

DIRECT ACTION



Monthly paper of the **DIRECT ACTION**
No. 17 MOVEMENT British section of
the International Workers Association **20p**

MINERS STRIKE

The miners' strike is now months old. The bosses must be surprised the miners are still fighting. When the NCB provoked the strike with its announcement (6.3.84) of 20 pit closures this year alone, with the loss of 20,000 jobs (a tenth of the industry), it was confident of an easy victory. The spark that forced the strike was the gamble by the NCB in suddenly closing Cortonwood in four weeks time, when previously the NCB had said it had many years of life--because they did not believe the miners would fight back.

Summer was on the way. The productivity agreement pushed through by the NCB and the Labour government in 1977, (despite a majority vote of the miners rejecting it) had allowed the NCB to stockpile huge reserves of coal to sit out a strike with and had helped to divide the various coalfields. Then a concerted media campaign was launched, calling for a national ballot. This last move wasn't motivated by a concern for democracy (no-one elected McGregor), but rather by a wish to isolate the miners and halt the momentum of the strike. This can be seen from his statement in the Times that the Coal Board will recover its responsibility for managing the coal industry. This can only mean one thing: a concerted class attack against miners, to put them back into the past. Yorkshire miners' leader Jack Taylor said

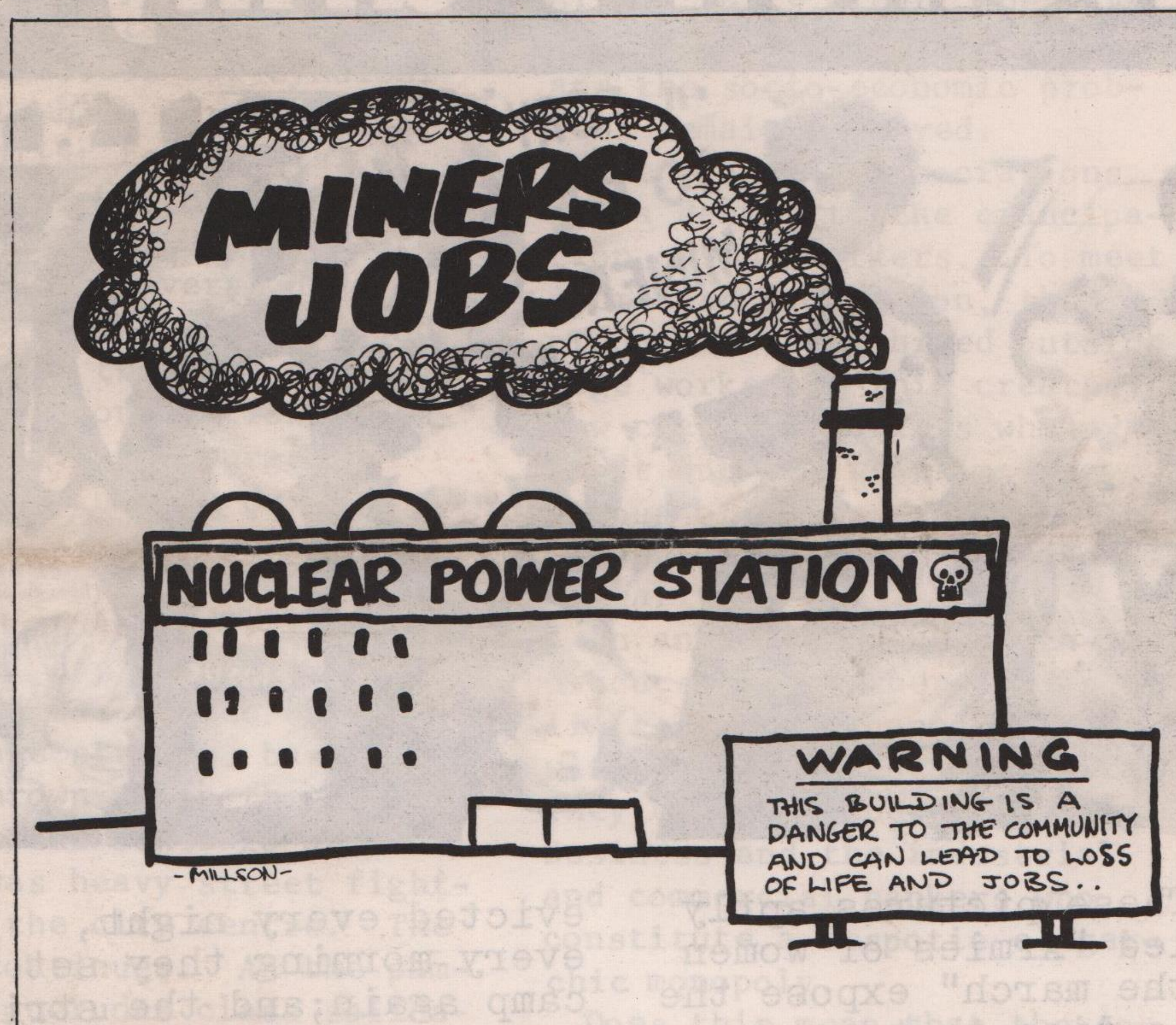
"Go to your local retired miners' tea and ask them what it was like.

"Two days on, two days off. Touch your cap to the gaffer and you'll get a decent job."

Fortunately rank and file miners consolidated the strike in the early days when the NUM was split fifty-fifty. Now 80% of miners are out on strike, (though Nottinghamshire has been sealed off by the biggest police operation since the 1926 General Strike).

As was to be expected the NCB has announced "generous" redundancy payments (if it's not the stick it's the carrot) and that pits may have to be closed because of lack of maintenance--miners have been sacked for occupying their pits and exposing such propaganda as lies. The NUM have maintained safety cover except where the NCB, playing dangerous games, have tried to restart production with tiny numbers of scabs (eg Bilston Glen).

