

DIRECT ACTION



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NUCLEAR DUSTBIN their profits - our children

Britain is the world's nuclear dustbin — and that's official. The Euro-Parliament says so. The Government's own Environment Committee says so. And, just for once, anyone with common sense must agree.

CANCER AND DEFORMITY

What this means is outbreak after outbreak of childhood leukaemias and other rare cancers (often unreported). A growth in the horrifying curse of birth deformities (especially near the Irish Sea, now the most radioactive on Earth). And a growing pile of radioactive waste, deadly for thousands of years.

Now the nuclear cancer is spreading. Four areas have been shortlisted to play host to a deadly and unwelcome guest — nuclear waste, buried in shallow trenches and left to seep into the surrounding earth and water. The proposed sites are in Essex, Lincolnshire, Bedfordshire and Humberside.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The whole existence of the nuclear industry is an outrage. There are plenty of better sources of energy — coal alone would supply many of our needs well into the future, not to mention the variety of under-researched renewable energy forms available.

But nuclear power is preferred for two reasons. It provides materials for the obscenity of nuclear weapons. And it allows the government total control over energy supply, without unions like the NUM, exercising any power over its production.

MAKE THEM LISTEN

The nuclear industry must, for our children's sake, be halted. Where millions of pounds' profit are at stake, this is no easy task. The Euro-Parliament can't do it. The Government won't do it. BUT WE CAN.

Not through grovelling petitions or "asking nicely". And not through the tokenist street-theatre of Greenham-style protest.

Through intelligent, organised industrial action, supported throughout the community, we can hit the boss class where it really HURTS — in the wallet.

Nothing else makes them listen to our demands half so well.



A LESSON FROM THE LOYALISTS

On March 3rd the Protestant workers of N. Ireland went on strike to try and scotch the Anglo-Irish accord. It was not a strike a syndicalist could support, organised by the likes of Ian Paisley, John Molyneux and the Orange Orders, to defend the privileges of only one section of the working class, and to support direct rule from London (for syndicalists reject all states).

However, what was interesting about the one-day general strike was the tactics used by the Loyalist workers. Their class-consciousness is positively Neanderthal, but their grasp of effective strike action is excellent and an example trade unionists would do well to learn from.

*In pursuit of their worthless objective these workers shut down industry completely throughout the North-east, bringing the economic life of Ulster to a grinding halt.

*Workers who refused to join the strike were forced, by active picketting, to join the walkout. One factory was burnt to the ground because its employees refused to join the stoppage.

*Protestant workers and youth patrolled the streets while paramilitaries enforced the strike.

The Loyalist workers are reactionary and we oppose both them and their bosses. But it must be said that THEY REALISE THE POWER OF THE GENERAL STRIKE WEAPON AND HOW TO WIELD IT.



INSIDE: A.I.D.S. / IRELAND / RED WEDGE / WAPPING

Budget? What Budget?

March, as always, saw the budget, which this year wasn't anything to get excited about. No doubt the Royal Family felt suitably public-spirited in receiving a mere 4% pay rise (the Queen and nine members of her family get well over £5 M from British taxpayers, ie you and me, in spite of their vast personal wealth).

For the rich

The wealthy will also be delighted that the Tories have abolished a fourth Tax since coming to power — Capital Transfer Tax. Inherited wealth will still be taxed, but gifts from living donors of up to £71,000 are now tax-exempt [perhaps this is what would-be donors to DA have been waiting for? EDS].

Capital Gains Tax allowances are also increasing beyond the rate of inflation.

Tax on share dealings has been cut and a new personal Equity Plan has been introduced providing a tax incentive for individuals to buy shares — a reflection of the Tories' Enterprise Philosophy — "We're all capitalists now".

Beware — charity

Another benefit for the rich was the new tax relief on donations to charity. The press and charities themselves greeted this with understandable approval — but how long before we see the rise of American-style corporate giving: companies using donations to gain tax benefits, while giving to bogus charities or those controlled by themselves, while welfare slides out of the domain of public concern and becomes a matter of applying to charity for basic requirements which in an abundant society should be the right of all?

