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FREE TO STRIKERS

# Wildcat

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**FRONT LINE NEWS FROM THE CLASS WAR**

## THE FIGHT BACK IN THE PITS

### A MINER SPEAKS OUT

LETTER FROM A YORKSHIRE  
MINER TO A COMRADE IN  
EDINBURGH

Extracts from a letter written by a miner who works at S Kirkby pit in Yorkshire to a friend of WILDCAT about the strike which started over the sacking of 2 miners for alleged intimidation on 29 April.

"The strike started at S Kirkby colliery where the

night shift walked out in support of 2 lads that were sacked that morning. What was most inspiring ... was that it was totally spontaneous. ... we stood up for the first time since we crawled back ... We organised the picket of the day shift against the wishes of the branch officials, with great success and what's even more amazing about this success; the scabs didn't cross our picket line. We

have 26 at S Kirkby and only 1 of them scabbed this time. Even the scab who was allegedly intimidated by the 2 lads who were sacked didn't cross. This amazing achievement can only be put down to the spontaneity in which it began. Ignoring bad advice from the officials and going for the throat while anger is rife and siezing support.

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## SOUTH AFRICA

### A SIMILAR STRUGGLE

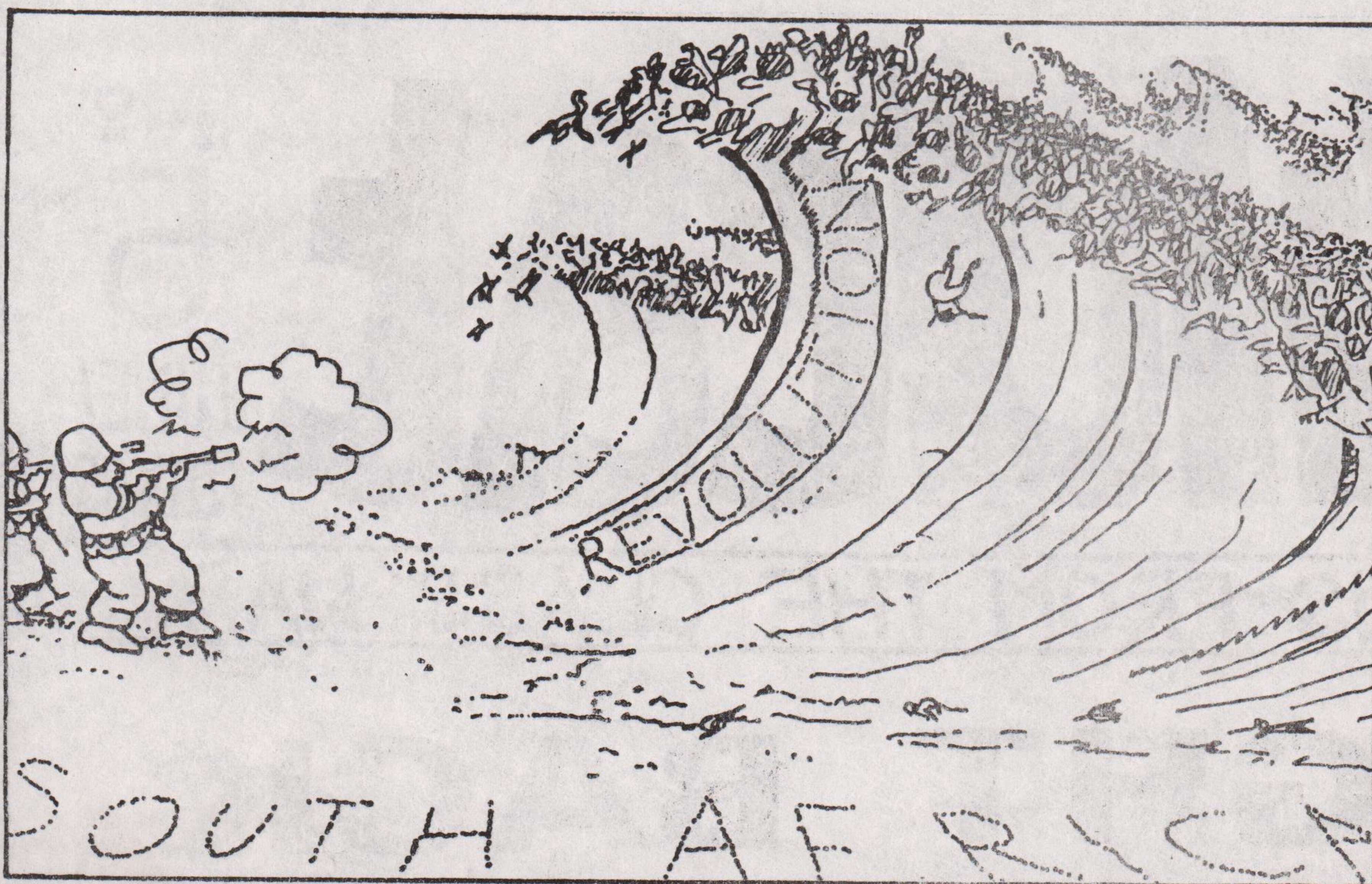
The present wave of class struggle in Cape Province started with school boycotts, bus boycotts and demonstrations against Botha's elections, by which he hoped to create a system of black "representatives". These have been rejected in no uncertain manner; in fact, black councillors have been on the receiving end of justified class violence; hacks have been hacked.

It spread to the car industry, then to the gold mines. The National Union of Mineworkers

gave the government warning of a proclaimed strike, but events overtook the bureaucrats, unofficial wildcat strikes provoked 13,000 sackings at Vaal Reefs, the world's largest gold mine, and the NUM was forced to endorse the increasingly militant campaign for their reinstatement. It requested a 'conciliation board' with the management of the Vaal Reefs complex, but events again overtook it as police stormed occupied

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hostels and deported thousands of miners to the 'homelands'.

Immediately, rioting spread from the black working class to the coloured townships. According to Botha's plan, 'Coloureds' are the next race up from pure blacks in the hierarchy of division. In the Cape, this plan has come unstuck. Coloured youth have put class before race.

In South Africa, as in Britain, the sacking and jailing of miners has provoked class struggle. In South Africa, the working class has shown the way forward by

- rejecting capitalist divisions
- rejecting (in fact, killing) black councillors and pigs
- spreading the class struggle to all areas of society; schools, townships, mines, factories. Class struggle in the Cape isn't limited by the unions to one industry or one issue. The brutality of apartheid is destroying any hope of negotiation and conciliation, and stoking the furnaces of working-class revolution.

Many of the unions are illegal. In spite of this, many international companies negotiate with the unions, recognizing that they are increasingly important to keep production running. Without these neg-

otiating bodies, trying to make a profit in South Africa would become increasingly difficult. When workers have a grievance, they go to the union reps, who waste time talking to management while tempers cool and order is restored.

Class violence has destroyed democracy. Only 6 out of 34 black councils are still functioning. 6 black police in the townships have been killed - the others have moved out. 95 township people have been killed by police since April. The army are now increasingly used to control crowds. Street committees have been formed in the townships to air grievances and organise justice.

The political radicalisation of the black working class, a result of the economic crisis colliding with rising expectations from an increasingly skilled and important workforce, has generally expressed itself in support for the African National Congress and the United Democratic Front. Both of these claim that the struggle for socialism will come after the struggle against apartheid has been won. In other words, they are fighting for capitalism without apartheid. To achieve this, they argue for uniting the working class with other classes, to create an independent country called Azania. These other classes include churchmen and shopkeepers ... and black councillors. The ANC supports armed struggle, but wants to subordinate this to its political aim - the conquest of democratic rights via

international pressure on apartheid.

'File on 4' (Radio 4) broadcast a tape of one of the UDF's representatives trying to prevent workers attacking the police. He sounded just like the 'community leaders' in Brixton in 1981. They also broadcast Bishop Tutu, speaking over the coffins of 29 of the victims of the Uitenhage massacre:

"I am opposed to the violence that seeks to oppose apartheid".

