

The **Syndicalist**

Issue One - Summer 98 Produced by the **Syndicalist Alliance** 30p

SYNDICALIST ALLIANCE LAUNCHED

If you are happy with New Labours benefit cuts, arms sales to Indonesia, the betrayal of the Liverpool Dockers and descent into financial sleaze then the Syndicalist Alliance is not for you. If you are turned off by the authoritarian left but love direct action and adore solidarity then read on

Our new Syndicalist Alliance is an association of working class activists who are dedicated to internationalism, solidarity and direct democracy. It works with and inside trade unions, trades councils, unemployed groups, environmental direct action groups, strike support groups in fact wherever there are people genuinely struggling against the state and capitalism. We work to build these groups not as entrists parasitically preying on the efforts of others. Through our efforts and ideas we seek to imbue these groups with the spirit of Syndicalism.

The Syndicalist Alliance rejects all party political action as the state is the enemy of the working class. By promoting direct action and solidarity we seek to co-ordinate and maximise the effect of Syndicalists active in various campaigns. We are part of the international Syndicalist family and as such our internationalism is one of practical mutual aid and not rhetoric. As internationalists we oppose war and militarism.

In the present the struggles we support are in defence of working class interests from opposing cuts in services and benefits to strike support work and defending the planet from ecological degradation. In the future we will work to form organisations with the desire and capability to destroy the twin evils of state and capitalism replacing them with a free society where production is for need not profit and voluntary co-operation replaces government.



• Delegates at the Malmö activists conference (story Page 2)

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If you like what you read then why not subscribe? Initially the **Syndicalist** will be quarterly, but in future who knows! £2 gets you the next 4 issues.

The **Syndicalist**,
39 Sheriff's Highway, Hedon, Hull HU12 8HA

Syndicalist Alliance

As we see things

1. We live in a society divided into two classes whose interests are opposed. Since Marx expounded this theory, the details have changed, the boundaries have blurred, but seeing society in terms of the very real division between the haves and the have-nots, or the workers and the bosses, is still the most useful basis from which to change it for the better. Trying to reform the system from within or working with your manager to improve things is a complete non-starter.
2. Where we differ from the various Marxist Leninist organisations is that we take seriously the idea that we the workers through our own self-organisation, are the only people who can effectively confront the evil effects of this class system.
3. The other important point which defines our approach as Syndicalists is that we believe we must organise ourselves for this confrontation with the boss class in the here and now, starting from the position in which we find ourselves ... rather than waiting until "the masses" to spontaneously rise up and create a pure and perfect revolution.
4. As an organisation we support the most class conscious and combative sections of our class when they come into conflict with the bosses. Their stories will be told through The Syndicalist
5. This approach (and reality in general) is incompatible with the purist attitude to the struggle against authority, so for example, although we would not allow full-time trade union officials or members of political parties to join, we are not so idealistic that we would, say, have disassociated ourselves from the Liverpool dockers just because they called for the TGWU to make the dispute official. Equally in a more positive vein we are in favour of part-time officials in trade unions as this makes it possible for more people to get involved in the struggle rather than it being confined to people (usually men) without child-care responsibilities.
6. We don't believe handfuls of activists can set up parallel unions, but if this were realistically possible - for example if the Liverpool dockers has broken with the TGWU - we would have wholeheartedly supported them.
7. Our basic guiding principle is that we are trying to reduce the level of alienation and exploitation caused by the authoritarian nature of class-based society. To do this we need to experiment in the here and now with exercising control over our own lives. The only way in which we can do this effectively (i.e. with the involvement of large numbers of our fellow workers) is by taking a practical in (or even initiating) the various forms of direct action - e.g. strikes, occupations etc which will always spring from time to time as workers try to improve their lot within the existing system.
8. We, the workers, are the only sizeable group of people who are motivated to take-up this anti-authoritarian project, (being those discriminated against under this system, we are also the best also the best equipped to do so given the human values which still form the essential basis of our culture, even under the dog eat dog system.



WORLD-WIDE UNION WEB SITE

By Guy Cheverton

A new effort to use cyberspace to boost international workers' solidarity, was agreed at an activists' conference, which was organised alongside the sixteenth congress of the Syndicalist SAC union confederation.

No doubt drawing on the undoubted success of the Liverpool Dockers' harnessing of the Internet, it was decided to design a joint web-site, which will spread solidarity action quickly, when necessary.

The technical work and administering the web-site will be done by the CGT in Madrid. The web-site is to be open to all class struggle trade unions and will be a step towards integrating Europe's radical unionists. These are made up of: 1) Minorities inside conservative unions, such as Liverpool dockers, opposition in the French CGT, Italian CGIL and Portuguese CGTP; 2) Rank and file unions - SUD Rail and Education, France; OVB, Holland; CUB and ARCA, Italy. 3) Radical nationalist unions - STC Corsica; LAB, Basque country; CANC, Canaries 4) Syndicalist unions - CGT Spain; SAC Sweden; CNT, France; USI Italy.

All these organisations, despite sometimes being in competition in their given countries, have a lot more in common with each other than with the leaders of confederations like the TUC.

Very quickly, it is hoped, the project, which includes an E-Mail tree, will be widened out to unions in Africa, South America and the "Tiger Unions" of Asia.

LABOURNET THREATENED

Perhaps the currently best known union internet site Labour Net is threatened by court action by Biwater a British-owned multinational which is spearheading privatisation of public utilities in South Africa. Apparently this company take exception to the South African Municipal Workers Unions campaign against privatisation. Labour Net is interested in linking with the new website for Alternative Unions to be administered by the CGT in Madrid an enriching process for all concerned. Messages of solidarity to Labour Net should be sent to:

<http://www.labournet.org.uk/>

GLASGOW'S SOCIAL WORKERS STRIKE AGAINST PRIVATISATION

By Mick Parkin

Glasgow council, where New Labour has more or less taken over from Old Labour, has got a cunning plan to move its 3,000 home helps from the Social Work department to the Catering Division. They put this plan together without consulting UNISON, but they claim that it's a purely technical re-organisation. However, as well as being an insult to the workers involved (who provide all sorts of care beyond just getting in people's shopping and putting the vacuum round). It would make it a lot easier to privatise their jobs at some point in the future. Maybe Labour has lost interest in privatising things, maybe if they did get privatised the input of market expertise would see their pay go up and pensions improve...

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the social workers in UNISON voted for a policy of refusing to implement this change and on Monday 3rd of August two of them were suspended without pay following this policy. Also, on Monday 3rd, all 2,000 of their colleagues walked out and began an unofficial strike. Well, actually where they were looking after vulnerable people the strikers gave 24 hours notice, but in a break with previous policy they did not arrange to provide a minimum cover during the dispute.

Last time they went on strike they did provide minimum cover (which, amazingly, involved having to put extra workers into some centres to bring the staffing level to what UNISON considers a safe minimum) but on that occasion the management gloated publicly that they would be able to hold out against such a strike forever.

The strike was spread via mass meetings which were held every day and packed out, with all 100 of the units involved being constantly picketed. With very few exceptions the workforce was totally solid and the strike immediately began to bite... accompanied by the background music of the Daily Record describing the strikers as "nutters led by nut-cases".

On Thursday 6th, New Labour took the issue to court where they got an injunction declaring the strike illegal and although the local branch of UNISON refused to repudiate the unofficial action a mass meeting on Monday 10th agreed to go back to work. However, they went back after a march to the office in Govan where it all started and they will be having an immediate ballot for official strike action.

In short, it's been a classic case of people who've never got involved in the union before very quickly coming to their senses once they take part in a bit of direct action and are now determined to come back at the first opportunity to have another go.



Watch this space.