Better still, steelworkers are being conned into seeing the miners' strike, rather than the likes of McGregor (Mac the knife') as a threat to their jobs. This rubbish is coming from the likes of Bill Sirs with his trash about his members not being "sacrificed" for "someone else's dispute". His incitements to steelworkers to use scab labour are disgusting--has he forgotten the 1980 steel strike?



An ISTC strike bulletin from then complains, "Every devious method is being employed using scab labour and unregistered ports." The bulletin contained an instruction from the TGWU telling lorry drivers to respect picket lines--Sirs is now telling lorry drivers to cross them. Pious words are not enough; for workers to win solidarity is needed, which means you support each other's struggles and don't cross picket lines. The level of class collaboration of the ISTC is becoming repulsive to the extent that BSC boss Bob Scholley was an honoured guest at the recent ISTC conference.

But despite all this the miners are still in there. The stakes are high. That's why all the forces of the state are being employed to defeat the strike. This has included growing violence

by the state against the miners. Two Yorkshire miners have died, men have been beaten, attacked with horses and dogs, handcuffed, tied to trees, jailed before trial, had their phones tapped, their homes watched by police, and the freedom to travel taken away by the setting up of police roadblocks. There have also been reports from miners that the army has been used on pickets--miners have seen relatives they know to be in the army dressed as police--and the claim in "The Miner" (June 1st) that a soldier was driving a police van during the miners' lobby of Parliament, which the Government claimed was a bomb disposal team that just happened to be in the area.

A striking miner who used to be a soldier has sent back his medal he won for "service" in N. Ireland. He told the

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press "I am now a Yorkshire miner and I feel that at the age of 31 I may soon be one of the forgotten masses. In other words, I was good enough to be a Yorkshire bully-boy fighting in Ireland, but not for my job."

But the most powerful army in the world is the working class, and it hasn't yet taken a hand in a big way. The miners can't take on the Government alone. But in factories and offices and on estates across the country there exists the power to come to the aid of the miners and inflict a crushing defeat on the Government. It's time we used that power and ended this strike.

Unlike Neil Pillock

and other assorted corpses in the Labour Party and TUC, we anarchists feel no need to condemn the miners for defending themselves on picket lines. Whenever a strike breaks out the priority of these reformists is always "negotiation". Our priority should be victory! We've nothing against negotiation with the likes of McGregor and Thatcher ... as long as what we're negotiating is the terms of their surrender!

Now is the time to act. The strike must be strengthened. Moral support isn't enough. Neither is waiting for bureaucrats and full-time officials to deliver the goods. Only rank and file action will win the strike.

Donations can be sent direct to the miners. Send to: MINERS SOLIDARITY FUND, CO-OPERATIVE BANK, SHEFFIELD. Account no. 30000009, sort code 08-90-75.

The DHSS deems strikers to be paid £15 per week and so knocks money off the benefit that miners' families can claim. Note families--striking miners are entitled to nothing, so single miners get nothing and families can end up with nearly nothing.

Food for single miners and miners' families should be sent to the NUM Area HQ or pick-up point nearest your home. National Union of Mineworkers HQ, St James' House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield S1. Yorkshire Area NUM, 2 Huddersfield Road,

Barnsley. SILVERWOOD MINERS' WELFARE-South Yorkshire Strike HQ, Dalton, Rotherham.

Barnsley Women Oppose Pit Closures, c/o North Gawber, Wombwell, Dodworth and Worsborough Miners' Welfares.

Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures, c/o 17 Merlin Way, Sheffield 5.

Doncaster Anarchists have been printing leaflets for free for Hatfield Womens' Support Group and need help; donations etc to: DAG c/o John Greagh Society, PO Box 217, Sheffield S1 1FD.

Women's army on the march



These pictures, aptly titled "Armies of women on the march" expose the media lies that women are all strike under-miners and a conservative influence. This image of women has been shattered into pieces. The message is clear--here and all around the world--women can be fighters. For their families, husbands, children and each other.

WHY THIS TIME? I think that when women looked after the children, only men could march, but if the women ask the men or the men volunteer to look after their children then the women can march. Women have traditionally been called the "reserve army" of labour. How true. Women are the "reserve army" of the labour movement, and its struggles are womens' struggles, but women are a significant force in their own right as "The Miner" and "The Yorkshire Miner" fully recognise.

I'm thinking of the Greenham Common women,

evicted every night, every morning they set up camp again; and the striking women at Barking Hospital; and the Thornton View Hospital occupation, now over a year old, led by women in Bradford. I'm also thinking of the Womens' Fire Brigade in Canada, who've shown the way to meet riot police--equally protected and armed (they wore crash helmets, carried shields of their own and truncheon equivalents). Don't forget the women in Solidarity who formed their own section, and of Latin America and Africa where it's really tough; they've fought armed (they have to).

But back to the miners' wives. They're showing the way the Greenham women will probably have to go, ie more direct action. The miners' wives have held peaceful demonstrations so far, and organised mutual aid schemes of food etc, along with unarmed, unprotected miners. This gives them a

great deal of Moral Superiority, true, but is that enough to win? Is this an ARMY of working class men and women? Are these wives really marching, or going through the motions as all demonstrators in Britain, us as well, have done. I know non-violent resistance takes guts, but I wonder about the use of it for real victory. I mean WHY SHOULD YOU/WE stand there and take it and go back next time and take more punishment and unjust harsh treatment. I think we all should start handing some back out. Arm yourselves, demonstrators and pickets--and wear lots of protective gear. Attack don't defend!

Now is the time to fight, now is the time we can get Thatcher and her cronies worried--the Iron Lady is not invincible--she can be brought down for good. Yes, she is a woman--a woman who is the creation of ruthless men--the puppet of male rule who has always been a

traitor to women: "The best man Britain has got" as President Reagan said.

Women are strong together. Sisterhood is powerful. And so is brotherhood. Brotherhood and sisterhood standing united are more powerful still. The miners and their wives have stuck together admirably. As Zapata said, "A strong people needs no leaders".