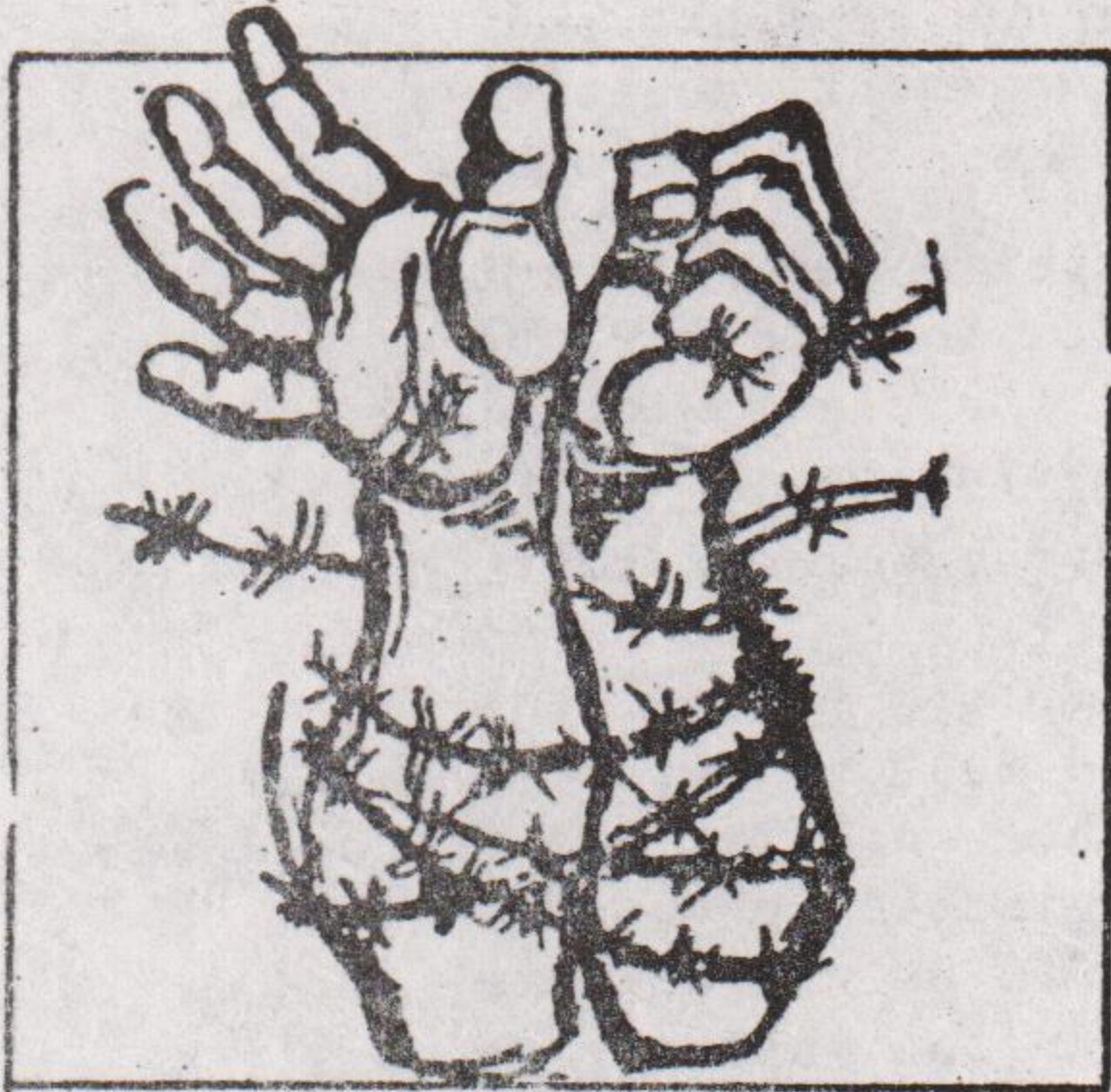
He puts the resistance of the working class on a par with the murders of apartheid. He also condemns the execution of collaborators. This shows which side he's on - the side of the oppressors. Youths interviewed on the same programme rejected his advice.

The examples of Zimbabwe and Mozambique are well known to South African blacks. They know that workers in independent black states are even worse off than they are. From the examples of the independence movements in Africa and the violent anti-working class regimes which they have created, South African workers can see that national liberation has nothing to offer. Workers in South Africa are looking for more than democratic rights. The fate of workers in the independent black states shows that movements which unite the working class with other classes always benefit the latter at the expense of the former. Every country in Africa is capitalist, all of them ruled by racist gangs who brutally crush the growing resistance of their populations.

Workers in South Africa, the only economy in Africa developed enough to produce a working class revolution in the near future, know that only armed struggle can get rid of apartheid. When that happens, all sorts of alternative forms of capitalism will attempt to fill the vacuum. The workers must reject all of these, and prepare to extend the South African revolution to the rest of the world's workers. As part of this process, an independent communist organisation is vitally necessary.



## MINER'S LETTER CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE.



An emergency branch meeting was called by the officials which only reaffirmed strike action making it official. From here on in it was doomed. The officials had no zest for the insurrection that had taken place. We were told after voting unanimously to strike -

a) There would be no pickets sent out until the next executive meeting took place. This was to make our official strike "OFFICIAL".

b) Any pickets that were dispatched would need an officially stamped letter signed by the secretary.

c) Any picketting that may take place will be by "INVITATION ONLY" meaning that any pit would have had to have a meeting stating that they wanted pickets and would respect our line.

... We argued our right to seek support immediately

and deploy pickets but were beaten by the bureaucrats. We stayed grounded for the rest of the week. You may be asking why we did not continue in the manner that we had been so successful at before. And the answer is simply this -

a) Our official strike was not officially "OFFICIAL".

b) That without our officially stamped letter stating that we were official. We were not official pickets.

c) We had to be officially invited (HA!).

Without the letter from the secretary we were rendered harmless, and wide open for the "troops in blue" to seize our liberty. We were not able to go out picketting until after our next branch meeting. Where after very luke warm speech by our president were made to vote again on whether to strike ... This was Sunday (5 May) following Monday's magnificent walkout. We reaffirmed strike action 290 to strike, 150 against. We were then told our officials had been to 6 branches and got official invitations for pickets. They stressed only these 6 branches would be picketed and only 6 letters would be endorsed. There was a sizeable rush to sign up for picketting and get off the subs bench. Letters would be given out on Bank Holiday Monday at our HQ after teams of 6 had be targetted for each shift.

When we arrived for our letters we were told we didn't need them and that we should go only where we were sent. We did, and we had success in picketting out our targets. Whilst we were out picketting we tuned to the car radio for news of disruption at the other pits.

To our utter amazement three branches that had pledged support had not been mentioned. After picketting out our target we returned to HQ to see what had gone wrong. I asked our secretary why the pits had not been affected. He told me that they had not been picketed. I asked why and he said -

"I do not apologise for the lack of organisation".

"We have achieved what was necessary the NCB knows we are here".

I told him it was a fucking utter crimeto slap support in the face in this manner.

This was deliberate sabotage right from the word "official"! ...

That night Tues, as we made ready to go picket out our targets night shift. A news flash (5.45) informed us that the strike had been caled off. The executive had put paid to our hopes of fighting for our sacked miners all over this country. All our mates in jail. And all our futures. ...

The experience of struggle has brought many militant miners (such as the author of this letter) into conflict with the structures and ideology of trade unionism, and has forced them to start organising their actions in opposition to this straitjacket. However, this miner, like most others, has still to confront the myth surrounding the topmost pinnacle of the NUM, Arthur Scargill. The NUM is quite capable of producing any number of leaders just as militant as its members - but only in order to bolster its credibility and its control over the workers. Only when all workers reject even the most radical-sounding leaders, and start leading themselves in struggle, will they have reached the level of consciousness that will be needed for the battles that lie ahead.