UNICOBAS TO HOST EUROPEAN UNION MEETING

Rome wasn't built in a day and neither will be co-operation of rank and file trade unionism, having said that the International Meeting of European Alternative Unions in Europe to be hosted by the strong Italian rank and file union Unicobas should go some way to increasing communication between Europe's independent union left. Invited to the October 29 to November the 1st in Rome are unions such as the Spanish CGT, SUD France, SAC Sweden, CNT France, LAB Basque country and ESK CUIS the same.

A DEVELOPING GREED

The first protest camp has been set up to stop a housing development in Nantwich near Crewe. The proposed 500 house estate and 4 mile road threatens rare Black Poplars, (only 2,000 left in the UK), an orchard and hedge rows, some of which are up to 30 foot thick! The camp already has 4 treehouses, a tunnel and a tower. There is unanimous local support with even local builders donating materials. For directions ring 01270 560645.

Toytown Camp is an Autonomous Free Zone now in it's forth week in leafy Cheltenham. The camp's defending a beautiful piece of woodland right in the middle of Cheltenham, under threat from another (Waitrose) supermarket; and keeping a very close eye on a nearby 3-acre playing field, the planned site for a 600ft 'leisure shed' with bowling alley, another multiplex cinema, another road - the same old Babylon bollox - with a half-a-dozen treehouses, numerous benders and tepees. "Toytown Camp" is: Just off the A40 junction of the M5, then a short bus ride into the middle of town. Ask anybody for the St James' site or the protest camp at: The Old Village Great Western Road Cheltenham Glos GL50 3QN phone box: 01242 525280 mobile: 0797 131 6597.

URGENT! is the newsletter of the Urban Regeneration and Greenfield Environment Network with tonnes of info on housing developments around the country. Issue 2 out now 50p + SAE Box HN, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford, OX4 1RQ Tel 07000 785202.

SPANISH POSTIES TAKE DIRECT ACTION AGAINST PRIVATISATION

Postal workers in the Barcelona section of the Syndicalist union, CGT, have kick-started a series of national strikes against privatisation by rejecting the defeatism of other unions and adopting a strategy of direct action.

On the 11th and 12th of March they occupied the main postal building in the centre of the city which was a major success, despite some very serious confrontations - especially when the riot police were sent to clear them out. Throughout all of this, officials of the CCOO (a reformist union) were on hand to encourage workers to cross picket lines and to deride the strike as futile.

Due to the success of the Barcelona initiative, a national platform of all postal unions was formed. The CCOO joined this, but then quickly left once they had secured a few sops from the government. As a result a large number of posties have left the CCOO and joined the CGT.

The platform has organised a series of one-day strikes and a rally in Madrid on May 23rd, which was attended by 20,000 posties. The privatisation of the postal service was passed into law on June 10th, so the CGT will continue to lead the fight against the affects, which will resume after the summer holidays. The effect of privatisation will be to axe 30,000 of the postal services present staff of 65,000 and to introduce the usual kinds of flexibility.

EARTH FIRST! SUMMER GATHERING

WEDNESDAY 9TH TO SEPTEMBER 14TH £10

To receive details of how to get to site, send SAE to EF! Gathering c/o Cornerstone Resource Centre, 16 Sholebrooke Ave, Chapeltown, Leeds LS7 3HB
Tel: 0113 262 9365.

BINGLAROOOGA

"There has been a site on the proposed route of the Bingley Bypass for two years. At present it may be tatted down even though the road has just been given the go ahead, due to a lack of support...It is a beautiful site next to a river and a few people have been struggling to keep it going.. They are burnt out and can't handle being there anymore. "We are sending out a desperate plea to you, all we want is a few people to live on site. There are plenty of habitable tree houses and good skips near by. Please help so that we don't lose faith that there are still people out there willing to fight the destruction of our planet." Ring :Lizzie, 0961 932 179 NOW

BLOCKED LINES

"The blockades will continue until the government agrees to a process to legally recognise indigenous lands."

(The Indigenous Federation of the State of Bolivia)

1,000 Pemon Indians of the Imataca and Gran Sabana regions of Venezuela are blockading the only highway between Venezuela and Brazil. They are trying to stop a 120 kilometre high voltage electrical line being built through their rainforest homeland. 50 National Guard are on the scene and telephone communications from the region are being blocked. At the beginning of the month in Caracas, a coalition of environmental organisations and university students marched in solidarity with the indigenous protesters in a march timed to coincide with the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus. It was the third time in a week that the highway has been closed. The blockades began in July, protesters suspended the blockades after the government agreed to meet with indigenous leaders. But blockades began again with protesters saying, "... the government sent representatives with no real decision-making power."

In May 1997, the Venezuelan government signed a decree which opens up 40% of the Imataca Forest Reserve, an area of 3.6 million hectares of diverse tropical forest to mining. About 10,000 Indians live in the reserve but were never consulted about the decrees and are worried that their land will be targeted by mining and loggers and that their small scale co-operative mining will be affected. The Pemon live mainly from their gardens supplemented by hunting and fishing. Palm trees provide housing materials and fruit. Some villages have set up small-scale tourism. The Pemon came into sustained contact with national society in the 1920's but have so far successfully kept their own language and way of life.

Contact: Survival International, 11-15 Emerald St., London, WC1N 3QL 0171 242 1441

SUPPORT TAMESIDE STRIKERS

On Saturday September the 12th a march and rally of 200 Care Workers and their supporters will march through Stalybridge departing at 1.00 pm from Astley Road members of our brand new **Syndicalist Alliance** will be there and will be meeting after in a local pub to discuss the situation of Trade Unionism in this country and beyond. On 3 June of June 1998 P45's were sent out to 200 care workers in Tameside previously threatened twice with the sack their crime to refuse to take a pay cut.

The Tameside Branch of UNISON who are prosecuting the dispute against Tameside Care Group are determined to gain the reinstatement of their members at decent rates of pay (not the £2.80 per hour of the privatised ex council run Tameside care homes).

The strikers also want decent care for the elderly not the mean scrimping "care" of the profit obsessed Tameside care group. Mind you when we say privatised the Labour Council has the golden share in the care group and the final reckoning lies with Roy Oldham leader of Tameside Council, (letters of protest to the Council Offices Wellington Road Ashton Under Lyne OL6 6DI.)

IN PRINT ...

A new book 'DiY Culture' McKay (Pub: Verso, ISBN 1-85984-260-7) Irvine Welsh (Trainspotting) calls it, "The most uplifting and empowering book you'll read in a long time". In the intro McKay raises some interesting points about ideology, but for those of you who are more interested in reading what's going on as contemporary history is being lived, the book is a series of chapters written by activists involved in alternative media, early party scene, Road Protest.

- For a well researched but readable copy of what's going on in the world of chemicals get TOXCAT Copies are £2 + SAE from PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L66 3TX

from: UNISON
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Lancashire
OL6 7LB
Tel: 0161 308 2452
Fax: 0161 339 2571
Minicom: 0161 343 5367

To: All Trade Union Branches

15th April 1998

Dear Brother/Sister

I am writing regarding an official all out strike action involving members of our branch who work for Tameside Care Group, which has eleven Residential Care Homes and one Nursing Home in Tameside.

Tameside Care Group was set up in 1990 with all staff initially transferring on protected Local Government rates but the Company then had financial difficulties arising mainly from mismanagement and members took reduced terms and conditions of employment in 1992. This meant that some staff lost up to 35% of their wages.

Last year the members voted overwhelmingly to be balloted on Industrial Action in support of a modest pay claim which management had refused. These members have not had any pay rises for 5 years.

In the middle of the Ballot, Management came back with a proposal of pay and service cuts and issued members with 90 day notice of termination of employment letters.