Grateful?

What about the direct impact of the budget on the ordinary person? Well, petrol tax was increased, but we can blame the greedy oil companies for the price rise — oil prices have tumbled while profits soar.

Cigarettes, too, were dramatically increased in price, but this should surely pass unlamented. Smoking is dangerous, wasteful and inconsiderate, and the tobacco industry would be better employed producing to-

bacco-based pesticides.

For the rest our spending remains fairly unaffected. Those lucky enough to have jobs will pay a bit less tax; no doubt the Tories hope you'll be grateful to them at election time.

Jobs

For the jobless — don't expect too much. The Enterprise Scheme will expand (fine if you have £1000 to invest) and there will be more Community Programme jobs (part-time temporary work for the under-25s).

The new measures are equally trifling. There is the "new workers' scheme" — a subsidy for employers to take on under-20s after YTS, provided they pay them low wages. And, for the long-term unemployed, the "job-start scheme" — counselling, a training course and a six-month allowance of £20 per week for them, if they take jobs paying less than £80 per week.

Needless to say, the strategy here is to force down wages. The actual number of unemployed isn't likely to be reduced much by these measures, but the expectations of those finding work will be.

All different?

Of course, from the Labour Party and TUC leftwards, the reaction to this or any budget is, "The Tories are benefitting bosses at the expense of the working class, but if we were in power things would be different".

DIRECT ACTION says otherwise. No party taking power through parliamentary means can do other than serve the bosses' interests. Labour have proved this again and again.

And furthermore, any party which took power through non-parliamentary means, however "socialist" or "working-class" it claimed to be, would still seek to control economic life through budgets or other legislation — from the top down.

We say the only way to abolish joblessness, poverty and inequality is through rank-and-file industrial organisation, not parties. This is the way the interests of all working-class people can express themselves, and ultimately not only seize control, but exercise it.

AR

MICHELIN: political sacking

A worker at the Michelin factory in Ballymena, N Ireland has been sacked because of his political beliefs.



Michael Murray, a DAM member and union activist, decided to stand in elections for shop steward, but on the day of the poll was sacked "for having beliefs and being involved with a group whose aims and principles are contrary to the well-being of the company".

What was the reaction of the union to this interference in its affairs and the liberties of its members? Sadly, they weren't sorry to see Michael go. You see, he advocated democ-

racy within the union. Better pay and saving jobs. Even the factory one day under workers' control, in a socialist society.

So, without their backing the anger of this comrade's fellow workers was not turned into action in his defence.

Once again we see the uselessness of present-day trade unions when it comes to protecting workers. Michelin have now established the practice of questioning employees about their political beliefs