The NUM has abandoned the sacked and imprisoned miners. It has demanded that unofficial support groups hand over control and funds to the NUM. Its up to us to defy these bureaucratic saboteurs, and support our jailed and sacked comrades outside and against the union structure.

# Pigs Murder Italian Activist

On 9th March in Trieste, Italy, the police shot and murdered Pietro Greco, an activist in the Workers Autonomy Movement.

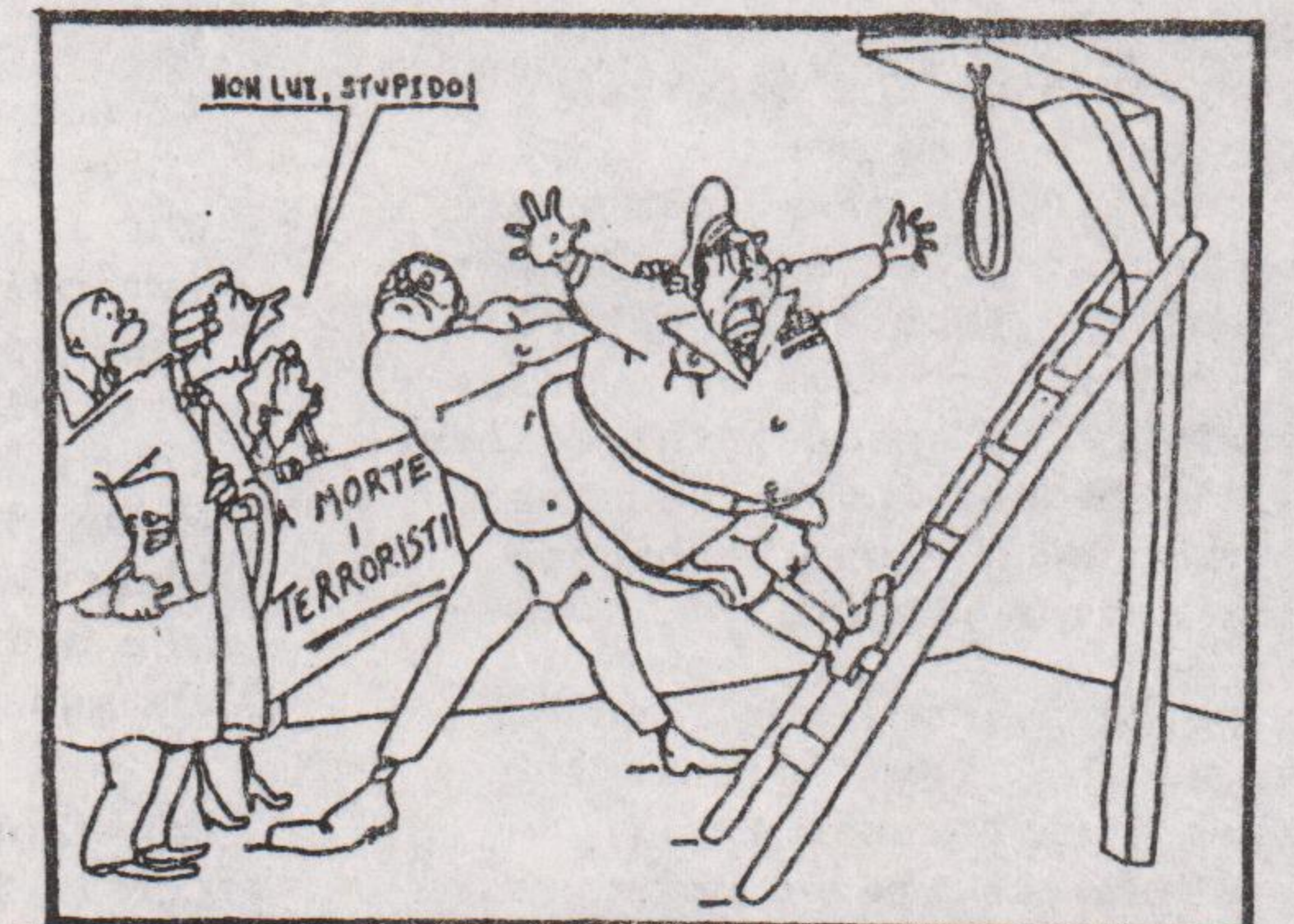
The vicious state repression in Italy had forced Pietro to go on the run. He was accused of "subversive association" and participation in "an armed band" (vague charges that made no reference to specific crimes) and of possessing arms (no arms were ever found).

When Pietro returned to his flat in Trieste shortly after 11 a.m. on the 9th, police were waiting on the landing. They fired at him on sight. Pietro fled into the street where he was brought by a hail of bullets. Hit seven

times, he died in hospital. The police and newspapers confirm that he was unarmed.

There was an immediate reaction to Pietro's death, with strikes by school students in Padova and counter-information by the autonomists denouncing this "premeditated assasination" by the state.

The judges, political parties, and the police are condemned for being responsible for the murder of Pietro and for upholding the whole oppressive political and social system in Italy. But, proclaim the comrades, this repression will not succeed - they will continue to struggle against the system of exploitation and for a better quality of life, as Pietro himself always did.



PLACARD: DEATH TO THE TERRORISTS!  
JUDGE: NOT HIM, STUPID!

More information from: CENTRO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE ANTINUCLEARE ANTI-IMPERIALISTA, VIA BELZONI 14, 35121 PADOVA, ITALY.

or BOX 81, c/o 43 CANDLEMAKER ROW, EDINBURGH.

We hope to carry a more substantial article on political and social repression in Italy in a future issue of Wildcat.





# REVIEW

# The Fight

It's obvious to everyone that the whole capitalist system is in a deepening crisis. The number of people throughout the world affected by unemployment, poverty, starvation and war increases daily. No amount of tinkering by right or left wing governments makes things any better. More and more people are beginning to realise that nothing short of a complete re-organisation of society can solve these problems. But what is less clear in people's minds is how this revolution might come about.

This question is discussed in a pamphlet titled 'The Fight', by the Dutch communist Anton Pannekoek. 'The Fight' is part of a longer book called Workers' Councils, written during the Second World War. Pannekoek presents his views in a straightforward way, relating them directly to the workers' struggles which he witnessed or participated in during his own lifetime (1873-1960). Many of the ideas put forward by Pannekoek 40 years ago are shared by Wildcat today.

Pannekoek begins with a look at the trade unions. Unions were originally a product of workers' struggle to attain a semi-decent standard of living. By the beginning of this century, however, the unions were fast becoming an accepted part of capitalist society. The bosses recognised their usefulness in removing the worst excesses of exploitation and in ensuring that production was kept running smoothly. For the bureaucrats who rose to power, within the unions, the organisation itself - its status within society, its full-time salaried posts; its enormous funds - became more important than its original purpose. They became less and less willing to risk losing all this in struggles against powerful bosses. Thus trade unions had lost their value as a means of struggling against the bosses, and had become instead an instrument used by the bosses to rule over workers.

The workers, however, cannot give up the fight against the bosses just because their organisations are no more use. But henceforth, to stand any chance of success, all actions by the workers would have to be taken without or against the trade union officials. Workers would have to develop new ways of struggling in which all initiative and decisions were kept in their own hands. They could no longer rely on the efforts of a handful of leaders: "The workers now have to realise that only by raising their own power to the highest height can

they hope to win liberty". Pannekoek argues that these new forms are mass assemblies of all those involved in the struggle, and recallable strike committees to unify and co-ordinate the fight.

The immediate aim of these new organisations must be to extend each struggle to as many workers as possible: "Against the enormous power of capital not only the individual workers, but also the separate groups are powerless. The sole power that is a match for capital is the firm unity of the entire working class".