The proposed cuts in conditions included no company sick pay, reduced holidays and reduced payment for Bank Holidays. Management also proposed to cut the hourly rate in some cases by £2.08 an hour. Most of our members are part time female workers, domestic, admin., cooks, and care workers.

The members were ballot again on Industrial Action and started their action on Monday 30th March. The strikers face the threat of dismissal on May Day if they do not accept the pay cut and cut in conditions.

We are now asking if you could support us in the following ways:

- *send a letter of support to the T.C.G. workers, any donations payable to the Strike Fund, Tameside, UNISON, address as above.*
- *send a letter of protest regarding the cuts to Alan Firth, Managing director Tameside Care Group, Enterprise House, Grange Road South, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 5NY.
Tel: 0161 368 9099 Fax: 0161 368 0058*
- *invite us to your meetings to hear about the dispute.*

Yours fraternally,

*Noel Pine,
Branch Secretary*

DUBLIN BRICKIES SHOW HOW TO WIN

(Source: Workers Solidarity Movement)

The Dublin brickies' strike against the big construction firm, Cramptons, showed the rest of us a thing or two about the media. Because they were victorious, the newspapers and RTE gave scant coverage to the dispute - and no report of the victory. The last thing they want is the rest of us following a good example.

Several years ago construction firms began to replace directly employed workers with contractors.

Workers were forced into taking C45s, a special tax arrangement for "self-employed" contractors. The result was most building workers being paid 'cash-in-hand', weak unions, and a dramatic rise in safety problems. In the years 1995-1997 alone, forty workers were killed on sites. Back in the 1980s when most workers were directly employed there were only six fatal accidents in the whole decade. The average fine on employers for breaching safety rules has been a mere £250.

Being 'off the books' (i.e. in the black economy), workers are not fully insured. Being self-employed they are not entitled to holiday pay, travel time, subsistence payments or any of the other hard won rights that directly employed workers can expect. For years the Department of Employment and the Tax Office have looked the other way. Promises that the use of C45s would be tightened up came to nothing. Last year just over half of the 110,000 building workers were paying PAYE. The rest were pushed into unprotected so-called "self-employment" on dodgy tax certificates.

Things started to happen when bricklayers on a Cramptons site at Dublin City University refused cash payment 'into-the-hand' from a sub-contractor and instead demanded legal, direct employment by Cramptons, with PAYE paid. They were sacked. Their union, the Building and Allied Trades Union, balloted them for action and pickets went on. Cramptons ran off and found a judge who gave them an injunction against BATU.

Judge Kelly ruled the strike illegal because the ballot did not specify exactly what sort of action the union would take. The fact that there is no law requiring this didn't matter to him. The injunction not only banned pickets but also placards, leaflets or speaking about the dispute in a "provocative manner". Anyone breaking the injunction was to be carted off to Mountjoy prison. The judge had no interest in the fact that Cramptons were breaking the law by knowingly using sub-contractors who were hiring workers on a 'no tax' basis. Cramptons then sued BATU for £500,000.

Another five bricklayers were sacked from the Cramptons site at the Smurfit Business School in Clonskeagh. The circumstances were the same. The five placed an unofficial picket, and were immediately enjoined by Cramptons. Not willing to be walked upon, militants in BATU decided to take on both Cramptons and

the courts. January 29th saw the public launch of 'Building Workers Against the Black Economy' at a well attended meeting of building workers. This group of union activists made it clear that they would not be bound by injunctions handed down by the courts, they would organise mass pickets, and they would break the Industrial Relations Act.

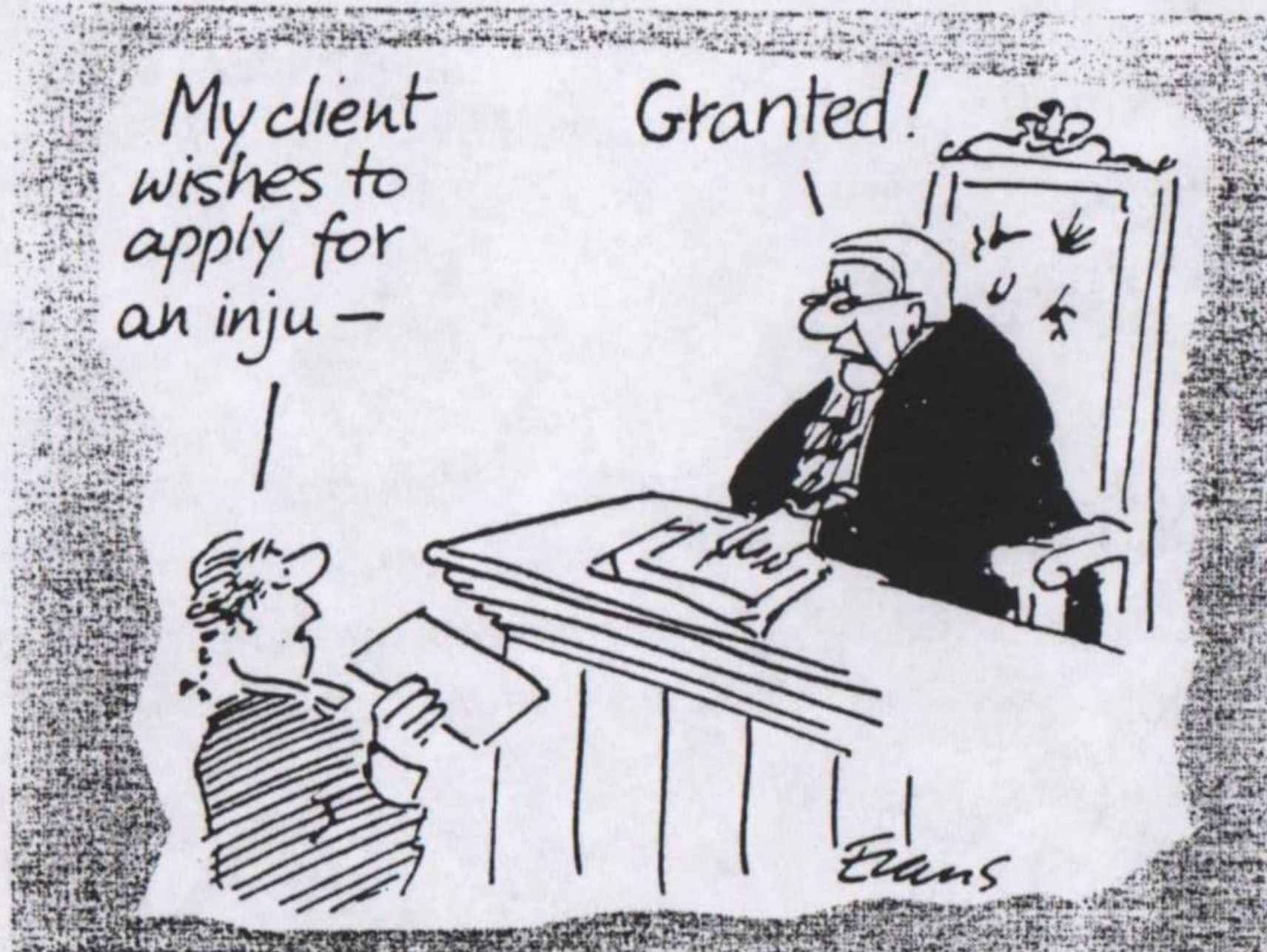
Mass pickets were then organised at the two sites on a number of mornings. Despite being in contempt of the court injunctions nobody was arrested. It had been made very clear that arrests would lead to a Dublin-wide stoppage in the building industry. But Cramptons were not offering anything either. It was then agreed to step up the pressure and put full-time pickets on. This was done by the strikers being supported by other brickies who joined in on their way to and from work, at lunchtime, and by taking time off from their own jobs. The Cramptons site in the Liberties was then hit too. With three of their six Dublin sites falling way behind completion deadlines, Cramptons agreed to talk.