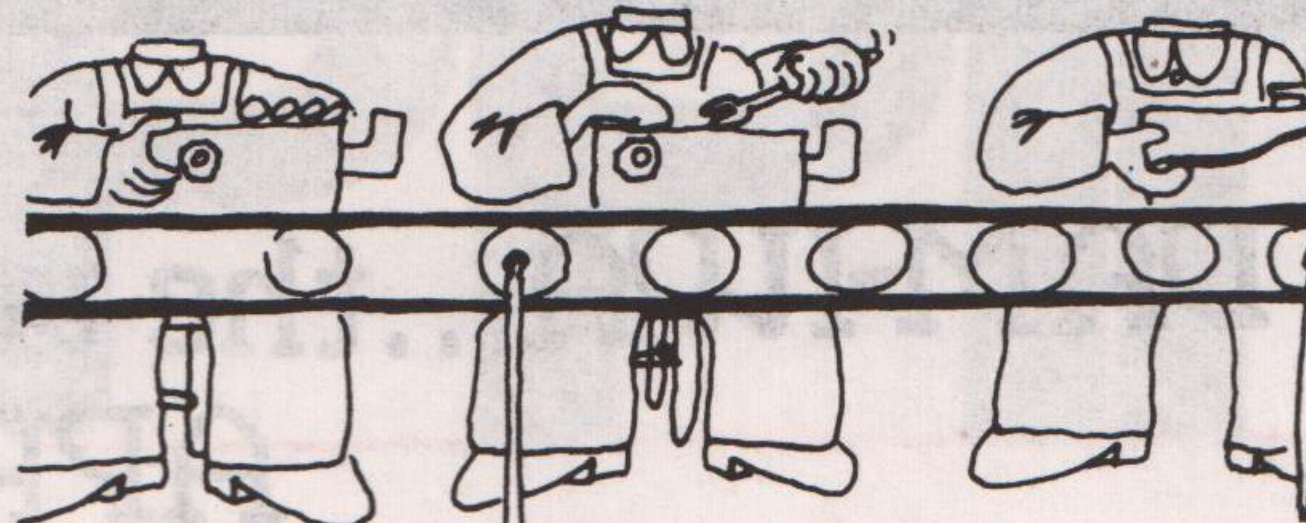


and activities, and using shop-floor spies to stamp out opposition to their dictatorial management style.

SILENTNIGHT

The strike continues at Silentnight beds, with an increase in picketting. The strikers have produced a leaflet calling for blacking of Silentnight goods, in spite of union opposition to this plan. They have also been supporting the Wapping printers' strike.

Donations etc to:
FTAT, Cravendale Branch no 1
c/o Ann King,
10 Rainhall Crescent,
Barnoldswick,
Colne,
Lancs.



UNI-PORK

At Uni-Pork, Portadown 400 workers are on strike against arbitrary sackings in the factory. Van and lorry drivers have joined in and 50 workers staged a sit-in last month.

Messages and donations to:
Uni-Pork Strikers,
c/o USDAW,
61 Royal Ave,
Belfast.

QUARRY STRIKE

Welsh quarryworkers have been on strike since last August, over cuts in bonus payments. Some men have been losing £28.50 per week, at the same time as production is increased.

Men on work-to-rule over this issue have been sacked and workers in two other quarries unanimously decided to strike in their support.

At present the workers are in serious need of financial support. Don't let the bosses beat them and succeed in getting the union out of their quarries.

Messages and cash to:
Ffestiniog Quarry Dispute Fund
T&GWU District Office,
17 Segontium Terrace,
Caernarfon,
Wales.

A1 FEEDS

Eleven workers are on strike against bosses' attempt to cut the workforce by forcing them to buy their own trucks. They are in dire need of financial support. Send cash to Al Feeds Shop Steward, c/o Transport House, Islington, Liverpool.

BETRAYAL!

TRADE UNIONS — DITCHING STRIKERS AND HELPING THE STATE

DUNNES DISPUTE

In July 1984 two workers at the Dunnes store in Dublin were suspended from work after refusing to handle S. African goods, which was the policy of their union IDATU.

The strikers got widespread support and publicity and picketted Dunnes stores with some success. But the treatment they received from their union left much to be desired.

Strikers had no right to attend union executive meetings when their case was discussed. They were told not to talk to the press. Their strike pay was reduced by the amount they received in donations, and made conditional on the strikers closing down their bank accounts. Support groups were told by the union to "suspend themselves". Last December the union decided, in spite of the strikers' wishes, to end the pickets, and gave the impression to many outside groups offering support to the strikers that the dispute was over.

Not so. The only outcome of the strike so far has been the possibility that the Irish Government may end imports of fruit and vegetables from South Africa.

The Dunnes strikers deserve far better than that.

CROCODILE TEARS

The decision by the pit deputies' union, NACODS, to ballot its members on an overtime ban in protest at the closure of Bates Colliery comes two years, 1,000+ arrests and 28 lost pits too late. Rather like the recent headteachers' 1½ hour strike one week after scabbing on the teachers for a year, or the EETPU "promising" strike action at GCHQ, NACODS deserve only our contempt.

These scabs are weeping crocodile tears. The box of goodies that kept NACODS quiet during the miners' strike — arbitration on pit closures — has been found to be empty. When will those bought off by a few crumbs of control in our society realise that they're no better than the rest of us? Our time will come; they've had theirs.