The miners' strike has illustrated the relevance of Pannekoek's arguments. Initially the miners that with their strong union, and their important position within the economy, they could win the struggle on their own. These beliefs have now been exposed as illusions. Two vital lessons of the miners' strike are that workers cannot hope to win their struggles if they fight within the strait-jacket of trade unionism, and that no single group of workers is powerful to win any struggle by itself. In future workers will have to organise in ways that enable everyone involved to participate in how the struggle is run, and they must broaden the struggle to draw in and join up with other groups of workers.

Pannekoek points out that the basis for extending each struggle lies in the capitalist crisis, whose effects are felt in one way or another by all workers: "discontent is universal; all the workers feel depressed under capitalist superiority; fuel for explosions has accumulated everywhere. It is not for others, it is for themselves if they join the fight". In other words, extending struggles does not mean going to other workers for collections of money or token 'sympathy' strikes; it means asking other workers to show real solidarity by joining the strike with their own demands.

Pannekoek explains the capitalist crisis in the following way. Historically, the system has passed through a cycle of booms and slumps. In its early days capitalism emerged from each crisis by expanding outwards into the non-capitalist periphery and integrating those areas into the system. Obviously, though, this cannot go on happening for ever. When there are no new areas of the globe left to conquer, it becomes increasingly difficult to sell products and invest capital:

... slows down, unemployment grows, competition heats up, and the threat of war looms.

In fact, once capitalism has reached the limits of its expansion, it has nothing else but this to offer. There are no better days ahead. Increasingly, therefore, workers have no choice but to struggle. At the most basic level it is a fight for self-preservation and survival. But this can also pave the way for the creation of a better world out of the decay and chaos of capitalism.

The process and experience of struggle changes people. Individuals are surprised by the power they discover within themselves and see in their fellow workers. Selfishness is replaced by community-feeling and class solidarity. Organising their struggles themselves, workers increase their self-reliance and their capacity to take control over their own lives. Periods of struggle also see great intellectual ferment: old ways of thinking are cast aside and new ideas develop rapidly. Again, the miners' strike provided many examples of these sorts of changes taking place in those who were involved.

It is this class solidarity, self-reliance and radical knowledge, acquired in the struggle against capitalism, which forms, at the same time, the basis for the re-organisation of society along communist lines.

The forms of organisation that grow up during the fight also play the dual role of destroying capitalism and building the new society. Here Pannekoek draws on the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

During the mass strikes in 1905 the Russian workers formed inter-factory and inter-district strike committees to unify and co-ordinate the struggle. Soon, however, the strike committees found that they had to do much more than just conduct a strike for better wages and conditions. Since the mass strikes had paralysed the state, the strike committees had to take on political and social functions. In doing so they were transformed into "soviets" or "workers' councils": potential instruments for working class rule over the whole of society.

The same thing happened in 1917, only this time the state was unable to crush the soviets as it had done in 1905. The workers councils emerged victorious from the struggle as masters over the whole of society. But the new rulers of Russia faced many difficulties: the country's backwardness, a large peasantry, civil war, etc. The most able workers were drafted into the strong central government needed to combat these problems; consequently, "The soviets gradually were eliminated as organs of self-rule, and reduced to subordinate organs of the government apparatus".

What developed in Russia was not communism but state capitalism, with the state collectively filling the same role as employer and exploiter of the working class that individual capitalists fulfilled in 'traditional' capitalist societies. The most important thing about the Russian revolution from the workers' point of view, Pannekoek therefore argues, was

lessons of how the Russian workers had overthrown the old regime:

"First, how an industrial working class by a gigantic mass action of wild strikes is able to undermine and destroy an obsolete state power; and second, how in such actions the strike committees develop into workers' councils, organs of fight and of self-management, acquiring political tasks and functions".

This is the perspective Wildcat puts forward for the development of the class struggle towards revolution. The present crisis forces workers to fight - either that or be ground down into complete misery. The fight can and must be extended to all other workers. And it has to be organised in new ways that build up the workers' own power. When the mass strike paralyses the bosses and the state, the workers' councils can step into the breach. The whole of society can be re-organised according to how the working class wants it to be. We strongly recommend Pannekoek pamphlet to anyone interested in reading about this perspective in more detail.

'The Fight', part II of Workers' Councils by Anton Pannekoek, is available for 50p from Wildcat or from Echanges et Mouvement, BM Box 91, LONDON WC1V 6XX.





# DANISH WORKERS STRIKE BACK



FOLKETING HELL!  
DANISH STRIKERS  
DELIVER THE POST.

Recently Denmark has experienced a wave of class struggle, the like of which has not been seen in that country for over 50 years. Not only have workers turned upon the government, but also upon 'their' trade unions.

The trade unions in Denmark regularly call token strikes over pay, but these usually end when the government announces a statutory maximum pay increase and the unions order workers to return to work. This year was very different.

In March the unions called a

strike within the public sector, however, it quickly got out of hand. Workers were highly successful in seeking and getting solidarity from workers in other industries. By the end of the month hundreds of thousands of workers were either on strike or locked out.

The government reacted by making the strike and all picketing illegal and by putting a 2% limit on wage increases. The trade union leaders reacted predictably,

"Our philosophy is that law is law, and law is obeyed. We

will not support continuation of the strike."

The workers were totally opposed to this. Many thousands refused to return to work, over 100,000 protested in Copenhagen against the new legislation and a number attempted to storm the Folketing, the Danish parliament.

There have been many clashes between workers and the police, and many workers have seen the need for violence in their struggles.

Illegal pickets stopped oil getting out of one of the largest refineries causing a petrol shortage and many petrol stations were forced to close. The vast majority of public sector workers have been on strike and public transport was brought to a standstill.

Strikes in factories, ferry services, schools, nursing homes, the post office, public transport, rubbish collection and many others, all unofficial and illegal, paralysed Denmark.

Workers demanded a 35 hour week with full pay and an end to government intervention in industrial disputes. One worker when asked what they were striking for answered "We're protesting against everything".

At the time of writing we are unsure as to the present situation in Denmark. We don't know if the strike is over or not. Whether workers have been able to organise around collective demands or not. Not surprisingly, the press in Britain has said very little about this demonstration of working class strength. If you have any further information on the struggle in Denmark we would be very grateful to receive it and publish it in the next issue of Wildcat.

One thing is certain, the class struggle is hotting up. Workers all over the world are fighting the bosses. These battles may be defeated individually, but they are the prelude to the united struggle which can cross all boundaries and defeat the bosses of all nations.



# THE MINERS STRIKE

## First Salvo in the Class War

Given the weakness of the miners' strike - in a word, trade unionism - it was inevitable that it would be defeated without its aims - the prevention of job losses - being achieved. But despite this weakness, the real and growing gains in consciousness, among miners, miners' wives, and the rest of the working class in Britain and internationally, cannot be over-estimated. The lessons of the greatest and most violent strike in British history are maturing in the working class. We hope to contribute to the process by which the seeds of revolution, sown by the bosses and their police and trade union gigolos, come to fruition in the fertile soil of decaying capitalist society.

The miners' strike's strength derived largely from the organisation of women in mining communities. This was a result of the weakness of trade unionism among women. Without the union leaders and traditions to tell them how to behave, which have weakened the class struggle in Britain for 100 years, women simply got on with what needed to be done. Far from being the weakest section of the working class, unable to fight back against the bosses' onslaught because they are unorganised, women have shown time and again that it is their very lack of involvement in the organisations that hold men back, that enables them to organise themselves and carry out their own decisions and actions.

I AM A  
PIG



The violence of the state, the occupations, imprisonment, beating of innocent workers, prevention of movement across county boundaries to go picketing, showed to thousands of workers the nature of class society. All the lying crap about civil liberties, fair play, the peaceful nature of class struggle in Britain - all this has been revealed for what it is. The law is a weapon in the hands of the ruling class - when it is insufficient, it is simply ignored or changed.