The settlement reached included direct employment on all their sites, reinstatement of the sacked workers, no victimisation of anyone involved in the illegal pickets, dropping the court case against BATU, and payment of the union's legal costs. The feeling of strength this victory has brought is seen in the increased level of participation in the union by ordinary members. By using direct action methods and winning, a lot of BATU members now feel a

confidence not seen in the industry for many years.

In Carlow the union has turned things around and ensured that practically everyone is directly employed. In Limerick an illegal 300 strong picket forced Arch Construction to also directly employ. BATU members in a timber frame firm in Monaghan were sacked when they joined the union, their strike was won when the boss was told his products would be blacked all around Ireland.

This is a great example to the rest of the trade union movement. Instead of continually waltzing off to the Labour Court, LRC and other never-ending talking shops, the brickies were prepared to go 'unofficial', ignore the anti-strike law, and use the real strength of the unions - solidarity. Those who dare to fight also dare to win.



GET OUT OF JAIL FREE

Mexican prisoner Juan Lopez escaped from jail after saving up six years worth of Salsa sauce before using the stuff to dissolve the bars of his cell window! In the same country six inmates escaped during keep fit sessions in the exercise yard - using a trampoline to bounce over the wall. In the USA three prisoners were playing Monopoly in their cells waiting to go to court when they used the tiny wheel barrow playing piece to remove 'tamper resistant screws' on an airduct covering before crawling to the roof, lowering themselves down with a rope made of bedding and escaping in a stolen pick up truck.



DOCKERS ARE FIGHTING BACK INTERNATIONALLY

(Source: Workers Solidarity Movement)

The Liverpool dockers were forced to end their dispute after 28 months in January of this year. But they were unbowed, the letter explaining to their supporters why they had ended the dispute ended with a quote from Jim Larkin

"Who is it to speak of defeat? I tell you a cause like ours is greater than defeat can know. It is the power of powers".

Throughout their struggle the dockers had identified the attack on them as part of an international attack on dockworkers and on workers in general. This was one of the reasons why they received so much international support. We looked at this support in the last issue of Workers Solidarity. We also published what may have seemed at that time a rather conspiratorial piece about former Australian army personnel being trained secretly as dockers in Dubai in preparation to act as scabs.

On April 7th the main docks company in Australia (Patricks) sacked its entire workforce of 1,400. At the same time hundreds of security guards, with dogs, flooded onto 17 different dock locations around Australia, resulting in at least one worker being injured. Some arrived by boat and were described by one witness as behaving like Commandos as they leapt ashore. Some conspiracy theories it turns out are true!

Within days the courts had swung into action behind the employers, giving out injunctions against the dockers' mass

pickets, then against community mass pickets, and finally reaching the absurd length of forbidding anyone filming within 200m of the docks. The government announced \$250 million to pay sacking-money to docks companies. It also announced its intention to take out injunctions internationally against any blacking action against Australian ships.

It is unsurprising that a couple of days after the lock out started the media were already presenting it as over, and the government and companies had started popping the champagne. Their well laid plans they believed had left the dockers defenceless.

At the time of writing, just over a month later, it is clear the bosses celebrations were premature. They probably expected the mass pickets and occupations by dockers. They moved swiftly to ban them. But the first hint that this was only the start of the opposition came when - on the first morning - 1,000 Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union-building workers marched off sites and down to the picket lines in Victoria.

On Saturday 11th at East Swanson docks 350 workers succeeded in stopping a cargo train entering the docks. On the 16th the 180,000 strong Australian Manufacturing Workers Union announced its intention to ballot its members for a strike in support of the dockers. On the 16th, in response to injunctions against the dockers, some dozen unions in Victoria said they would strike if the police attempted to clear the picket lines. "We'll be there in the hundreds and the thousands. . we won't be intimidated by their injunctions".

On the 17th it was revealed that more than £250 million worth of cargo had been stranded on Sydney and Melbourne docks alone. Toyota said they would be forced to shut their Altona plant due to parts shortages. The following day Patricks told the courts they would have to close half their docks because of the losses they had suffered.

The 18th also saw thousands of dock workers and supporters engage in an overnight resistance to police attempts to smash the picket line in East Swanson. The police were forced to abandon these attempts in the early morning when 1,000 building workers arrived to join the pickets. Mass resistance like this forced Melbourne police to reach a deal with the pickets on the 20th

By the 21st mass pickets were stopping trucks and trains getting into many of the ports and sections of industry were being forced to close down. The ruling class

began to look for a way out. The first sign of this was an injunction given to the unions re-instating the dock workers because "there is an arguable case that the Patrick owners and Patrick employers have engaged in an unlawful conspiracy".

Crucially the dockers continued to keep the pickets in place as the courts found in their favour and then Patricks applied for and got an appeal. Meanwhile international solidarity poured in from other dockers' unions in the form of donations and pledges to boycott Australian goods and ships.

On 4th May, the dockers won a partial court victory. Patricks was forced to lay off the scab companies and employ only dockers from the original unionised companies. But the court left it open to Patricks as to how many of these workers it would be 'able' to employ. On the 8th the Melbourne (East Swanson) dockers marched back to work in triumph but elsewhere the return was a delayed due to attempts by Patricks to put 25 dockers on a blacklist.

The dockers fight is far from over. The battle has entered a "cold war" period, with skirmishes here and there. However whatever happens in the future the dockers and their supporters demonstrated the ability of mass action to halt a well-planned conspiracy involving all levels of the state.

Meanwhile (May 11th) the "Columbus Canada", a ship loaded by scab labour during the dispute, is sailing from port to port on the US West Coast, unable to get unloaded because of boycotts by US dockers. There is little doubt that the speed of reaction of dockers internationally is due in part to the successful efforts of the Liverpool dockers, during their struggle to build contacts between dock workers all over the world.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sound and Fury.- eco protests 1997 now you can relive, through the sounds, a London Reclaim The Streets, Reclaim the Ballots Tony Blair slugging an unenvironmental farmer, the rants of Ben Elton at the Fuming Mad Rally and more £3 from Dream Power Pictures PO Box 521, Hove, E. Sussex BN3 6HY.

LIVERPOOL DOCKERS – STILL STICKING TOGETHER

The following is a slightly condensed transcript of an interview with Bob Richie, a docks shop steward from Liverpool. The interview was carried out in Malmo on July 7th, 1998 at a conference of the SAC, the Swedish Syndicalist union. The interviewer is Mick Parkin.

MP: So, things are still happening in Liverpool?

BR: Oh yeah. I mean, when the dispute ended, that was a terrible experience, and it was not as clear cut as the 4 to 1 vote suggested – it was an awful lot closer. Then we had outside groups criticising us – like the SWP always saying that we ought to be occupying the docks, but the port is 5 miles long, and anyway, when we put it to a mass meeting there was very little support. Still, that decision to end the dispute, it haunted me for weeks afterwards.

So, it was important to get as many people as possible back to work. Of course any potential employers would look at it – two and a half years on strike – and just say ‘Goodbye’, so we went back to the idea of organising our own co-operative Labour Supply Agency. What that means is providing skilled labour to the port industry and it may seem strange, but the Dock Board were interested...

MP: Is that because you have the skills that the scabs don't have?

BR: Yeah – we're multi-skilled, even and with 30 or 40 years experience.

MP: So what kind of wages are scabs on these days? (the rate

before the dispute was £10 an hour)

BR: Drakes at the container terminal are on £6 an hour, but in the general cargo terminal they're paying agency labour £3 an hour.

MP: What support are you getting for the co-op?