STABBED in the BACK

After 17 months of strike against privatised cleaning contract, cleaners at Addenbrookes Hospital have been dealt a final blow by their own union COHSE national executive who dropped official support on February 20th. Over the last 3 months local NUPE/COHSE officials have held several extraordinary branch meetings at short notice in an attempt to push through a "back to work at any price" deal. These stitch-ups were defeated by the determination of the women not to surrender to official pressure. This latest move has to be seen as the beginning of the end of official union resistance to current attacks on pay, conditions and services. NUPE & COHSE are now actively assisting the privatisation process in many areas. FOR RANK & FILE CONTROL OF THE UNIONS! THE NHS BELONGS TO WORKERS AND USERS! NO TO OFFICIAL COLLABORATION IN NHS CUTS!

CONTRACTS SELL-OUT

Six months of struggle by the Contracts (French Connection) strikers have been betrayed by their union NUTGW.

A deal has been struck at ACAS giving the boss the right to lay off the strikers and sack militants, without granting union recognition — a key issue for the strikers. Union officials, upon hearing that the strikers had rejected going back to work on those terms, immediately withdrew official support for the strike.

This is the culmination of a series of failures to support the strikers to the full, and many of the strikers now feel they would prefer to join another union.

Although they are now without strike pay the Contracts workers are still determined to win. YOUR SUPPORT IS VITAL. SEND DONATIONS TO:

CONTRACTS STRIKE COMMITTEE,
c/o NUS BUILDING,
CORONATION ST,
SOUTH SHIELDS,
TYNE AND WEAR.

What Syndicalists Think About...

KILLING FELLOW WORKERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Anarchists have often described the state as organised violence, a machine which can use the most sophisticated weaponry against its own or another people to maintain the status quo of who is to be the ruling class of a country. This is never more apparent than when a country goes to war. The whole economy and resources of the nation are mobilised for the war effort.

Mussolini once said, "War is the health of the state". The state truly comes into its own when there is a war, which serves the dual function of reinforcing the ruling class's control over its subjects at home, while protecting their interests or extending their spheres of influence in territories abroad, against the encroachments of another ruling class.

The old music hall comedian George Robey used to define a politician as "a man who gives your life for his country", and in the last two World Wars we have seen the lives of ordinary working class men, women and children sacrificed by the millions.

But the war machine itself has undergone technological changes that make it capable of far worse slaughter. Since the development of nuclear weapons it now threatens the survival of the whole human species. It has become a self-generating Frankenstein's monster, forcing the pace of governments in the arms race, so that they now stockpile missiles and bombs which could destroy the world many times over, and people throughout the world live in fear of the nuclear holocaust.

While individuals in the ruling class pay thousands for personal nuclear bunkers, deluding themselves as to their personal survival in a radioactive, burnt-out world, the rest of us are offered the con of worthless Civil Defence schemes, with advice on "How to take the kitchen door off its hinges as a protection against thermonuclear blast".

Governments have an even more schizophrenic approach. On one hand they promote programmes for the extension and research of more and more sophisticated and efficient means of mass murder, while their military strategists justify their high salaries with war games, the latest missiles, the dreams of Star Wars, the promises of first strike capabilities.

But because the mutually assured destruction (MAD for short) does not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants, governments are constantly seeking agreement with their rival ruling class in other countries to try to return to more "conventional" forms of weapons that would afford them some chance of survival and leave the world sufficiently intact to remain exploitable.

So proceeds a mad death dance, where partners change, former enemies become allies, old allies become potential enemies, and the capitalist media condition the minds of ordinary men and women to accept and adapt, and most of all to forget that the Russian rockets cannot come home in only on the capitalists, the western missiles cannot aim only at the Kremlin bureaucrats; no: the mass of deaths that would occur in nuclear war would be

those of ordinary workers who have NO interest in defending systems which exploit and oppress them.

As the French statesman Clemenceau once said, "The Anarchists are right, the poor have no country."

As syndicalists we are opposed to participating in wars, which perpetuate a system of society which reduces men and women to wage slaves with no control over our daily lives, whether that system is avowedly capitalist or so-called communist. Because of our unswerving opposition plans have already been drawn up to have "subversives" like ourselves rounded up and slaughtered if the need arises because governments themselves realise that the social philosophy we advocate is the means of bringing such a system to an end.