The media are tools of the rulers of society - this is just as true in Britain as in Russia. Workers who were once fairly conservative, who used to respect the police, now see their true nature. These lessons will not be forgotten, not by anyone in mining areas, nor their children, nor their grandchildren. This shows how people learn in struggle. Thousands of workers have been politicised by the strike. The understanding of these points was shown in every act of class violence, against police, press and TV scum, NCB property, and scabs. The hit squads, who organised paramilitary attacks on the class enemy, were supported by militant miners and all class conscious workers. The burning of scab buses and scabs' homes, NCB office blocks and pit heads, pointed the way forward to what will have to be done in the future. The community riots which swept mining communities, in which police stations were besieged, and whole villages defended themselves against the state behind burning barricades, armed with petrol bombs, pointed to the revolutionary civil war to come.

The riot is now an established form of class struggle, as it was before the cancer of Labourism took root at the beginning of the century. Numerous anti-police riots have taken place since the miners' strike.

Unfortunately the vast majority of miners, bogged down with trade union ideas, felt they could afford to be passive throughout the strike. The strike was at its strongest when it went beyond miners themselves, to involve the whole working class community. The involvement of people from all sections of the working class in all the activities of the strike, including riots, hit squads, picketing, and collecting money, showed how strikes have to be organised, and how the revolution will occur. The NUM's attempts to limit meetings to its members, dividing the class according to industry, showed how unions will try to sabotage revolution.

The recreation of human community out of isolation and separation is what the class struggle leads to. In the miners' strike the workers became more aware of this than ever before. The communist revolution is the development of the struggle for community. Class consciousness is the realisation of this aim. This consciousness has clearly begun to emerge.

Miners saw the need to take the struggle to workers abroad. Against the international attack of the ruling class - the import of coal from Poland and oil from elsewhere, to feed the power stations - the workers to some extent organised international solidarity. As well as the enormous financial support from around the world - which was very important to miners families, and shouldn't be minimised - there was the total boycott of Australian coal (normally Britain's main exporter), solidarity from dockers around the world, the sabotage of French coal trains. Some workers saw their international interests, and put class before country. Although none of this went anything like far enough to actually prevent the scab fuel from pouring in - particularly from Poland, where the workers have been too crushed by McGahey's friends in the "socialist" government to organise solidarity, and much of it was held in check by the unions - all of it shows the way forward to the international class struggle of the future.

A SCAB  
A GRASS



At the end of the strike some workers began to see what we are on about when we condemn the trade unions. On the day after the strike was supposed to end, Tuesday, March 5th 1985, I was talking to Kent miners in a Yorkshire miners' club. In defiance of the National Executive, these miners had come up to try to continue the strike. They were planning to lobby Yorkshire NUM. The Yorkshire miners explained how the Yorkshire NUM had, quote, "sabotaged the strike". Ironically, the end of the strike was not a case of NUM sabotage, as the militants said, it was a result of the drift back to work. NUM sabotage had done its demoralising work long before "Black Sunday". Although Scargill is still worshipped by the miners, and even by many of their wives, trade unionism as such has been weakend.

The NUM showed the nature of trade unionism as a capitalist institution when it held off the crucial picketing of Nottinghamshire in the first weeks of the strike, in order to "calm things down", to allow a ballot. It showed its nature when it arranged with the police for pickets to be limited at Welsh power stations and steel works. On September 1 1984, the Welsh NUM ordered miners who had occupied the entrance to Newport docks to surrender. They did and were arrested. It showed how it holds back the class struggle when it excluded miners' wives and supporters from meetings, and when it tried to stop supporters joining picket lines, and prevented miners from going round recruiting more passive elements into the pickets. The NUM showed its true nature when it stopped mass picketing on the grounds that it couldn't afford it, in Yorkshire and Wales. These area NUMs salted away miners' money, desperately needed by pickets and their families, in foreign bank accounts. The unofficial Lancashire strike committee showed it possible to avoid the sequestrators by giving their money out to sympathisers, and was thus able to keep the buses running.

The NUM showed its role when Jack Taylor and other NUM leaders went on TV to condemn the riots, and when Arthur Scargill condemned attacks on scabs at a miners rally and then again at a rally in Stoke at which he shared a platform with Neil Kinnock. It goes without saying that we don't condemn any acts of class violence.

### TRADE UNIONS V. THE WORKERS

Tragedy was mixed with farce when Scargill told miners that he could deliver workers solidarity by appealing to the biggest scabs in the country, the trade union leaders. Many union leaders, such as Chapple and Sirs, never disguised their wish to see the strike defeated. Others such as NUR leader Jimmy Knapp endorsed the solidarity action their members were taking anyway, whilst working overtime to prevent it escalating. Many rail workers wanted to take strike action. When, in response to rank and file pressure, NUR leaders called Midland region out on a one day protest strike against the victimisation of rail workers who refused to handle coal, Southern Region railmen came out unofficially in solidarity. But this was an exception. In general, militant workers were not prepared to take action without their leaders' backing.



# MINERS' STRIKE

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The TGWU also played a part in sabotaging the two dock strikes of the summer of 84. They confused dockers and lied to them about what the strike was about, claiming it had nothing to do with the miners. But what broke the dock strikes was the passivity of dockers. They were largely unprepared to come out for an overtly political strike. Mass pickets of miners might have changed their minds. But miners were too busy cheering Arthur Scargill to do this.

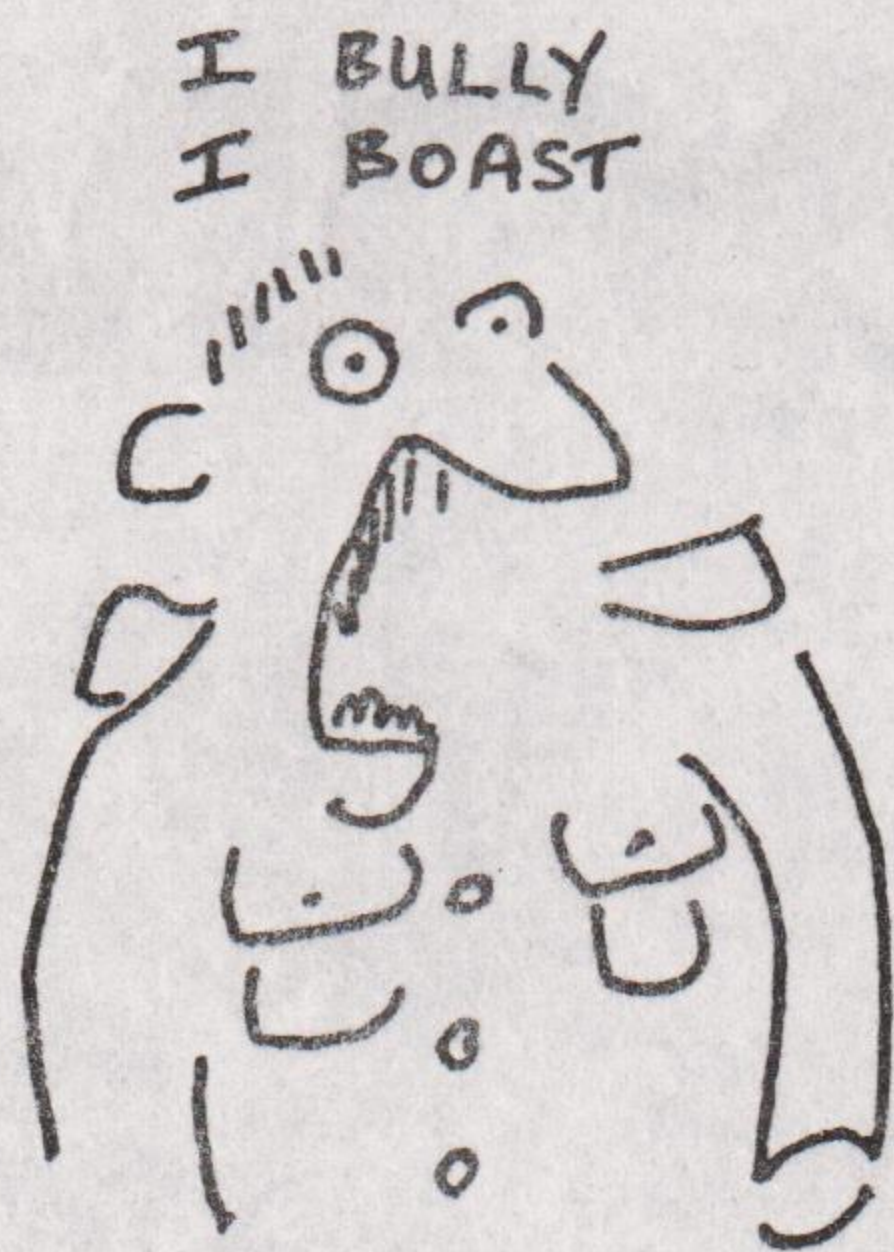
Welsh miners showed that workers have learned a few things since 1926 when they dangled a noose over TUC leader Norman Willis. The TUC will have to be one of the first targets of future workers' struggles.