I don't believe these strong women will stand aside and watch the creation of a pseudo-fascist police state, Cruise missiles hanging over all our heads, whole peoples starved to death, the disappearances of political activists, orphaned children, political police...

I don't believe the men who inspire and support these women--the same men who return to the violence of the pickets--who wash up and babysit so that the women can organise and struggle, will be defeated. UNITY IS STRENGTH--SOLIDARITY FOR EVER! Migs, Leeds DAM.

POLICE STATE

After the violence of Orgreave—where Mr Scargill was not the only miner injured, but only one of more than 100, and where police behaviour was so unrestrained that it embarrassingly slipped through the censorship net and was televised—no-one can remain in doubt about the threat of civil disorder we now face.

How much longer will people tolerate these thugs—often armed and on horseback—roaming the streets at will? Isn't it time we stopped thinking of the police state as something that happens in Latin America or Eastern Europe but could never happen here? After all, the British police and army get plenty of practice in Northern Ireland—no wonder they are experts in violence and terrorism.

Examples of the real nature of the good old British bobby are coming to light thick and fast. Such as the miners' wives in Castleford, Yorkshire, who were collecting money in their local shopping centre: they were quietly watched by policemen until the men collecting with them left—at which point the brave officers of the law unleashed vicious police dogs, which they set on the women.

Such as the pit village of Blidworth in Nottinghamshire, which suffered a virtual occupation by the police. They swarmed around the streets for three days,

sealing off parts of the village with road blocks and intimidated residents—including children—both on the streets and in their homes. They purposely filled the streets with noise in the early hours of the morning. They arrested striking miners with no excuse, often very brutally. The climax of the terrorism came when police ran amok among women and children preparing meals for strikers in Blidworth hall.

Frighteningly, residents who tried to telephone for help and advice found their phones cut off, with only the sound of policemen laughing in the background.

Elsewhere it is common knowledge that troops are being brought in, in the guise of police, to add to their capacity for violence against workers.

Meanwhile, at Orgreave, we've seen vicious cavalry charges by mounted police armed with truncheons, against unarmed pickets; and the brutal behaviour of the riot police with their shields and crash helmets. Already two pickets have died and countless others have suffered injury.

The miners, for all their high morale and great determination, can't fight on their own. Orgreave (like Warrington last year) has shown the limitations of mass picketing. Unarmed



workers, however heroic, cannot match the strength and technical superiority of trained, well-equipped police and soldiers. Our real strength lies in the workplace, not outside

at the gates. In order to achieve victory for the miners the strike must spread. Solidarity can win—the miners' fight is all our fight.

AMAC 1

On DA no. 14 we pointed out the role of Britain in the "repression trade"—the supply of internal security equipment to various dictatorships in what is ironically called the "free world". Those weapons include such things as vehicles, gas, truncheons and computerised intelligence systems—all tried and tested in Northern Ireland.

Readers of the Black Flag Quarterly will have come across the fearsome AMAC 1 riot control vehicle. It has water cannon, 7,000 volt electrified body, surveillance equipment, gun ports and grenade launchers, and can hold 10 people. The perfect buy for many governments in 1984.

AMAC corporation were hoping for good sales at the recent weapons fair in Aldershot. However a fifteen million pound, IMF sponsored deal with Chile was sunk when members of UCATT, the construction workers' union protested by boycotting work on the stand where the vehicle was to be displayed.

The Ministry of Defence withdrew its invitation for AMAC to appear and to avoid further embarrassment the Department of Trade unofficially ruled out Chile as a customer. As a result

of the non-appearance of the AMAC at the exhibition many other orders may have been lost.

Mr Paul Latham, AMAC's marketing director, has described the AMAC 1 as "not an aggressive vehicle", and was furious at the UCATT ban saying "Why the union picked on Chile I don't know, but they walked off the stand and forced the Ministry to withdraw their invitation to us."

There are many repressive regimes in the world but it is a well-known fact that Chile is one of the most bloody. The Pinochet dictatorship has been responsible for the murder of 30,000 people during and after the 1973 coup, for the introduction of monetarism several years before Thatcher and for using heavy repression last year against the upsurge of resistance led by the workers' organisations, which shook the regime to its foundations.

George Orwell wrote in 1943, "Whether the British ruling class are wicked or merely stupid is one of the most difficult questions of our time". Judging from the remarks of Tory MP Nicholas Winterton, that question is still valid.

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MOON AND SUN

1 Moon sets (London) 11.35 a.m. today, rises 2.52 a.m. tomorrow.
Sun sets (Manchester) 9.13 p.m. today, rises 5.43 a.m. tomorrow. Lights up: New-upon Tyne, 9.48 p.m.; Liverpool, 5.30 a.m. tomorrow.

Tragic miner's protest agony

A STRIKING miner who crucified himself with six-inch nails in a pit strike protest, was recovering in hospital last night.

After writing a letter about the strike, 52-year-old Abe Moffat—the son of former Scots miners' leader Alex Moffat—went into his kitchen in the village of Cousland, near Edinburgh.

He impaled both feet to the floor and then did the same with his left hand.

Mr Moffat refused to be moved until Communist miners' leader Mick McGahey arrived to talk to him.

How it's done... a glaring example of how Fleet Street distorts news.

The miner in question, Mr Moffat, made his drastic protest AGAINST the 13 per cent of miners who are still going to work.

The Daily Mail deliberately left that fact out and tried to give the opposite impression to readers by speaking of a "pit strike protest."

A number of other papers used exactly the same format to mislead their readers.

BARKING

Women domestic workers have now been on strike at Barking hospital for many weeks against a savage new contract for servicing put forward to the Health Authority by Crothall, a part of the giant Pritchard Group.

All cleaning staff, long-established NUPE or GMBATU members have been sacked for refusing an average cut in hours of 33%, a 40% to 60% cut in wages, cut in holidays to 3 weeks and limitation of sick pay. Women who were earning £57.00 per week would take home only £17.00 due to cuts in hours.