BR: The Council in Liverpool and Sefton have been very helpful and so have John Moore's University. In terms of money, the government gives us £75 a week for the first year, for every job that we create, then there's a lot of European money going too. Then you see companies paying over £3,000 to have people trained up on the forklifts – and that's just a one week course – so we've now got 9 men on a course to be instructors. They're on week 4 of the 6 weeks training and then that will be another arm of the co-op.

MP: And the dock work has started too?

BR: Yeah, last week the first 20 men got a start, and it was great, cos you had men – 50 years of age – coming up to you and saying, “this is great – for the first time in me life, no bosses”. But them 20 men, they've got to pull their weight, because a lot depends on the impression that they make.

MP: How's the work shared out?

BR: There's gonna be a standard 32 hour week - no overtime - and they get paid for that at £7 an hour, even if no ships come in. We've been fighting against casual labour all of our lives - so, we're not having it in our co-op. The co-ordination needed to keep things running - National Insurance even - all that's down to the stewards, and we'll be working unpaid until there's enough money coming in. We run things day-to-

day and then we report back to a mass meeting once a month.

MP: How many men are involved with the co-op?

BR: There's about 200, because some of the men took their pensions, or they're on sickness benefit, and some of the younger men got pushed into taking low-paid jobs by the JSA ... but, obviously they're welcome back when the co-op expands.

MP: And you don't have to work with the scabs?

BR: No - we won't work in the container terminal alongside the scabs, so we work in the timber terminal and they stay out of it. See, they got very brave once the dispute ended, but you still hear stories every week where some scab walks into a pub and one of the customers - not even a docker has thrown a pint in his face.

There's another side to it too, because the increase in injuries at work has been terrible, even the company can see that, though it is the damage to the cargo that really worries them. Like Jaguar have started using the port again now, but they're having to send their own drivers down to take the cars on. That was traditionally dockers work, so might get to do that again.

MP: Careful that you don't bump into any of them scabs.

BR: Yeah, we'll just give them a wave. No, we'll keep the windows up, so there's no contact - but just let them know that we're back and they have not got long!

MP: How's things on the international side?

BR: We're keeping up the links - like I was over in Australia with

Cont on Page 9

OIL BARREN

"Despite warnings of global warming and the alarming rate of extinction of plant and animal species, oil companies are scrambling to tap the world's remaining oil resources. With forecasts of many reserves drying up within the next few decades, the oil industry is in a race to explore the most remote areas of the world, with no regard for the fragile ecosystems they often destroy in the process." - Oilwatch

Last week BP announced a 67 billion pound move to merge with Amoco which will make them the 14th largest corporation in the world. Here are some things you might like to know about...

BP is proud of its 'miniscule' contribution to climate change from its production operations: only 1 % of world CO2 - but that makes it the world's 21st largest polluter, bigger than countries like Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and the Netherlands!

A recent Colombian government report presents a catalogue of deforestation, contamination and dumping of toxic waste. They've been fined hundreds of thousands of pounds by the Colombians and had four rigs temporarily suspended. It also finances the Colombian military for the presence of a 3,000 brigade of soldiers to protect its installations from 'guerrilla' attacks. Since 1994 six villagers who have objected to damage caused by the oil company, have been assassinated and others falsely imprisoned and harassed by the army. Human rights lawyers investigating the killings said that BP's military brigade are out of control.

Amoco Infamous for its Amoco Cadiz oil disaster in Brittany 1978, their US refineries have been plagued by fires, explosions, injuries and deaths. In Indiana, Amoco accepts responsibility for 75,600,000 litres of spillage and an explosion at a gas plant in Kansas forced a close down, it's also had a go in Papua New Guinea, where it bought up 30% of the OK Tedi correctmine. Toxic spillage from here proceeded via local rivers to the Torres Straights and Australia's Great Barrier Reef. In 1989 it paid Burma's brutal military regime \$5 Million for a concession in the country's virgin teak forests and its 1996 proposals for a World Bank financed oil exploration of Western Siberia outraged environmental groups. Amoco is a member of the Global Climate Coalition, an industry front group that tells everybody that global warming isn't happening and tries to stop laws that reduce in fossil fuel emissions. Last year it help fund a PR company by the Nigerian dictatorship to improve the countries image and prevent oil sanctions.

MAI-DAY Conference - to help organise a co-ordinated UK campaign to stop the MAI. 19th September at Insurance Hall, 20 Aldermanbury, London EC2. To book your place ring Chris 01268 682820.

Hot Spring 98 United Action Against Corporate Rule. Excellent booklet. Send a large SAE to A SEED Europe, PO Box 92066, 1090 AB Amsterdam, Netherlands Tel 31 20 668 2236.

Cont from prev page

the dispute that's on there and I'm going to Japan next week. The faxes never stop coming, so we help anyone we can. And the Women's group is still active with the people who have been disappeared in Turkey, or Hillsborough... Tameside workers - which is really impressive, cos these women are in a caring profession, but now they're industrial militants as well.

MP: Yeah, well it's great that, with yourselves - the Company thought that they could just chuck you out on the streets and forget it, but instead they've created...

BR: They've created a monster (laughs). The thing is that all through the dispute, we consulted the men. Sometimes the stewards had to make a snap decision, but we always went back to the men and said "is that OK?" And this co-op, we're all in it together, so even when we get a new building - we're gonna pay the bar staff £7 an hour as well, everyone at the same rate of pay and just that'll cause ructions throughout the catering industry.

MP: Yeah, tell us a bit about that.

BR: Well, we want to move out of Transport House as soon as possible and get our own building. We'd have one floor for the offices, one for the museum of the dock industry going right up to our dispute and on the ground floor a bar and restaurant. Anyone who's been to Liverpool will know there's a need for a bar.

MP: Right enough. And how are relations with the T&G?

BR: The sooner we get away the better, maybe even start building our own union.

MP: Are there similar groundswells in other unions?

BR: I think that the rank and file in the whole movement is looking for something completely different, cos we're paying massive wages to these official who sign agreements and then come back to the members and then say that "Sorry, it's the best deal that we can do for you" - but the members have not even discussed the offer. So, if we do need any paid officials, they should be on the same pay as the members and if they're not doing their job properly we should be able to get them out. Certainly, we want people elected, not imposed from the top.

MP: Aye, not a lot to ask for really. OK, thanks and good luck with the co-op.

RYANAIR: AIRPORT CLOSED DOWN BUT SIPTU LEADERS RUN AWAY FROM VICTORY



Magnificent solidarity, did it scare the SIPTU leaders more than it scared Michael O'Leary?

MARCH 7th saw Dublin airport closed down. Clerical staff, loaders, fire fighters, mechanics, catering staff, cabin crews, computer operators, even the airport police walked off the job. When the 39 Ryanair baggage handlers who have been fighting for recognition of their union, SIPTU, were effectively locked-out; thousands of workers from all the different airport companies came out in a great display of solidarity. Taxis, buses, An Post, delivery vans refused to pass the pickets. The airport was completely shut down, for the first time ever.

The Ryanair workers had been taking part in short stoppages for nine weeks. This resulted from the company's refusal to negotiate on pay, working conditions and safety matters. The dispute was well known and there was tremendous public sympathy for the baggage handlers. Hardly anyone was taking the side of the 19th richest person in Ireland, practically everyone was on the side of the workers.

At the airport there was a real fighting spirit. Ryanair was going to be shown a thing or two. And other airport bosses would be shown that they had better not think that workers would just roll over every time they were asked for further concessions.

Newspaper editors who had been fairly reasonable in their coverage of the dispute changed tack in the blinking of an eye. Bosses' organisations were outraged at this return to real trade unionism. It was as if they had believed that legal restrictions and over a decade of 'social partnership' had killed off any fighting spirit in workers.