But the crisis has not yet reached the stage where most workers have been forced to fight, let alone confront trade unionism. In the immediate future, we can expect to see this happening. Most workers in Britain are nowhere near as confident of the trade unions as miners are, and most unions are nowhere near as flexible as the NUM. Already, the unions are blatantly sabotaging strikes by introducing compulsory ballots.

"A union is not entitled to organise mass picketing", is Mr Justice Scott's ruling (Guardian 11 April 85). In other words, effective class struggle is now illegal, and most unions, in Britain at least, are notoriously legalistic. In other words, they will find it impossible to organise and thus contain the class struggle. The government's trade union laws are forcing the unions to act more like American-style industrial police than militant saboteurs like the NUM. This may prove to be their undoing.

## WORLD-WIDE CRISIS - WORLD-WIDE STRUGGLE

The international context in which this strike took place is one of rising class struggle. More important than the number of strikes, riots and demonstrations which are blazing across the world, illuminating the darkening skies with the flames of class struggle, is the political background. In the thirties, there were also numerous strikes. But at that time, the working class had just suffered a political defeat. To give just one example, workers still thought Russia was socialist. They still followed the left. Workers today, at least in Europe, are more cynical. As the myriad leftist sects found in the miners' strike, it's not so easy to get workers to accept the moronic ideologies which defeated the workers of 50 years ago. But workers seem more open to real communist arguments today than they did then. The idea that the working class is 'undefeated' is true, in the sense that it hasn't been crushed on a massive scale yet.



In addition, the biggest and most contradictory economic system in history is clearly heading for collapse. The US economy is no longer driving the world, it is eating it. The recent surge in the US economy is coming to an end without having stimulated a world economic recovery. On the other hand America itself is now burdened by vast trade and government spending deficits. Exports have collapsed because of the overvalued dollar. High interest rates have drained funds from industry and left agriculture as a whole in a state of near bankruptcy - leading to an epidemic of bank failures in the farming states. Whatever measures the US takes to counter these problems will plunge the world into new recession. The ruling class is already attacking the workers of the world in every conceivable way - wage cuts, repression, carved-up social services and subsidies. The deepening crisis will leave it no option but to intensify these attacks. As each ruling class is forced to attack a large part of its population, the workers will be forced to fight back. They will be forced to see the connection between their struggles and those of their neighbors, and act accordingly.

The capitalist crisis also threatens the imperialist blocs. There will be tendencies towards unplanned wars like the Falklands and internal civil wars between increasingly disparate and desperate capitalist factions. The shifting sandbanks of their fragile alliances are shrinking islands in the swamp of their disintegrating economy. The course towards the third world war continues. All these tendencies - splits in the capitalist class, preparations for world war, rising class struggle - are happening at once and are in no sense exclusive. Any combination of them can happen at once, as history shows.

## INTERVENING IN THE STRIKE

Enthusied by the politicisation of the miners and their supporters in the strike, political organisations jumped on the bandwagon. They all fell off it again, except certain left-wing tendencies in the Labour Party, which have done very well out of the strike, judging by the optimism of its post-strike an-

alysis, and some revolutionaries like Wildcat and various anarchists. The reactionary tactlessness of calling for ballots (Revolutionary Communist Party), condemning class violence (SWP), was only rivalled by the stupidity of asking the TUC to call a general strike (Workers Revolutionary Party). But left Labourites like the Militant grew because many workers still think the Labour Party can be reformed, in spite of its clearly anti-working class role during the strike. Unlike revolutionaries in the thirties, we are in an increasingly better position to point out the reactionary nature of trying to reform the Labour Party. Fifty years of experience proves our case.

Some revolutionaries were able to get our message across because we went to the picket lines, and defended a consistent line on the need to break with trade unionism from the first week of the strike. Towards the end of the strike, in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Scotland, workers became noticeably friendlier towards our publications than they had at the start. Then the NUM called off the strike, but the political arguments in the mining communities continue, and revolutionaries are participating in them.

I AM GOING TO GET MY HEAD KICKED IN



## OVER? NEVER!

The most negative feature of the strike was scabbing. Its necessary to unconditionally support all acts of class violence against scabs, but that's not enough. The revolution won't happen if half the working class has to terrorise the other. Miners must try to work out how to win back scabs to their class. They should distinguish between hardend scabs and people who were driven back by hardship in the last weeks of the strike. We must work out how to deal with the proven fact that large sections of the working class can be bought off by the bosses. The ruling class is deliberately dividing the working class, and we have to work out how to unite it. Obviously, the crisis itself will force the ruling class to attack large numbers of workers at once, but it still has enough leeway to pay enormous amounts of money to scabs where necessary.

But if workers in a European country can learn the lessons of both Poland 1980 and Britain 1984 (mass solidarity and the community riot), and put them into practice, that country will be on the verge of revolution.

If the lessons of this strike are spread widely in the working class, in particular to need to struggle outside and against the unions, revolution will become a practical possibility.

The lead that miners can take now is in teaching other workers in struggle the lessons they've learned; they should organise revolutionary workers' groups to address other workers on the things they've learned.

From Quom to the Kremlin, from Tirana to Teheran, from Whitehall to Wellington, the ruling classes are preparing for an intensification of class war.

This analysis isn't meant to be a detached 'balance sheet' of the miners' strike. It's meant to be a practical contribution to the development of class struggle. One of the most significant effects of the miners' strike, seen in continuity with the working class uprisings of 1981, is its demonstration of the growth of class anger in Britain. This class anger is not always visible, but is definitely there. Hatred of the scum who rule us is spreading. This hatred is a basic precondition for the growth of revolutionary consciousness.

As an anarchist leaflet produced by Class War in London said -

"A huge explosion of class hatred and anger is building up and when it erupts it will make the '81 riots look like a tea party. In the meantime when you look out of your window we'll be there! When you drive down the street in your Rolls - we'll be there. We have no demands to make of you, there's no reforms you can make to get rid of us, our banners read only

"Behold your future executioners!"

## communist bulletin 50p

\* The Miners - After the Strike

\* PERSPECTIVES The Crisis & War Preparations

\* Capitalist Barbarism in Africa

\* CWO - Turning Marxism on its Head

The Bulletin April 1985 No 8

Obtainable from - Box 85, 43 Candlemakers Row, Edinburgh UK price £0.50.

Much of this article is taken from the excellent analysis of the miners' strike from COMMUNIST BULLETIN no 8, and it also leans heavily on 'The Miners Strike' in BULLETIN no 7, which we also strongly recommend to our readers.



# CLASSROOM— CLASS WAR

The class struggle in the classroom - the teachers' strike and the school students' actions - has provoked a lively debate about to what extent school teachers, given their role in maintaining capitalist order, can contribute positively to the class struggle. We are publishing a contribution to this issue by one of our contacts, and extracts from a leaflet produced by the revolutionary anarchist group, Careless Talk, in Stoke. This leaflet was distributed at the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) school students' rally in Stoke, and was enthusiastically received by the students. Several helped to hand it out, and two of them, along with an anarchist who tried to defend them, were arrested and charged with distributing obscene literature.