CRISIS IN THE NHS

At a time when the bosses are replacing workers by sophisticated automatic machinery and computers and moving operations to developing countries they have no need for mass health care by the state to maintain a large active workforce. Instead health becomes a part of capitalism from which profits can be made directly. This is the background to the cutbacks in the NHS, and the drive towards privatisation the Government is pursuing.

FOR PATIENTS NOT PROFITS

What happens now in Barking is a foretaste of

what will happen in the rest of the Health Service. In an effort to regain their existing contract Crothalls slashed the price of their tender by 41%. The cost of this is passed on to workers who are already low paid and patients who suffer lowering standards of health care.

Meanwhile Redbridge Health Authority pretend not to take sides in the strike, whilst in fact they served writs on the strikers to remove them from their huts on the picket, and have had behind-the-scenes talks with Crothalls.

On June 13th workers in 20 London hospitals came out against privatisation. And in Hammer-smith and Fulham an NHS house tender proposed a reduction of 60 to 14 full time staff with split shifts and 35 redundancies. Kitchen staff were sacked on 20th June.

At a 40-strong lobby of a meeting of the Redbridge DHA, whose chairman is the Tory ex-mayor the Community Health Council representative just glossed over the deteriorating conditions at Barking, despite the fact that a previous report confirmed that things were now a mess

Very different from the clean public image of cosy staff relations that the company likes to put across - Crothall manager attacks one of the women on the picket line.



due to the inability of scabs to service properly. To stop the meeting going into private session the doors were locked. However, the "prisoners" escaped by a fire exit and restarted the meeting at the Board Room of King George's Hospital in Ilford. When this was locked up too a police SPG IRU turned up within minutes and proceeded to grab the first protestor they could lay their hands on, throw him down some steps and stand round kicking him. Another was hit with a helmet and shoved through plate glass. All this was done with no provocation and with a matter-of-fact attitude. One of the

group, John Lister, now faces charges of threatening behaviour. This is just the most serious in a whole series of police interventions, (or non interventions when Crothalls managers scabbing laid into women on the picket line). Despite this the workers are confident. There was a NUPE day of action on the 26th June. It is a start, but action and solidarity need to be stepped up: token "days of action" are not enough..

Send messages and donations to:
Strike Office,
AUEW House,
588 Balham Road South,
Dagenham,
Essex RM10 7RA.
Cheques payable to:

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In the Daily Mail he was quoted as saying: "We should perhaps have called the Chilean Ambassador and obtained assurances about the way the vehicles would have been used. In that way we could exert some influence over the actions of the Chilean Government".

Sure! Given the workers general strikes the Pinochet regime may have wanted the AMACs merely as milk floats or ice-cream vans!

On a more serious note it seems slightly inconsistent of UCATT to object to the sale of AMAC to Chile--what about the other gory delights of the weapons fair, and what about the other bloodthirsty dictators whose buyers were doing the rounds?

Opposition to the imposition of a single union/no strike deal has come from workers at Hitachi's television factory at Hirwaun, near Aberdare, South Wales.

The Electrical and Plumbing Trades Union, (EPTU) made a deal with the bosses for sole representation. A few weeks later 500 redundancies were announced.

Opposition has arisen though, due to the single union/no strike agreement.

Previous such agreements with Japanese companies have been on new sites--this is a long-established factory that has been taken over.

Mr Jim Bevan, the Amalgamated Union of Engin-

EEPTU

SCABS

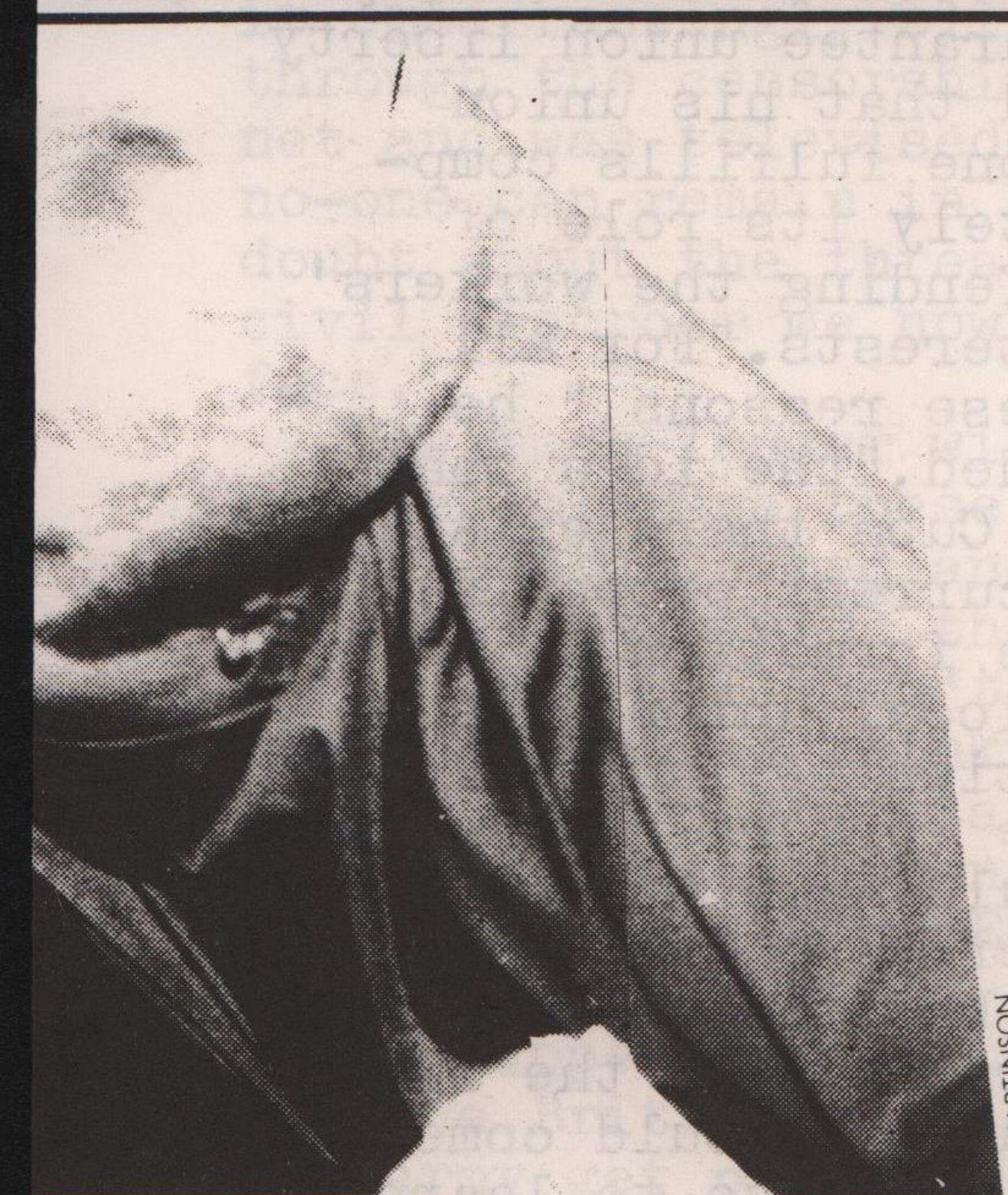
eering Workers (AUEW) district organiser, said on June 17th that a large majority of the 1,300 strong workforce had the previous week rejected the EEPTU deal. The AUEW is taking the issue to the TUC disputes procedure.

