.... [redacted]'s speech was followed by a question and answer session in which he expanded on the parts of his speech.

NORWAY

SITUATION IN THE UNION MOVEMENT

As the I.O. (Norwegian T.U.C) congress will be held this spring, our work has been dominated by activity relating to the propaganda potential of this congress.

Our proposals deal especially with the questions of union democracy, political autonomy and increasing the fighting capacity of the union base.

In addition, we propose that the L.O. stops all contacts with the state-run unions in the 'communist' countries, as it has stopped contacts with fascist state-run unions in military dictatorships.

The congress is composed of 240 delegates from the local unions, 60 from the local union federations and in addition the leaders of the central and federal bureaucracy.

In some places Unions have elected N.S.F (Norsk Syndikalistik Forbund- Norwegian Syndicalist Federation) members to represent them, which in consequence improves our chances of making propaganda. In addition N.S.F will run a parallel campaign (in the Unions) in favour of our points of view during congress time.

Generally, the last few months haven't been dominated by wage struggles and strikes. But the stakes rose immensely in Jan '81, and we are expecting an increase in struggles in the spring and after the summer, when central and local wage negotiations start.

In the last few months, the N.S.F influence has increased in various union sections, especially because an increasing number of N.S.F members are being elected shop stewards and union delegates. This tendency is particularly marked in the metal workers, and amongst social/health workers.

PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES

The main problem we have faced in the N.S.F has been that we have underestimated the importance of propaganda outside of the unions. We have not been able to correct this, firstly as a consequence of our members concentrating all forces inside the local unions. We have now elected a special Propaganda Committee to improve this situation, and there's an increasing awareness amongst the members of the importance of this issue.

ACTIVITIES OF A GENERAL CAR CRER

There will be a parliamentary election in the autumn of 1981. (Gallup) polls show the Social democrats(sic) losing ground. Since the last war they had averaged 45-53% of the votes. Over the last year this has been reduced to about 30% of the votes, which is more or less the same as the right wing parties. About 18,000 workers that traditionally voted social democrat will not vote in 1981. The Marxist parties are consolidated at very low levels and have not grown: The NKP (Moscow) averages 0.4% of the votes, the AKP (Marxist-Leninist) averages 0.0% of the votes and the SV (Opportunists) average about 4.5%.

A coalition of formally capitalist parties will probably win the election, not because they have increased much, but because of the increased abstention of the working class.

The NSF has decided to exploit the situation, and has decided to establish a Union front of offensive character. The front will be organised as a committee lead by NSF members and independent workers.

The formal aim of the committee will be to defend the Union rights, Economic benefits and social security that have been won in Norway by the Union movement against the right wing offensive. The other formal aim is to activate an extra-parliamentary offensive of Norwegian workers against political, social and capitalist elements that manipulate the interests on different levels. In practice, this includes all parties, bureaucratic union bosses, state bureaucrats and capitalists.

The committee will be permanent, and do its work through various campaigns, each directed at different groups of people... Trades Unionists, Young people, Old people, etc etc...

Really this committee will be the socio-political front of the NSF and will permit us to be active in spheres we have hitherto ignored.

The descision to set up this front is a consequence of autocriticism in the NSF. We have concentrated almost 100% on union questions, and have in reality ignored other promlems related to the working class.

The NSF determines to be not only a Union alternative, but to offer a total alternative on all social levels that affect the class.

From BOLETIN INTERNACIONAL of the A.I.T. FEB 1981.



"MAN IS BORN FREE but is Everywhere in CHAINS." A^{no3}

TODAY IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND.....

We hope the information presented here will disprove the British government's propaganda that the conditions faced by the prisoners who are protesting in Aramagh and the H-blocks are 'self inflicted'. The prisoners have not only been punished for non-cooperation in the form of lock-up, no clothing etc, but they have been beaten and degraded continuously.

The prisoners protest must be broken for the British government to succeed in regaining control and 'normalising' society in the north-east of Ireland. The legacy of a policy of colonialisation and the investment of capital both exert strong influence on

the govern-
-ments
decision to
'Win the War'
But probably
the most
important
of its
priorities
is the need
to put down
a challenge
to its
authority,
repression,
assassination

and imprisonment. That challenge could have repercussions within sections of the population it has so far managed to contain - the working class, women, young people, the Welsh and Scots.

Internment, which had been on the statute books for fifty years, came to an end in 1974. International and local protest became embarrassing for the world's oldest 'democracy'. The Diplock commission introduced a system of trial for scheduled i.e. political offences.