## THE TEACHERS' STRIKES --- CLASS WAR IN THE CLASSROOMS ?

The Tories' current attack upon teachers' conditions and pay is a continuation of previous Labour policy. It's important to remember Shirley Williams began the first round of education cuts in the wake of a much publicised concern about "falling rolls". Jim Callaghan laid the political groundwork for the current proposals to centralise control of education in the infamous "Great Debate". The end of the post-war boom around the early 'seventies, when in office, to cut the cost to the State of schooling and to restructure it to deal with the main problem of the 'eighties and 'nineties : youth unemployment.

The main thrust of the Tories' attack is to use wages as a means of forcing teachers to accept a considerable worsening of conditions associated with these changes. Teachers are not in a strong position. The last ten years have seen teachers working harder and longer to compensate for the effects of cuts, only to see their own pay go progressively downwards during that period. Yet it is probably the employers' blatant attempt to link pay and conditions which has led to the upsurge of militancy, rather than economic hardship as such. The current dispute is now three months old, and there is open talk of it possibly going on for a year or longer. The Unions have tried to channel the largely symbolic action they have proposed into a "salaries campaign" which of course they will control. No action has been proposed to deal with the burning issue of 'assessment'. The Unions appear to be ready to sell out altogether on other aspects of working conditions. The Government, on the other hand, fresh from defeating the miners, seems to be on the verge of kicking out the acquiescent Unions as mediators, and simply imposing the changes by legislation.

The employers want new contracts which will more tightly define teachers' duties, making lunchtime supervision and cover for absent colleagues contractual. They want a three-year probationary period and reduced wages for new teachers. But the issue which has undoubtedly united teachers is Keith Joseph's plans for compulsory annual assessment. These plans are part of a wider series of far-reaching changes designed to increase central control of education and in particular, what goes on between the teacher and pupil within the classroom. To force through these changes together with the 60,000 job losses required nationally, the Government will need to inflict a decisive defeat upon the teachers. That's why the remarks by Joseph recently have been so provocative: a defeat inflicted upon the teachers will be a political priority for the Tories this year.



In 1984 the change of mood amongst teachers first became evident at the NUT Easter conference. On the surface the issue was pay. Teachers' actions in schools went considerably beyond the ineffective guidelines issued by the Unions. But the aim of referring the claim to arbitration allowed the union leaders off the hook and a subsequent defeat for the teachers' claim that year. Now the employers have taken a tougher line and want to link any future pay rises with conditions. And the Government can be confident that they can sit tight this time because the action the teachers have taken so far has had minimal impact.

Teachers, possibly more than any other group, exemplify all the problems inherent in industrial action by those who play a key role in propping up the system which exploits everyone else. Although teachers are essentially wage-earners whose pay is marginally above that of many manual workers, they are also low-level functionaries in a hierarchy whose role is to drill State ideology into the minds of tomorrow's workers. It is the same 'State ideology' that now holds teachers back.

Three myths need to be exploded if teachers are to move forward. The first is the lie that teachers are 'professionals'. Professionalism is a tool of the State and media designed to weaken industrial action when it takes place, and to blind workers to the reality of their position and the real nature of their work. Ironically, it has been the recent revolts by pupils themselves in some areas which has done more to force teachers to choose between 'professionalism' or supporting the pupil picket lines forming at the school gates and hence their own struggle as workers. The second myth obscuring teachers' real interests in the dispute, is the 'myth of Houghton' arguing for a return to the Houghton report pay levels of 1974. Instituted by a Labour Government, its acceptance caused a massive widening of pay differentials, reinforcing the hierarchical system of pay scales, and generally undermining collective struggle ever since. Teachers forget that it aroused bitter resentment at the time because of the way the increases were distributed leading to a rash of unofficial strikes against it. Needless to say it is a myth pedalled by all the teacher Unions.

Ideologically though, it is a barrier to real struggle, channeling action instead against 'unsympathetic' (ie. Tory) authorities in the hope of reaching 'agreements' with Labour ones. In reality, of course, authorities like ILEA have shown themselves to be every bit as ruthless an employer no matter how 'left' is their rhetoric. The third myth is the one that no group of workers are immune from: that traditional Trade Unionism is the way to fight and resist these attacks. The fact that all the teaching Unions have spent the last three years busy negotiating a worsening of conditions if the price is right, coupled with their preparedness to subordinate any action, however modest, to the dictates of Capitalist Law, has only highlighted the near total lack of any initiative by teachers independent of the limits of the Union framework. The only outstanding example has been the unofficial 'absolute no-cover' action in London involving 3,500 teachers against compulsory transfers. NUT was able to keep this isolated with some help from the ILEA employers, proposed disciplinary proceedings were dropped for the duration of this dispute. Again it has been

striking pupils who have really caused the most disruption so far. Despite a virtual media blackout, hundreds of pupils have been suspended in schools across the country as revolts have spread, particularly in inner city schools. Unhampered by the ideology of Trade Unionism, pupils have come up against police on horseback in some cases. In the months preceding the teachers' action, many more children took an active part in the miners' strike than has generally been realised. The first report of a children's strike in support of the miners (in Scotland) involved a hundred and fifty pupils who walked out of school to join a picket line. Naturally the scale of children's rebellion against schools and in the cause of the striking miners has been played down by the media. Anti-school sentiments were not far from the lips of the 6,000 pupils who demonstrated in Glasgow city centre recently, as well as slogans like 'You can shove the YTS up your arse' and 'Dole is better than slavery'.

If the teachers are really to make any headway this time they need to learn the lesson of the miners' strike that no single group of workers can win alone. They must also extend their action beyond the limits imposed by the Trade Union framework, directly to the rank and file in other industries like the civil service and the post office. If they are to resist the State's plans to make working class education turn out the docile dole-queue fodder of tomorrow, they must support the actions of their pupils. Otherwise they will remain the cultural and moral "cops" of a system that presides over war, misery and more exploitation; they will remain the bosses' front line in the class war.



ON NEXT PAGE:  
EXTRACTS FROM  
SCHOOL STRIKE  
LEAFLET



# FUCK SCHOOL

The Labour Party Young Socialists are trying to get pupils to strike in support of the teachers pay claims and against the Youth Training Scheme. They want an orderly, passive and purely symbolic one day demonstration where everyone follows the orders of the stewards. This will get you nowhere.

## SCHOOLS AS PRISONS

You're not being taught, you're being controlled. School is compulsory INDOCTRINATION, it has very little to do with education. It is designed to teach you obedience and respect for authority, to actively discourage you from thinking for yourself. They are not interested in creativity or independent thought ... they want obedient parrots who will grow up to be obedient, unquestioning wage slaves, or who will submissively join the ranks of the unemployed. The LPYS do not question this system ... they want the victims (ie YOU) to strike on behalf of the teachers, on behalf of the compliant unquestioning guards of these compulsory CONCENTRATION camps. Teachers are soft cops, they are one of the most valuable tools of the state for maintaining and reinforcing a shit society based on boredom, oppression and exploitation.

## USE THE TEACHERS' STRIKE ... for yourselves, not for them!

The only time kids and teachers can strike together is when teachers come over to our side and reject their role as thought police. By ramming their boring and often irrelevant lessons down our throats they prevent us from learning for ourselves. Striking for teachers now would be like prisoners striking for better paid screws! Only when teachers give up their role as SOFT COPS and actively encourage school strikes and the SELF-organisation/education of kids, only then can they be seen as allies.

## YOUTH 'TRAINING' ... an inadequate opposition

YES! Oppose the conscripted labour of the Youth 'Training' Schemes ... but are the alternatives to it that much better? Life on the dole with just enough money to survive ... or WAGE SLAVERY, slogging your guts out for 40 hours a week for a pittance you'll be too knackered to spend. The LPYS demand the 'Right to Work': they want everyone to be a wage slave for 35 hours a week. Big deal! Whichever way you look at it, kids today have no future in this society.