Mr Bevan said, "The other deals have been struck at new factories with new workers. The difference here is that the Japanese have taken over an existing British factory and are trying to implement Japanese working methods with the EEPTU".

Mr Wyn Bevan, the EEPTU official said, "We were offered a single union

agreement by Hitachi and if the other unions had been offered it they would not have turned it down". Maybe, but it's still disgusting to see union officials like him in the reformist unions selling our basic union power away, making agreements to outlaw direct action, one of the few effective levers we as a class have. We as revolutionary unionists condemn such deals, and reassert the primary importance of direct action for winning concessions and reforms for our class. Naturally as revolutionaries we want more than reforms--we want a total social transformation, which is built up to from the practice of the day-to-day struggle of the class war.

THE REAL FACE OF PRIVATE CONTRACTORS



NEL MARTINSON

Barking and Dagenham Health Emergency. All ambulance crews in the Redbridge DHA have voted not to cross the picket and support is coming in.

Southampton Hospital

At the time of going to press 250 Southampton Hospital workers have voted unanimously to stay on strike until the NUPE branch secretary, Steve Ferris, is reinstated. The disciplinary hearing on another steward has been suspended.

According to the Financial Times (the bosses' paper), there is mounting concern at Austin Rover (Leyland) about the state of recent "unconstitutional" stoppages, which has prompted Mr Harold Musgrove to write to the homes of all 38,000 workers urging them to be good, forelock-touching lackeys.

Mr Musgrove complains in his letter that virtually every one of the recent stoppages had been caused by a relatively small group of workers who ignored agreed trade union procedures (sic).

The most publicised recent dispute was at Longbridge, Birmingham, where a black worker who had been racially abused and harassed by a supervisor was dismissed after he retaliated by hitting his boss, which led to a two-week strike. The walk-out to

LEYLAND FIGHT BACK

support Zedekiah Mills was encouraging, but then the experience of all workers of their bosses is the same—all workers are abused and treated like shit.

To Quote a shop steward who left the track line three years ago, "My pay is down but I am a happier man—those guys deserve every penny they earn and more. You wouldn't believe the stick they have to put up with." (We would).

Unfortunately they returned to work without forcing the reinstatement of Zedekiah Mills. This came about because the boss managed to enlist the full-time officials, Mr Adams and Mr Johnny Barker, on his side to incite a capitulation. The union claims they will take legal action to get Zedekiah Mills reinstated; with the nature of the class forces in the legal business, it is unlikely that such tactics will get him his job back.

This strike caused a strike at Cowley. On June 14th the toolmakers at Cowley went against union advice and voted to continue a week-long strike. The union officials didn't like the result so they forced another vote, which produced the same result.

The strike followed the lock-out of 80 fellow craftsmen. Austin Rover said these workers were among 7,300 laid off because the Longbridge strike cut off supplies of engines.

Mr Malcolm Young, the district secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, told the strikers the union executive felt they should return to work as they had not exhausted the dispute procedures

(sic). Despite this they voted to stay out.

There are signs of growing confidence among the rank and file to resist the class attack that workers in Leyland have had to endure in recent years. These have amounted to speed-ups, worsening working conditions and job losses. A 33-year-old worker in the body shop was quoted in the Guardian of June 15th as saying, "If you have been doing a job say, for six months, they reckon you must be able to do it faster. And if you don't hit the new target, they'll discipline you—no messing."

A recent victory for the workers at Longbridge against these attacks was reported in the June issue of the T&G Record (paper of the Transport and General Workers' Union).

"The men on the section are walking ten feet tall" said Rudy Gayle, the TGWU shop steward. It was caused by plans for reduced manning levels and higher production levels on the head lining gang. Before the dispute the gang operated in two shifts with eight men per shift, working in four pairs. The new schedules demanded the same production but with only three pairs of men.