SIPTU and ICTU leaders were just as eager to put a stop to this tremendous expression of solidarity. It was upsetting their cosy routine of 'conciliation', 'arbitration', 'compromise' (and sometimes outright defeat as at Nolans Transport, the Three Lakes Hotel, and Pat the Baker). Ryanair's Chief Executive, Michael O'Leary, was paid a bonus of £17million. That's as much as a baggage-handler would earn if he

went on working, full time, at current rates, not just to the end of the century but to the end of the millenium, the next millenium. In fact, for more than 1,130 years.

When the news broke on March 8th that the airport was going back to work and there had been a deal, more than a few delighted union members thought that Ryanair had given up and recognised SIPTU. Then confusion set in. The baggage handlers had been reinstated but Ryanair had not recognised the union - the strike had achieved no more than a return to the situation earlier that week. It was such a squandered opportunity. Keeping the airport shut for just a little longer would have totally defeated Ryanair and given the rest of us the most spectacular victory in years.

People who saw the result of their solidarity - nothing - won't be in a hurry to repeat it. What came out of it? ...an inquiry. What's there to inquire about? A long tribunal so that everyone would forget about the Ryanair dispute.

The pickets were no sooner off the gates than Ryanair was saying that they would never recognise the union. On March 23rd they stuck the boot in by letting three baggage handlers go just before the end of their probationary year. The union confined itself to "lodging a strong protest" with the inquiry team. I'll bet that scared Michael O'Leary. Not. On April 5th he told the Sunday Tribune that "I'm confident that the 39 workers won't go on strike again, no matter what the inquiry finds".

And who is on this inquiry team? Dan McAuley, the former chief of the Federated Union of Employers; and Phil Flynn, ex-chief of the ICTU who was given the chair of the ICC Bank as a reward for his services to the ruling class. You don't need a suspicious mind to think that the main role of the inquiry is to recommend a 'code of practice' whereby the airport is never closed down again. The rights of the Ryanair workers will be secondary, and disposable. SIPTU is the biggest union in the airport, it is the biggest union in Ireland. It is also one of the most conservative and bureaucratic. Desperately trying to be 'responsible social partners', the top officials hate conflict. That is why we had only part-time stoppages, no pickets, no question of an all-out picket, no blacking, no sympathy action. Instead we were offered reliance on government intervention, being seen as 'reasonable' in the media, and appeals to take 'partnership' seriously. Winning by militant trade union methods seems to be more threatening to the characters from the top floor in Liberty Hall than failing to protect union members in Ryanair. Connolly and Larkin must have migraine from all the spinning in their graves.

37 HOUR WEEK VICTORY FOR TRANSPORT WORKERS

(Source: Red South West)

Train guards and drivers employed by Wales and West Passenger Trains Ltd, members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union recently took successful strike action over the implementation of a 37 hour week.

The 2 hour reduction in the working week was agreed in 1996, but Wales and West then tried to link implementation to 'restructuring' (rail speak for job losses and poorer conditions). When the members rejected these proposals, the company tried to impose changes in the system of collecting fares on trains, to fund the 37 hour week.

A strike ballot gained a massive 80% yes vote. Wales and West sought a High Court injunction, but the judge threw the case out, refused appeal, awarded the RMT costs of around £40,000 and the strikes went ahead on 19th December and 5th January!

Wales and South West then suspended Bristol Rail Branch Secretary, Alex Gordon, for the crime of speaking to the press while on the picket line with members! Railway employees are gagged from speaking in public about their work, as you'd expect in such a top secret enterprise! This failed to break the strikers' morale and the RMT gave an ultimatum to re-instate Gordon without any pre-conditions, before negotiations would continue. At this point Wales and West realised the strength of the support for the strike, charges were dropped against Gordon and the company conceded defeat.

On Tuesday 13th January, under threat of a further two days strike action, the company agreed to implement a 37 hour week without strings! A victory for strong union organisation, solidarity and strike action!

This example must be repeated by RMT members throughout the privatised train companies, if jobs and services are to be defended against the demands of rail bosses seeking profits for share-seeking above safety,

job security etc. London Underground workers are preparing for industrial action against the Government's planned privatisation under cover of Private Finance Initiative. Banned by law from organising a "political" strike, they'll do it instead in protest at threatened changes to their conditions of service which privatisation will bring.

For thousands of rail workers, privatisation and "re-structuring" has meant job losses, deteriorating conditions, increased workloads and greater stress. Travellers face increasing levels of unreliability, discomfort, lateness, cancellations and high prices, as well as having to continue to subsidise the private companies through taxes!

Investment by the new companies seems to be concentrated on painting their trains in pretty colours and dressing their staff up in daft uniforms rather than improving a rail network chronically under-funded for the last 20 years. It's present absurdly fragmented state offers rich pickings for the fast buck makers, but will be the death of a safe and reliable transport system.

The only solution today, as in 1948, is an end to private ownership within the public transport system.

FLACK OVER FLOCK

A millionaire car dealer in a Rutland village has been rebuffed in court after attempting to sue a nearby farmer for having sheep that were too muddy. "Mud was inevitable" said Judge Victor Hall as he threw out Frank Sytner's application to Leicester Crown Court for a restraining order against farmer Edward Baines and his untidy flock.

While Judge Hall counselled that people living in the countryside had to expect such things, Sytner's wife Elizabeth told the court of her own rustic ordeal; "I was in my garden and heard cows making a noise in the field. It was annoying, so I went to see what was happening." When told it was normal for cows to be heard in the countryside, Mrs Sytner replied "Yes, it's unfortunate, isn't it?". Sytner was ordered to pay his own and Mr. Baines legal costs, estimated at £35,000.

THE CORPORATIONS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ASYLUM

(Source: SchNews)

"Their influence has grown so much that today, of the world's richest economies, 51 are multinational corporations, and the total sales of the top 200 firms in the world are now equivalent to nearly 30% of global gross domestic product. Indeed, corporations have gained so much power over international political and economic life that we may well be entering a "Brave New Corporate World."

- Ambika Chawla, A SEED

Four weeks ago the Ethyl Corporation of America, received \$13 million from the Canadian government. Well, so what? The Ethyl Corporation make a chemical called methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl, MMT for short. MMT is a fuel additive, which is mixed with petrol in order to prevent engine knocking. It is also a dangerous neurotoxin. Manganese entering the body through the lungs causes nerve damage which can lead to psychosis, memory loss, and early death. In April 1997 the Canadian government decided to ban it.

Had the vote taken place three years earlier, the Ethyl Corporation would have had to abide by the decision. But, since 1994, corporations in Canada, the United States and Mexico have enjoyed a powerful new tool over elected authorities. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) allows companies to sue governments which, they believe, raise unfair barriers to trade.

"It is the butterfly's wings over North America that will cause a hurricane in Europe."

- George Monbiot

Ethyl sued the Canadian government for the 'expropriation' of its 'property' (namely its anticipated profits) and the 'damage' to its 'good reputation' caused by the parliamentary debate. It took its suit to NAFTA, where a secret tribunal whose records are not disclosed and whose decisions cannot be appealed, began to assess the case. Last month, the Canadian government realising that its chances of success were approx zero, settled with Ethyl, agreed

to allow the corporation to resume its sales of MMT and announced that "MMT poses no health risk." So what has any of this got to do with us? Well, the NAFTA rules that allowed Ethyl to sue the Canadian government are almost identical to those in the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

The MAI is a multinationals wet dream. Discussed in secret for the past couple of ears before activists let the cat out of the bag, it will, like NAFTA, give corporations the right to sue governments for even debating issues, which may harm their profits.