We say FUCK SCHOOL, FUCK WAGE SLAVERY, and FUCK THE LPYS! If we want a society worth living in we are going to have to fight for it - not march for it (in an orderly fashion!) or vote for it. Already the actions of the miners and other workers throughout the world (mass

strikes plus riots in France, Denmark, Spain, South Africa, Belgium etc.) are showing the way forward. These plus the actions of school students in Britain are showing that there is a growing international movement which will not patch up this crumbling system but will destroy it.

## KIDS ON THE RAMPAGE ...

Riots and strikes have occurred in Glasgow, Bradford, Bristol, Portsmouth, Liverpool, Doncaster, and several Yorkshire mining villages. Doubtless there are countless other examples that we haven't heard of yet. They have involved 'kids' 'rampaging' through the streets tearing up school books, storming town halls, battles with the police and occupations of various buildings. There have also been many examples of sabotage and vandalism which have obviously been directed against schools as institutions not to mention lots of small scale strikes over issues such as school uniforms (uniforms are the systems way of dehumanising you, destroying your individuality).

We are entering a new period of struggle. The unions and parties are part of the system we are fighting against. Its not just a matter of a few more crumbs, we want the whole fucking bakery!! Replacing Thatcher with some other bureaucrat (eg Kinnock the scab (ugh!)) will get us nowhere. It is time for a complete transformation of society, for an escalation of the class war towards Social Revolution...

END WAGE SLAVERY! SMASH THE STATE! SMASH SCHOOLING! NO TROTS! NO LEADERS! NO PARTIES! FOR SELF ORGANISATION!

For more information, and copies of the leaflet, write to Careless Talk, c/o PO Box 294, Newcastle, Staffs.



# Wildcat

## BASIC PRINCIPLES

1) Opposition to capitalist society which exists in every country in the world; both in the form of 'private capitalism' and the 'mixed economy' as in the American bloc, and in the form of 'state capitalism' as in the Russian bloc, China, and much of the 'third world'.

2) Commitment to the communist objective - abolition of nation states and the money/market/wages system and its replacement by a classless society, common ownership and democratic control of the world's resources.

3) Rejection of nationalisation and other state capitalist economic measures as any solution to working class problems, or to the world crisis caused by capitalism.

4) Rejection of all expressions of nationalism, including 'national liberation' organisations such as the IRA, PLO etc. For the internationalisation of class struggle.

5) Opposition to all capitalist and nationalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. Opposition to all joint work with these organisations, including participation in front organisations such as CND.

6) Support and encouragement for independent working class struggle, outside the control of the trade unions (including the shop stewards and 'rank and file' movements), and all political parties.

7) Rejection of the use of parliament. For the active participation of the whole working class in its own emancipation through social revolution which overthrows all governments, bosses and leaders.

8) Active opposition to all forms of sexism, racism, and cultural and institutionalised barriers to working class solidarity.

9) Opposition to religion, pacifism and all other ideological mystifications.

10) Support for principled co-operation among revolutionaries, and opposition to sectarianism.

## WILDCAT contact address:

Wildcat c/o Raven Press,  
8-10 Great Ancoats Street,  
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(correspondence only)

## PAMPHLETS

The new, revised and enlarged pamphlet:

'How Socialist is the Socialist Workers Party'

will be available very shortly now. Advance orders welcome.

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'Front Line News From The Class War'

(Analysis of recent strikes in Britain and Europe)

Price 30p including post.



If you like the paper and want it to continue to appear on a regular basis, we urgently need your help:

- take out a subscription.
- take bundles of the paper to sell to workmates and friends.
- place it in your local radical bookshop if it is not already there.
- send us articles for the paper (short, no jargon) about class struggle in your area.

'Wildcat' is produced at present by a small group based mainly in Manchester. But we don't aim to stay that way! We would like new people to join our group from any part of the country. If you agree with what we say, contact us to find out more.

## PUBLIC MEETING

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE CLASSROOMS  
7.45pm Wednesday 29th May 1985  
The Millstone Pub, Thomas Street  
off Oldham Street, behind the  
multi-storey car park on Church  
Street.

The meeting is in the back room on the ground floor.

All Welcome. Plenty of time for discussion.





# BOSSSES SPREAD AIDS PANIC

Over the last few months the popular press has massively increased its hate campaign against gays, violent attacks on homosexuals are on the increase and the government has stepped in with repressive measures of its own.

The reason, or rather, the excuse for all of this is a disease originating in central Africa amongst both men and women, which, by chance, emerged in the West amongst homosexual men. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, known as AIDS, is a sexually transmitted disease which can break down the body's defence system leaving the sufferer susceptible to other diseases which can be fatal.

## THE GUTTER PRESS

Papers such as the 'Sun' have deliberately set out to cause a panic over AIDS by reporting cases in an inflammatory and emotive way, and by dubbing it 'the gay plague' and describing it as the wrath of god. Gays are painted not as the first unfortunate victims, but as filthy perverts who threaten us all because AIDS can be passed on through unscreened blood transfusions.

By reporting the disease in this way, and by not giving all the known facts (such as how unlikely it is to contract AIDS, or that in most cases it isn't fatal) they have caused widespread fear and panic. The symptoms associated with AIDS in many cases are very similar to the physical symptoms of anxiety and stress. One doctor reported that almost all the patients he saw who thought they had AIDS were, in fact, suffering from acute anxiety.

In other words, the fear of AIDS propagated by the press is making people ill. Also, because the contagiousness of the disease has been so vastly exaggerated, workers such as firemen and hospital workers have refused to help gay men or AIDS sufferers for fear of contracting the disease themselves.

## QUEER BASHING

The attacks on gays in the media have led to increasing numbers of physical assaults on gays. 'Queer bashing' is on the increase as the more susceptible members of the working-class (mostly alienated youths) have been prompted to take out their frustrations on gays rather than on their real enemies. As a result, many gays now fear to go out of a night for fear of attack. In March the government introduced regulations, supposedly to combat AIDS, against the advice of the medical profession. These measures in effect equate AIDS with cholera or typhoid. Sufferers must be registered, can be hospitalised against their will without recourse to discharging themselves and can even be banned from using public toilets or libraries.

Doctors have objected to these because they feel such measures infringe upon the confidentiality expected by sufferers of what is a sexually transmitted disease, and could drive the disease underground. Apparently the government was going to introduce harsher, more repressive measures, but was forced to withdraw them as they had no medical basis what-so-ever! Similar measures have been brought to bear in other

countries. In Australia gays can be imprisoned for giving blood. Also, some gays have been attacked and hospitalised by other blood donors when overheard answering questions on their sexuality at clinics. All the attacks mentioned above have been instigated by the ruling class simply using AIDS as an excuse. These act as a smoke-screen to prevent workers taking out their frustration and anger on their real enemies, the bosses, gays provide a good scape-goat and, secondly, keep the working-class divided against itself to prevent the unity we need to defeat them. Divide and rule!

## GAYS MUST ORGANISE

In order to defend themselves against the bosses' attacks gays must organise. Firstly to defend themselves against the attacks from 'queer bashers' and pigs as violently as is necessary. Secondly, to break out from the ghettos and begin to seek the support and understanding of fellow workers where-ever possible.

During the miners' strike some gays were involved in support groups and active on the picket lines. They were able to forge links with the miners to their mutual benefit on the basis of their common experience. Both have experienced at first hand violence and intimidation from the pigs, attacks in the media and the bias of the courts, so each could understand the others situation. Last summer when the council in Rugby refused jobs to gays, there were miners and their wives involved in the protests in solidarity with the gays. This shows the way forward.

So long as the bosses can keep us divided whether by sex, race, industry, nationality or by sexuality, then none of us stand much chance of countering the attacks they make on us. Only through class solidarity can our struggles be successful, only through that unity can we overthrow the bastards once and for all.

DEATH TO THE 'QUEER'-BASHERS!  
ALL POWER TO THE BOSS-BASHERS!

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