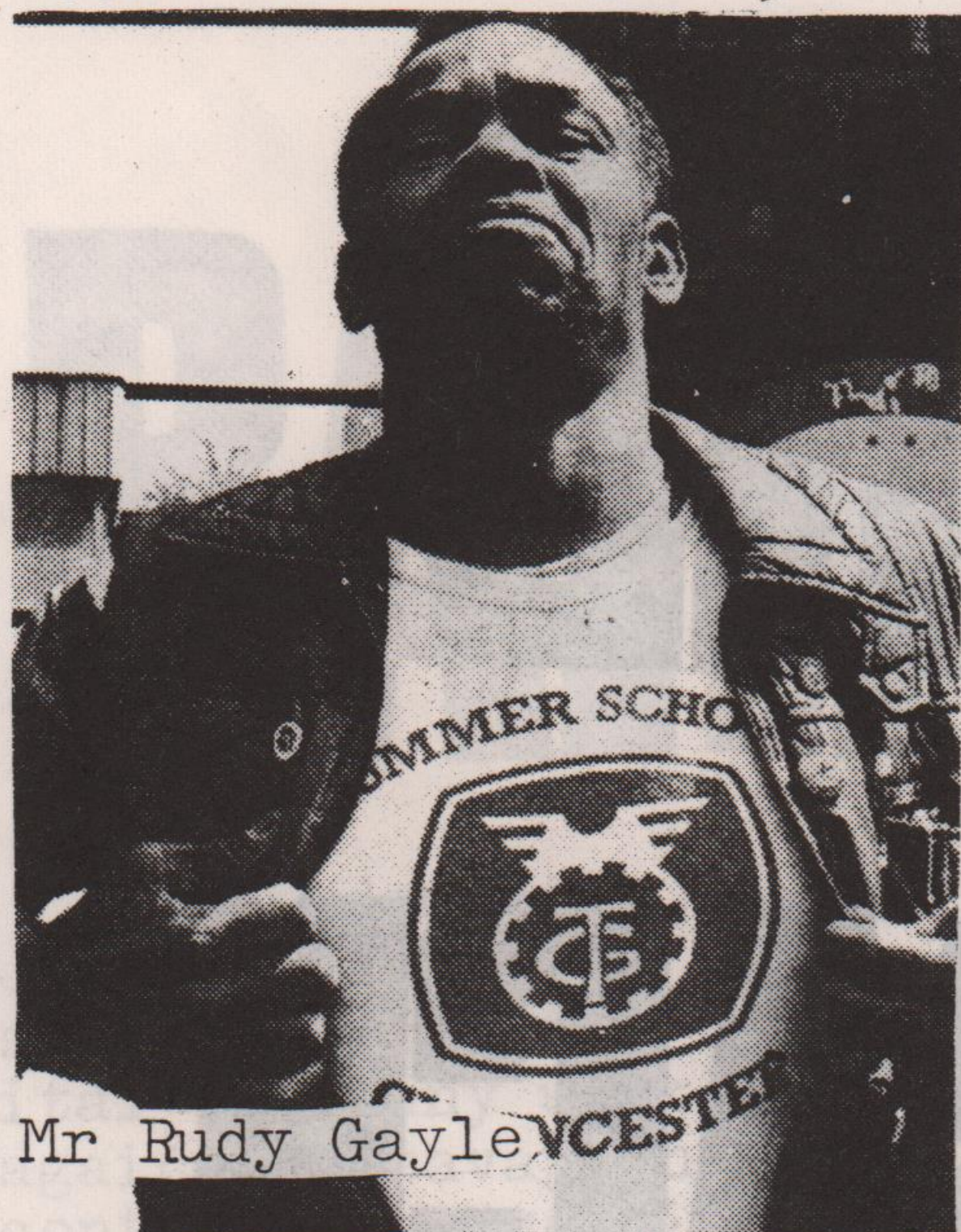
The workers demanded a reduction in the track speed in order to cope—so when the new manning levels were instituted very soon models were drifting out incomplete and chaos was caused on the track. The management solution was to discipline the six men for "not achieving standard performance". This led to escalating strike action by sections until the management capitulated.

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— © Steve Bell 1984 —

CUBA



Mr Rudy Gayle

After the strike was over Rudy said "The whole of the workforce had felt threatened by the unreasonableness of the management and acted together. It was the most united we have been since 1979 and there is a feeling of victory in the air --we are getting our confidence back".

Cowley BL workers have also successfully resisted an attempt to impose a three-shift system on them. The fight back has begun, and it is coming from the rank and file, who are ignoring union rules designed to pacify them and keep them under the control of their union bosses; most of whom are prepared to sell out the working class--class collaboration scabs. Sources: Financial Times, T&G Record, Guardian.

In October 1982 several dozen, perhaps even several hundred people, working, according to one source in the sugar industry, or, according to others in the building trade, were arrested by the secret police. The affair involved altogether about 200 people. On January 25th 1983 the Provincial Peoples' Tribunal of Havana tried 17 people in this connection, more specifically for "crimes against the security of the state" and "industrial sabotage". Five of them were condemned to death and the others to up to 24 years in prison. This trial in January involved altogether about 46 people.

The offence "justifying" such harsh repression would indeed frighten the regime should it spread throughout the country: these workers grouped together with the purpose, inspired by Solidarnosc, of creating a union-type organisation to defend their interests. Their first task was to organise a strike to protest against their conditions of work. But before this could take place, the secret police

discovered them, seemingly after an infiltration or denunciation. Most of the accused were aged between 20 and 30 years --that is born or at least brought up under Castroism. The youngest of those sentenced is 17 years old, the oldest 55.

In March 1983 Amnesty International began a world-wide campaign for a reprieve for those condemned to death. The international fuss forced the Cuban government to back down; after the apparently unfounded announcement of their execution it was learnt that the death sentences had been commuted to 30 years in prison. Under Cuban conditions this merely substitutes a slow death for a rapid one. But it was also learnt that four of the prisoners' lawyers and one judge have in their turn been imprisoned because of their too-favourable attitude to the accused. The judge, Nicasio Hernandez de Arimas, had at first imposed prison sentences on them. Furious, Castro forced a second trial where the death sentences were imposed. Judge Hernandez then protested against what he considered a breach of socialist legality, and was himself imprisoned.