The pacifist organisation the Peace Pledge Union had a poster which said "WARS WILL CEASE WHEN MEN REFUSE TO FIGHT." We would go farther. We seek not merely a refusal to fight but an active destruction of the war machine itself.

As workers, not a wheel turns unless we turn it. The power to save humankind from annihilation already exists in our hands. Capitalists do not make tanks, ships, missiles, planes and bombs. No. It is we, the working class, who do that.

It is not by pleadings, petitions and protest marches that this can be changed. No, it is only by organised, industrial, direct action. It will certainly not be changed by the reformist perpetrators of capitalism, like the Kinnocks or Owens. These self-glorifiers are only concerned with gaining power within the system, while we seek to destroy the system along with its power structures.

Sometimes the question is put to us, "If Britain was syndicalist and was invaded, what would you do?" The answer is that we would fight against an invading STATE as we fight against the present STATE, but in fact this possibility could not arise in a single nation. The building of a syndicalist society would not come about only in one country. The trend towards liberation is a worldwide trend. But let it suffice to say that in the case of invasion, "the flies would conquer the flypaper". Every man and woman sent in to attack would be subjected to disaffection and intensified subversion by a people unexploited and unoppressed, daily determining their own lives without party bureaucracy or fear. Such a people would be ungovernable.

Workers, after all, can be shot to death, but cannot be shot to work.

With the industrial resources already in the hands of workers every form of sabotage and direct action would be unleashed against those who would seek to rule, for with every form of domination there must be acquiescence on the part of those to be ruled. Having once tasted the liberty of self-determination, no man or woman would ever again relinquish it.

BM.



WILL HE CONTINUE, OR WILL HE BUCK?

The Shape of Things to Come



COME AND WET THIS TRUNCHEON
Pamphlet by Dave Douglass.
Published by Doncaster, Cambridge and S London DAM groups
Available from PO BOX 96,
DONCASTER, price 80p.

This pamphlet on the 12 month miners' strike records in vivid detail how the police and legal system were used by the Thatcher government to break the strike and emasculate the NUM. Furthermore, it shows clearly that "confrontational" tactics against the state's troops, trained and armed to the teeth is a futile, though brave, struggle.

This pamphlet further highlights the brutally rude awakening of many miners as to the real nature of the police. Those who had naively believed in the "British sense of Justice" felt that the role of police in society was to "protect the ordinary man and woman from violence to their person or encroachments on their liberties". Now many for the first time in their lives saw first hand the naked aggression of the state when the interests of those who control society are resisted by organised labour. Their illusions about British police being any different from Russian, South

African or any other police were shattered. "Our Friendly British Bobby" could be as vicious and brutal as anything that came out of Hitler's Germany, but of course, as with the Nazi thugs of yesteryear, they were "only doing their duty".

Since the miners' strike, we have seen them used in other industrial disputes. They are currently employing the experience gained during the miners' dispute against the print workers at "Fortress Wapping" and no doubt with the constantly recurring "crises of capitalism" we will see them used again and again, with a constantly increasing scale of force through the availability of "better" batons and shields, increased training in the tactics of a Macedonian Phalanx (a new riot control training centre has just been set up in Hounslow, no doubt at mind-boggling expense, for this purpose), gas grenades, rubber bullets, water cannon and the latest weapon, the AMAC tank.

But the police are not the only ones to learn from experience. The miners' strike has also taught the workers a bitter lesson. Although they have yet to get themselves industrially organised, with enough solidarity to ensure they cannot be crushed, workers do not lack the initiative or ingenuity to adapt their tactics in future struggles according to the repressive force being used against them.

The social history recorded in this pamphlet will one day be of great academic interest to students. Meantime, let it serve as a warning to us as to what our immediate future holds.

BM.