The MAI 'will force governments to respond to economic pressures by abolishing worker protections, public safety regulations and measures protecting the environment.'

The Canadian 'pay the polluter' case should have alarm bells ringing in all of us. The signing of the MAI has been delayed, but the mentality of the multinationals will mean that a similar agreement will no doubt be rearing its ugly corporate head in the very near future.

Bristol Reclaim the Streets

"We're up for it today. We know you're just a bunch of professional anarchists"

- Chief Inspector Reid

Another street party, another dollar... So Bristol Reclaim the Streets showed impeccable professionalism in throwing down the gauntlet to the police, who picked it up and wielded it with an iron fist. But the three hundred-or-so party-goers weren't about to go home empty-handed.

As the 'World of Public Order' theme park opened once again on the Bristol streets the old bill struggled to retain control, while party-goers dashed past cordons, outmanoeuvring officers on horses or with dogs, alternately to seize control of two major roundabouts.

There were 66 nickings during a day in which the cheery throng danced two main roads and a Shell garage into closure, leaving the thin blue line just a pale smudge all over the disgruntled pavement.

WRITE TO A PRISONER - NOT YOUR MP

"I have had many letters of support and the support has given me the strength to get through this nightmare."

- Prisoner writing to SchNEWS

PHIL DE SOUSA was recently found guilty of common assault and affray at the Southdown and Eridge Hunt in September 96. He's been involved in direct action such as hunt sabbing, poll tax, prisoner support etc for the last eight years. He should be released on Nov 15th. AW6717, HMP Lewes, Brighton Rd., Lewes

MARK BARNESLEY was attacked by 15 drunk students when out walking with his six week old baby daughter and a family friend. He fought back, and injured five of the students. Despite the fact that every single independant witness said he was the person being attacked he was the only one arrested and eventually received a 12 years prison sentence. WA2897, HMP Full Sutton, York, YO4.

GARY MILL and **TONY POOLE** are both serving life after being stitched up by the police, who killed a black man in custody then framed them. Gary is at HMP Erlestoke, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 5TU. Tony is at Long Lartin, South Littleton, Eversham WR11 5TZ

PABLO LOCKE Inside for life after defending himself against 'a psycho with a multitude of violent convictions'. Pablo admits he was no angel but the sentence should have been more like 8 years. MM2797, HMP Kingston, Milton Rd., Portsmouth, Hampshire (Pablo has also set up a Anarchist Black Cross group for prisoners inside).

MARK CHRISTIAN CULLINANE is presently serving a six year sentence in Tanger, Morocco, for possession of cannabis resin.

Conditions in the prison are horrendous : 25 people in one cell measuring 5m x 7m sharing one toilet between them, with one tap above the loo for use as a shower and for general food and clothes washing, one meal a day of vegetable soup and very little natural daylight. His girlfriend Deborah is having to bring up three children alone, as well as raise money to buy him extra food and toiletries. Money is also needed to help buy art materials for Mark which make his sentence more bearable.

Write to Mark No 21486, Chamber 5 Chartier C, Prison Civil Tanger, Marroccous-Maroc, North Africa

Donations to Deborah J. Hayes, Nationwide Building Society, Flex Account, No 0321/270370675.

Don't know what to write? Talk about your life, about the things you are doing. If you writing to people from political movements keep them involved in what's going on (but obviously don't drop people in the shit!) Most prisoners aren't the mad dogs you forever hear about in the press - they are ordinary people - so get scribbling. If writing for first time its probably best to send letter recorded delivery.

"NO ONE IS ILLEGAL"

Kicking off with a 36 hours party attended by 800 people German activists have set up two new 'alternative' border crossings at the Neisse riverborder near the town of Goerlitz. The 'New' border crossings have been organized by the "No one is illegal" campaign. 300 people have gathered near the small town of Rothenburg to protest against the European migration policy and stress the right of free movement for everybody and free access for all to Europe. Each year especially in summertime the Neisse border is used by thousands of migrants and refugees, who are not allowed to enter Europe. However the area has seen ten thousand new border patrols being stationed to detect "illegal" border crossings..So far two activists have been arrested while trying to construct bridges, and the camps ferry boat has been seized.

HUMAN RIGHTS ARE GOOD BUSINESS

These are your working conditions:

- your shift is 11 or 12 hours long
- you work seven days a week (although you may get every other Sunday off)
- if you can't stay and work late, you'll be fired
- your wage is 16 cents an hour (that's \$6.92 a week - \$358.84 a year)
- there is no union and chances are you'll be fired if you complain
- you'll be working in a room with 16 other workers but you aren't allowed to talk to them
- you're constantly up against a high production quota - you might be yelled at, suffer corporal punishment, or be made to work longer unpaid hours until you have reached your quota
- if you're pregnant you may be fired
- your working environment will be neither safe nor pleasant. It will be noisy, dusty and full of fumes. Chances of incurring industrial injury are high
- in some sections you may find yourself working alongside illegally employed teenage labour if the factory is to be inspected, you will be warned well in advance (in fact you'll probably be cleaning up the factory prior to its inspection). And if you happen to be interviewed, don't worry, there will be someone from the factory management there with you to make sure you give satisfactory answers

Sounds grim. Sounds like something from centuries ago... sounds like one of Nike's offshore factories in Dungguan, China. A handful of human rights activists in the US (among them the Chicago based US/Guatemala Labor Education Project, and the National Labor Committee in New York) have campaigned doggedly to increase awareness of labour practices in offshore assembly plants.

And they don't shy away from naming names: Nike, Wal-Mart, Guess?, Walt Disney, K-Mart, JC Penny, Esprit, Victoria's Secret and Macy's Department Stores were announced by the NLC as the 9 greediest companies/sweatshop abusers.

Although these organisations should be applauded for having made the public aware of the atrocious labour practices of these well-known and extremely rich companies, their activities tend toward the liberal, rather than the radical. The Holiday of Conscience, initiated by the NLC, stops well short of advocating a boycott (which, whilst it might hit companies like Nike where it hurts, is often not a politically effective way to tackle the complexities of capitalism...) but instead encourages consumers to express "concern" to store managers about the labour rights of their production workers. The problem is whether this tactic merely thus salves the customer's liberal conscience to the point where they'll buy the trainers anyway and therefore keep Nike happy too.

The greedy companies themselves, seeing the spotlight turn towards them, are cleverly pre-empting criticism by inviting people into their factories and having them report on their findings. Nike did this in 1997 when it sent former Atlanta mayor, Andrew Young, on a whistle-stop tour of 12 Nike factories in Asia, in an attempt to clear the company's name of accusations of worker abuse. And unsurprisingly, the former mayor returned from his visit announcing that he and Nike were on the same wavelength over workers' rights. He commented - "they agreed with me that good human rights is good business".

Excuse me? I'm sure Nike workers, working in what amounts to sweatshop conditions, will be greatly comforted to know that any improvement in their working conditions, if it comes about, is not because how they are currently treated is inhumane and morally wrong, but because it's "good business".

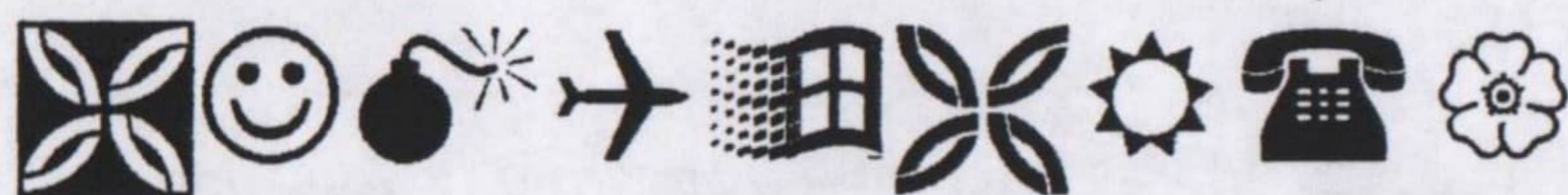
But then, perhaps exposing Nike's commitment to profit at the expense of any commitment to health, rights and simple decency is the way to get them to act. After all, anything which affects their marketshare seems to be the only language they understand.