The authorities have been obliged to admit to these proceedings, and have given their own version of them. The Vice President of the Council of State and Ministers has declared that the five condemned to death "were sentenced by the Tribunals in accordance with our laws. They were sentenced for proven acts of sabotage admitted by themselves during judicial procedure. These acts have nothing in common with any kind of trade union organisation. Among the five persons, one is a small peasant and the other four have no occupation. They devoted themselves to speculation on the black market...they set fire to fish-processing plants, sabotaged transport equipment and tried unsuccessfully to destroy important enterprises in Havana. They even planned the assassinations of

certain managers. They were in contact with the exterior, with counter-revolutionary organisations operating from outside, with more official bodies in the USA. We possess all the evidence."

Roberto Veiga, General Secretary of the official Cuban workers' organisation, declared that Cuban laws fully guarantee union liberty and that his union alone fulfills completely its role of defending the workers' interests. "For all these reasons," he added, "the idea that in Cuba there existed a current proposing the formation of even a local union organisation is laughable. The workers themselves would make it impossible!" There are two comments to be made on these declarations. In the first place it would come as no surprise to learn that these five "saboteurs" were also responsible for the poor performance of the Cuban economy, and for the cancer that killed Brezhnev. Secondly, the authorities repress the claims for which the Cuban workers were struggling with a violence that suggests fear of contagion.

Other information has arrived on social struggles unfolding in Cuba recently, but it is not definitely confirmed. In the province of Sancti-Spiritus, 200 peasants were arrested for having burnt their harvests rather than sell them to the state at its low fixed prices. In the sugar refinery of Chaparra in the province of Camaguey, lorry drivers have been threatened with arrest if they carry out their plan to form their own defence association. At the Pedro Marrero brewery in Havana, two representatives from the official union have been imprisoned for having defended the idea of independent unions. In view of the difficulty of obtaining news from Cuba these few examples are only the tip of the iceberg. In such a social atmosphere, it is not surprising that Castro called for the death sentence for those who struggle for the free association of workers in order to defend their interests. It calls into question the basis of his regime. SOURCE: IZTOK, PARIS.

IG METALL

It is typical that the coverage by the media of the strike by the massive IG Metall union and 160,000 paper and print workers in West Germany has been scanty here in Britain. Capitalism likes workers' struggles to be portrayed as isolated events when they are in fact world-wide and continuous.

The reasons for the strike, like the miners' strike in Britain are not economic but social. though the German strikers get far more strike pay as IG Metall is one of the biggest and richest unions in the world.

Unemployment in Germany, while not as bad as here, is rising and a 35-hour week with no loss of pay would result in over a million new jobs. In addition the German car industry is now making big profits due to reductions in labour and increased output per worker. Germany has been

portrayed to us as a place of economic miracle due to hard work, whilst in fact there is a tradition of struggle, such as the disputes of 1973, which is being rediscovered.

Yet we should have no illusions about the origins and nature of IG Metall, nor about the ability of the arbiters to find compromises. (One way the bosses might choose is to speed up production on the job).

The fight in Germany should be followed by workers in Britain with a view to learning from it and applying the same demand here to cut the 4-5 million dole queue.

As we go to press it seems that IG Metall has backed down and agreed to a shorter week of 38½ hrs on average, with the proviso that exact hours and conditions should be decided at each workplace.

REVIEWS

DAM and The Trade Unions(25p)

This pamphlet casts a critical eye over the effectiveness of the TUC in recent years. Not of course from a reactionary Tory Union-bashing standpoint, but from a considered view as to the positive gains won by the workers.

These have not been great. Indeed a series of defeats have happened due to the remoteness and soft approach of the leaders. The solution to this, the author says, is to create factory committees which have maximum participation by the rank and file. These are then federated to give strength in the fight for better hours; eventually they would smash the present system and administer production for the workers themselves.

Because the pamphlet is designed for general readers, it doesn't have a chance to go into detail as to the merits of this approach, compared with having a definite Union Structure with revolutionary aims; at first based in parallel organisations within existing unions, but splitting off after a time to compete with the TUC.

A book of many pages would have to be written as to the best revolutionary strategy for anarcho-syndicalists. The question was hotly debated by the Italian anarcho-syndicalists during the 1920 Factory Council occupations. It caused a split in the Anarcho-Syndicalist Golos Truda group in the Russian Revolution.

TCB

Direct Action in Industry, DAM 50p; 24 pages.

Direct Action in Industry is a run down of the guerilla struggle methods of the working class in the face of the superior forces of the bosses. It covers, with examples such activities as work to Rules, Go slows, 'Good work strikes, Open mouth tactics and sick-ins.

The Pamphlet then goes on to cover events where workers have created "liberated areas" in industry with power in their hands, such as self reductions in hours, occupations, sit-ins, work-ins and active strikes. It says that these need a greater amount of power through solidarity and organization. Sabotage is a word which is guaranteed to scare the bosses, but in fact without it output would fall due to the idiotic

orders of managers being obeyed, instead of being ignored because the workers know more as to how the job should be done. Indeed part of the resistance tactics of Polish Solidarity after marshall law

was declared was to obey especially stupid orders coming from the boss class. (Katowice Solidarity leaflet, December 1981). Many of the tactics outlined in the pamphlet whilst not invented, were certainly intergrated into revolutionary praxis by the Syndicalist movement in France, which also adopted such measures as Boycotts and "The Label," a means for singling out enterprises where the boss had given in to workers demands. The workers thereby using the purchasing power of our class as a means to defeat capitalist resistance.

The pamphlet ends by giving Italian ways of conducting normal strikes, such as staggered strikes. Altogether this pamphlet gives imaginative means to combat the massive assault the present Tory government is making on working class action, through 'law and order' and the police. It can also be used for what the French Syndicalists called revolutionary gymnastics. Exercises which prepare the way for the all out war against capitalism and the state, the Revolutionary General Strike.

There has been a publishing explosion recently by the Direct Action Movement, both nationally and locally, below are some pamphlets now available :-

Writings on Anarcho-Syndicalism, 2nd edition, 16 pages, 30p(+p&p), Publications Commission.