AIDS: THE SHOCK HORROR TREATMENT

Early last year AIDS hit the headlines as the press began a campaign of scare-mongering and persecution in a severe case of homophobia. This had the required effect of causing panic amongst the population. Gay switchboard were inundated with callers worried about AIDS-everyone from mothers to people suffering from night sweats and union representatives calling to ask advice.

DETENTION

The Government replied with the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Act which provided for the detention in hospital of AIDS sufferers, if, in the 'wisdom' of a magistrate they are likely to 'take...proper precautions.'

SUICIDE

The latest attack has come from the hospitals who are now insisting that any gays coming in for surgery should undergo tests to discover whether they have been infected with the AIDS virus. This has resulted in some gay men being sent home without treatment when their results have come up positive. Problems caused by the test were discussed at the first national conference on AIDS in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in February. The Terence Higgins Trust, presently Britain's only AIDS charity were NOT invited. Six gay men have committed suicide after the test proved positive.

CAMPAIGN

In March the Government launched a £2 million media campaign. This consisted of ads in 'The Sun' and 'The News of the World', who were to blame for the hysteria which made it necessary in the first place. Plans for three page ads and television advertising have been dropped. The total distribution of the national dailies is around 15 million, the population of Britain is around 70 million. NO ads were placed in the gay press.

These disgusting actions we expect from the state which has a history of harassment and persecution of gays and lesbians. Far more alarming is the response on the shop floor. The Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) reported that a member who had been living with a partner who died as a result of contracting AIDS had been a victim of unpleasant over-reaction from his workplace colleagues. In December 1985 a NALGO paper stated that it had received reports of a considerable number of cases of discrimination against lesbians and



gays. NALGO members had refused to deal with gay members of the public.

PREJUDICE AND LIES

Gays and lesbians in the workplace are being subjected to increased prejudice. In addition it means gays and lesbians will be prevented from coming out because of the hostile climate which is being created. The state is dividing the working class by spreading fear based on lies and falsehoods.

The experts have clearly exposed the lies. In August 1985 Dr Donald Acheson said 'I know no job where there is a risk of transmitting AIDS'. The British Medical Journal stated in an editorial last year 'There are no grounds to suggest that transmission occurs...by sharing a bus or waiting room or by talking or shaking hands with a patient who has AIDS'. Obviously none of these statements made the newspapers.

STRUGGLE

The working class must be united. We must stand together despite the state's attempt to divide us by homophobia, racism, or sexism. The struggle of gays and lesbians is our struggle. A struggle against harassment, persecution, and bigotry. Gays and lesbians should find sympathy, help, and solidarity on the shopfloor.

Clearly the unions have failed to provide information to its members though a number are beginning to take steps in that direction.

The Terence Higgins Trust exists to help and service anyone with AIDS, or AIDS-related problems. The Trust is understaffed and in need of funds. In 1986 the Trust will need £400,000.