THANKS TO SchNEWS. Some of the content of this newsletter has been drawn from SchNews a weekly news-sheet! We recommend that you **Subscribe to SchNEWS:** Send first class stamps (e.g. 20 for the next 20 issues) or donations (cheques payable to "Justice?"). Or £15 for a year's subscription, or the SchNEWS supporter's rate, £1 a week. Ask for "original" if you plan to copy and distribute. SchNEWS is post-free to prisoners. You can also pick SchNEWS up at the Brighton Peace and Environment Centre at 43 Gardner Street, Brighton.

SchNEWS, PO Box 2600, Brighton, BN2 2DX, England
Phone/Fax (call before faxing): 01273 685913

Letters.....

Tell us what you think about The Syndicalist.... or whatever is going on in your part of the world. Deadline for the next edition - October 1st.



LOGO COMPETITION

Please save us from the corporate hell of having to using Microsoft clipart as a logo or potentially even worse us attempting to draw something! Send in your ideas for the next issue! The prize won't be quite as good as the Lottery - but the chances of winning are marginally higher.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER

How the mighty have fallen: Lady Thatcher is apparently going on tour with Rod Hull (he of EMU fame). Rod will 'shock' fans (?) by announcing that he wishes EMU had never been born: alas, 'tis only European Monetary Union, and not his noxious puppet. As well as sharing hairstyles and odiousness, it seems Rod and Thatch share the same political leanings- "She has a brilliant mind", quoth he, inaccurately- and the two will share a platform with Nazi alien John Redwood and mustached dullard Nigel Mansell on a national tour to highlight the tedious evils of Brussels.

MUM GASSED FOR CHARLIE

"I was one unarmed middle-aged woman injured and alone in a police cell. How could I possibly be a threat to the police?"

Gravesham Borough News reported the police use of CS gas on Gill Emerson following her arrest during Prince Charles' recent visit to Gravesend, when police burst into her cell without warning and sprayed the gas in her face! They neglected to mention that Mrs Emerson, 43, of the Kent Socialist Alliance, also had her nose broken during the arrest (requiring 3 riot vans, and 20 of Kent's finest) in which she and three others were charged with conspiracy to cause a breach of the peace by sitting on a wall. An additional charge of "criminal damage to a police camcorder" has also been brought. Mrs Emerson said "I was thrown down by several policemen so hard my face hit the ground... by the time I was handcuffed and put in the van I was covered in blood. Later, several policemen burst into my cell and sprayed CS spray directly into my injured face causing me to collapse in severe pain. It was agonising and I couldn't breathe."

Could it be that the Plod were embarrassed that four anti-monarchist demonstrators were able to penetrate their high security/surveillance operation shortly before Big Ear's eagerly-anticipated arrival? Long live the Republic!!!? Get well soon, Gill.

A couple of weeks ago Prince Charles was banging on about how evil genetics were, so it's ironic that he's the head of an environmentally friendly business regeneration charity called 'business in the community', whose past vice-presidents include Sir David Barnes of leading Genetic modifiers Zeneca Pharmaceutical and Sir Anthony Cleaver who used to run the unsafe Dounray nuclear plant! The current vice president is Steven O'Brien who is on the environment panel of Tarmac who trashed Twyford Down. The panel punt out glossy brochures boasting how environmentally sound Tarmac is yet they are at the moment building Runway 2 at Manchester Airport and have just been served an enforcement order for trashing trees and hedgerows.

A decision by the Chief cop of Merseyside police to issue CS spray to all officers at Liverpool and Everton footie matches has not gone down well with local councillors. They have asked the Home Secretary to intervene after Sir Hames Sharples told the clubs they had the choice of officers carrying the spray or matches not being policed at all.

CZECH MATE

We had lots of interesting stuff submitted in Czech, but unfortunately lacked a translator. Any offers?



It's a knock out!

Usedom, Germany: 15 Nazi skinheads attacked a group of black people in a local billiard hall. Little did they know they were a visiting group of boxers from Cuba. Result: two knock outs for Cuba - without reply!

NAZI GETS A LOTTA BOTTLE

The second suicide of an anarchist held in an Italian prison, sparked a mini riot in the "Campo de Fiori" square, Rome, last month. During the demonstration Teodoro Buontempo, ex-leader of Nazi groups and now a fascist congressman, emerged from a nearby restaurant and into the path of 200 anarchist. As they advanced on him, his two bodyguards legged it, leaving him on the receiving end of some quick 'justice'. He returned with 10 cops who also beat a hasty retreat after being pelted with bottles, chairs and tables.

More cops arrived and, faced with identifying the anarchos among the 2,000 passers-by, did the only sensible thing, they began firing machine guns in the air, sending hundreds of tourists into panic. The anarchos once again attacked the police who drove off at high speed, crashing a couple of their cars into each other.

The demonstration continued to another square before people scattered. There were 4 arrests. The next day the right wing press and TV launched attacks on the demonstrators, claiming the attack on their poor old fascist leader was "anti-democratic". The rest of the press stayed silent, because they remember Buontempo as a nazi. The moral of this story for the our Old Bill? Be thankful you get nothing worse than wheelie bins full of drunken Crusties chucked at you!



NEWS IN BRIEF



Protestors who have set up an anti-nuclear camp on Skin Rock in Russia, near the Kola nuclear power plant have been told by sanitarian inspectors that "*camp is threat to the environment*" (unlike the plant)!

Thirteen people were arrested on Tuesday August 4th on suspicion of criminal damage to a genetically engineered (GE) site in Totnes, Devon. The trial crop of **genetically engineered** maize was being grown by Sharpes International Seeds next to a large organic farm. The trial site recently employed security guards in the wake of attacks on crops the previous week. Police also raided the house of a journalist who has been covering the unfolding story of direct action against ge crops, seized video tapes and his computer and held him for 24 hours.

Reclaim the Streets - the movie. The history of RTS since 1992. The Criminal Justice Act, Castlemorton Free Festival, Claremont Road, Liverpool dock dispute and all your fave street parties. The 80 minute video is available from 72 Castlewood Rd, London N16 6DH. Costs at £6 unwaged £8 waged £10 well waged £2,000 for nasty corporations and cops! Cheques payable to Agustin Gutierrez. There's a showing this Sunday (23) at the RITZY CINEMA (15.45) Brixton tube, London - £6 waged £3 unwaged. Why not organise a showing in your home town?

Eleven people were arrested on August 4th in another **Genetix snowball** action as they attempted to uproot genetically engineered sugar beet at Sharpe Seeds Ltd, Boothby Graffoe, 12 miles south of Lincoln. Three people managed to uproot some the freak-beet while others were nicked as they approached the field and charged with going equipped to cause criminal damage with gardening tools. It is not known if a man on his bike coming back from his allotment with a bagful of onions and a trowel was also nicked. To contact the snowball campaign ring 0161 834 0295

A proposed permanent traveller's site is currently seeking planning permission. Brighton **Friends, Families and Travellers** Support Group are asking for letters of support to be headed "Proposed Travellers' Site at Horsdean" and addressed to Alan McCarthy, Director of Environmental Services, Brighton and Hove Council, Bartholomew House, Bartholomew Square, Brighton.

The Syndicalist

P&P **Syndicalist Alliance**, 39 Sheriff's Highway, Hedon, Hull HU12 8HA