The pamphlet is designed for those who want to know more details on the theory and practice of Anarcho-Syndicalism. It contains an introduction to the idea by Rudolf Rocker, then an examination of Anarcho-Syndicalism and workers Councils by Albert Meltzer, with reference to the Dutch Councilist Anton Pannekoek. A good piece by Philip Samson (from Freedom 1953, when he was still an Anarcho-Syndicalist), outlines the relationship between Anarchism and Syndicalism.

Two shorter pieces are Anarcho-Syndicalism and the Rank and File movement (1961) and Where we Stand by the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance (1973). The pamphlet is rounded off by a comprehensive look at the International movement today by C. Longmore.

Women Workers and Trade Unions, Hull DAM c/o Leeds DAM. 10p(+p&p). 7 pages.

This short pamphlet is designed for the ordinary reader rather than the committed activist. It shows how the traditional unions have failed to remedy the problems faced by women under capital-

ism. It puts forward the alternative of a revolutionary union movement committed not only to struggle against economic oppression but also for social liberation. A Union which would enforce such things as equal pay and proper child care facilities by direct action, and would enable the participation of women on an equal footing with men, due to its libertarian structure and praxis.

Chile 10 years on. 10p(+p&p), 8 pages. Middlesbrough DAM, 120 Victoria Road, Middlesbrough.

Arun down of the various social forces in Chile, in the light of the growing class resistance of strikes and urban guerilla warfare in that country last year. The bloody Pinochet dictatorship (Thatcher's ally in the Falklands war) murdered 1000's in the 1973 coup and have killed or disappeared many more since. Part of the resistance comes from the Commission for Syndical Renewal which has Anarcho-Syndicalist tendencies.

On September 8th 1983 the fifth National day of Protest resulted in several days of clashes with the police and army, with the left calling its own demonstrations independent of the bourgeois parties. The 6th day (October 11th-13th) resulted in an anti-dictatorship march of 50,000 in Santiago. The 7th National day of Protest (October 27) was marked by boycotts and strikes, barricades were thrown up in the shanty towns round Santiago and there was heavy street fighting in the city centre. The fight continues. As the pamphlet concludes class solidarity must be independent of ruling groups both east and west.

Other publications: STEFANO DELLE CHIASE, Portrait of a Black Terrorist, (REFRACT), Price £4.50 + 50p post. From Refract Publications, BCM Refract, London, WC1 3XX.



Whilst we are plugging other publications Black Flag has become a very good paper. They produce a fortnightly newsbulletin (20p), and a quarterly magazine (75p). It can be obtained from Black Flag/Black Cross, c/o 121 Railton Road, London SE24.

BAKUNIN

BAKUNIN ON CO-OPERATIVES

This is a short piece printed as a response to the Manchester "Wildcat" group who wrote in asking about the Anarcho-Syndicalist position on co-ops.

"The cooperative movement has expanded greatly since the 1840's. Consumer and producer co-ops, credit unions, co-op banks, mutual welfare societies, have spread rapidly all over Europe. There are tens of thousands of co-ops of all sorts. But, the poverty of the people remains and the socio-economic problems remain unsolved.

The producer associations are a danger to the emancipation of the workers...To meet increased production, the producer co-ops hired outside wage workers. This created a new class of workers who exploit and profit from the labour of their employees. And all this fosters a bourgeois mentality.

In any case, the growth of producers and other co-ops is limited. They cannot expand without the necessary capital. They cannot compete with Big Business and the industrial and commercial bankers who constitute a despotic oligarchic monopoly.

Does this mean that the co-op system is altogether bad? We are on the contrary convinced that the co-ops could potentially replace capitalism and carries within itself the seeds of economic emancipation. It is for this reason that the (1st) International in France, Belgium, Germany, and Spain organised many co-ops from which bourgeois and other non working class elements are excluded.

Above all, the workers learn from this precious experience how to organise and themselves conduct the economy without guardian angels, the state or their former employers.

We are convinced that the co-op movement will flourish and reach its full potential only in a society where the land, the instruments of production and hereditary property will be owned and organised by the workers themselves; by their freely organised federations of industrial and agricultural workers.

(Letter to the Editors of Proletario Italiano).



The police and the peace

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AT THE DEMONSTRATION AGAINST PRESIDENT REAGAN'S VISIT TO LONDON LAST MONTH: Once the police had cleared the road outside Lancaster House, this particular copper (pictured here a few minutes earlier) remarked to a colleague, "I just got one at random and kicked him".

Meanwhile with the demonstrators now safely tucked behind the massed ranks of police, the latter smiled at the tourists facing them and let them photograph their horses.

Apology

We apologise for issue 16 which we did publish but which seems to have disappeared into a black hole at the printer's. We changed the printer and this proved a mistake-- hopefully we will have more luck with future issues.

It is our intention from now on to produce the paper as a regular monthly. So we want copy. All copy should arrive for the start of the third week of each month. So as from next month DA will come out monthly: the deadline for the next issue is Monday 20th August.

Donations to help keep the paper going would also be appreciated-- it's your paper so support it.

Note: we prefer copy to be sent in ready typed.

ABOUT US

Direct Action is produced by an editorial group which is accountable to the DAM membership-- we are delegated to do the job and are subject to recall. The editorial role is also rotated every two years. The DAM being a federation, the paper is run on federal principles.

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DIRECT
Action
movement

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

(1) The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.

(2) Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.

(3) We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self-managed production for need not profit.

(4) In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.

(5) We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is for independent organisation in the workplace and community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of, and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers organisations must be controlled by workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers movement. Any and all delegates of such workers organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.

(6) We are opposed to all States and State institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all States do not exist to protect the workers of those States, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.

(7) We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to control their own lives and the environment.

(8) The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism; a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.



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DAM sections throughout the country have been raising money and food for the miners. The latest news appears to be that a number of overseas IWA sections (with which the DAM is affiliated) and other workers' organisations with whom we have fraternal relations have sent very generous sums of money to the miners.

We will give a listing of the response when we at DA receive more details.



Local contacts