In a Diplock Court:-

1. There is a judge and no jury
2. The defend has to prove inno-
-cence
3. evidence can be based on hearsay.

4. in signed confessions again the defendant has to prove tor-
-ture, if s/he wants to invali-
-date it.

5. bail can only be got from a high court.

So it is not surprising that 80% of convictions are based on signed confessions. These are usually 'extracted' in the infamous RUC interrogation centres of Castlereagh in Belfast, Strand in Derry, and Gough in Armagh.

That torture is used system-
-atically is indisputable.

Even the liberal Amnesty International and two local police doctors (who later

resigned) detailed the mental and physical intimidations. For recent coverage see, 'Beating the Terrorists' a Penguin special. Under the legislation which covers these courts the Army can hold you for 4 hours before turning you over to the RUC.

They in turn can hold you for 3 days (2 without right of solicitor). Under the PTA, as in England, Scotland and Wales, you can be held for 7 days. The mere thought of 7 days in one of the above mentioned centres is enough to intimidate people into cooperating with the interrogators.

The Diplock Courts were the centre of the British Government attempt to present the violent social upheaval as a question of 'law and order'. Two years later the political status grant -ed after a hunger strike was removed as Roy Mason and the Labour Government intensified

PRISON IS A WEAPON OF THE
RULING CLASS. SO ALL PRISONERS
ARE POLITICAL
BUT
THE MEN IN H-BLOCK + WOMEN IN
ARMAGH ARE RESISTING THEIR
IMPRISONMENT AND THE LABEL OF
CRIMINAL WHICH 'JUSTIFIES' THEIR
IMPRISONMENT.



the 'criminalisation' policy. Previously those convicted in Diplock Courts were housed in compounds ('the cages') and had a fairly high degree of association. They wore their own clothes and did no prison work.

It was 1976 when this system changed. The newly convicted refused to accept the label of Criminal and began the 'blanket' protest, where they refused to wear prison uniform and prison work.

In Long Kesh the men were constantly beaten and their back passages probed over mirrors on their way to and from visits. The beatings escalated in March '78. Every time a prisoner went to the toilet he was punched and kicked. The prisoners responded by staying in their cells. The protest had become a no-wash campaign. The shit was spread on the walls and the pots overflowed with urine. All the furniture had been removed bar a sponge mattress.

This shrunk in size as it was used to clean after shitting. It was constantly damp both because of the urine and the hosing down of the walls. This occurred every week during a cell change. It was one of the most frightening times for the prisoners as they were systematically beaten (again). There were about 350 people on this protest. It should be noted that there are about 100 prisoners with political status in Long Kesh. They were sentenced before 1976.

In Armagh womens prison there were 30 prisoners protesting. Before March 1980 they were refusing to do prison work. As all women prisoners wear their own clothes, their punishment was a 23 hour lock up with no reading material.

In March 1980 a premeditated attack by 40 male screws, brought in from Long Kesh, caused many injuries. The pretext was a cell search, but no previous search had been opposed. This provocation included the toilets and wash room being locked up for a week after the prisoners were moved to another wing. Requests for their reopening were made, but this made conditional on their ending the strike. they refused and began a no wash protest.

The unhealthy conditions faced by the women were multiplied by the

inadequate number of sanitary towels available. Also the tensions and intimidation mean many women have heavier periods than usual. Menstrual blood accompanies the shit on the walls.

This communication is sent out because we feel we must play some part in the governments ability to outlast the protestors. The Tory government is strong and determined. It is especially strong in the north where 12000 troops, 10000 RUC and 7600 UDR have contained the protests within the minority working class districts. BUT IS IT STRONG ENOUGH?

Belfast Anarchist Collective.



BRITZ 'N COMMIES

The past few months we have been subjected a propaganda blitz by western governments and their media over the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The cold war jingoism is so convenient when they 'up' military spending, paid for (by us all) at the expense of welfare services. (Britain currently spends circa £1 000 000 PER HOUR on military purposes!).

The British gov and media have been emphasising the Russian use of chemicals and biological warfare against the Afghan tribes...they have used it to justify increased spending on chemical and biological killers. The Russians have used chemicals in Afghanistan CS gas to be precise - and as news of this leaked out, the blitz have suddenly shut up!

- It would hardly do for them to criticise a Russian use of CS gas after all the shit they pumped into the people of Belfast and Derry!

Is El Salvador in for the same treatment?

@ Libertarian Collective

70 [redacted] st

- stay free!