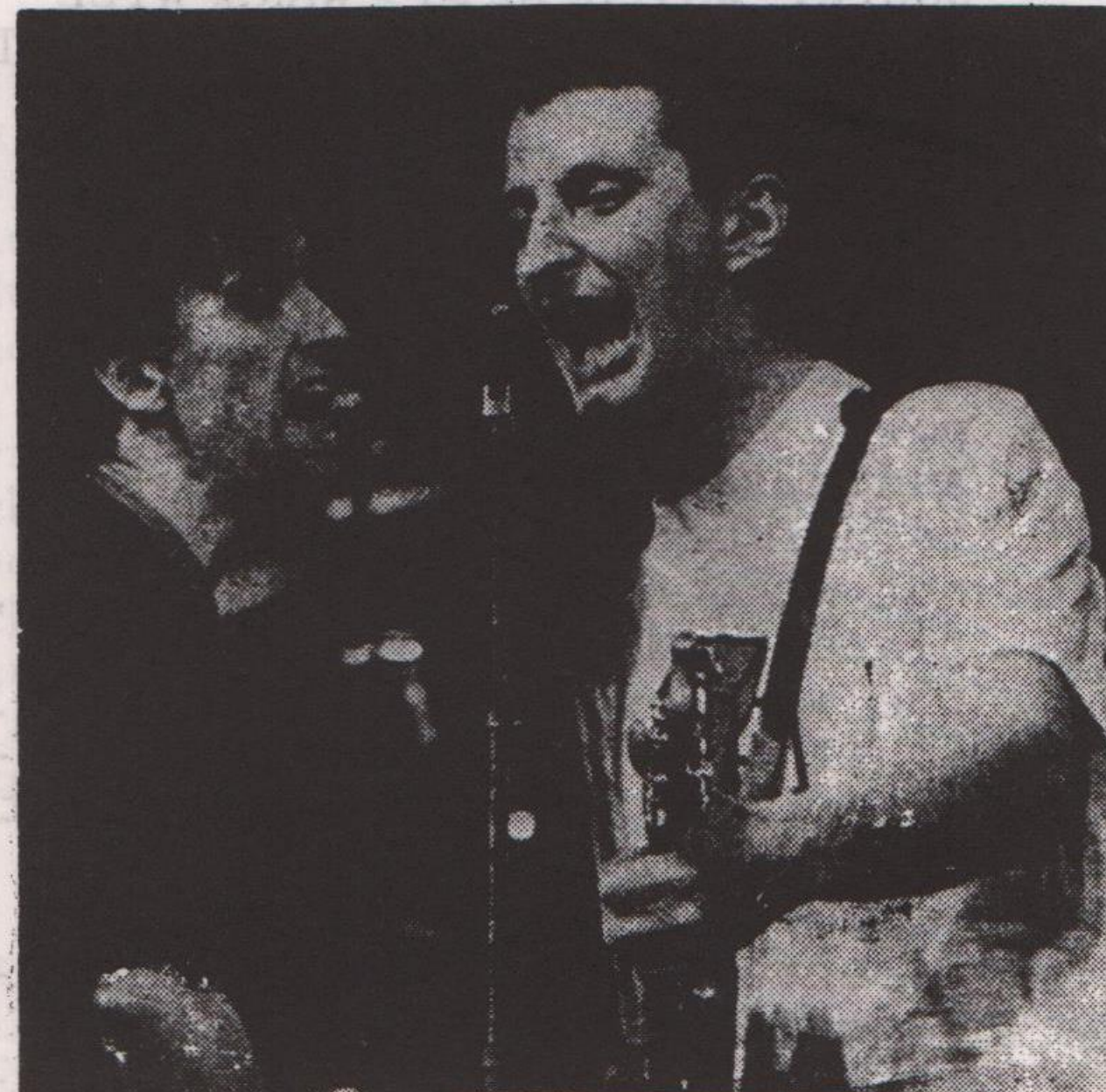
Donations to:
The Terence Higgins Trust,
BM Aids,
London, WC1N 3XX.
Tel: 01-833 2971.

music RED WEDGE and politics

Probably the second most publicised happening on the music scene recently (after Live Aid) has been the rise of Red Wedge, an organisation which aims to increase the political awareness of young people through their enjoyment of music.

Fans' anger

Although Red Wedge claims merely to support the Labour Party, and not to be running a direct recruitment drive, such a project can only be regarded as a cynical move to channel music fans' anger towards 'safe' areas.



This is not to say that the musicians involved (Paul Weller, Billy Bragg etc.) are on a par with Kinnock, Hattersley and the rest. Quite possibly they sincerely believe that they are contributing towards the type of political understanding that will eventually bring about a better society. Whether they do or not, however, is not the point. What is important is that, as ever, one of the factions with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo,

namely the Labour Party, is bringing its grubby influence to bear on young people, through a popular medium - in this case music.

Keep them out!

It is quite likely that the majority of people who go to Red Wedge gigs will do so to enjoy the music, particularly in areas where good live music is a rare commodity. No doubt, though, that there will be a lot of people who, like so many others before them, will swallow the well-presented party political propaganda.

This is not an argument for 'keeping politics out of music' - the sort of phrase usually used by the most cynical exploiters of peoples' gullibility. Politics cannot be kept out of anything, and music has been used to express peoples' anger and resentment, and to put over messages about the good and bad things in life, ever since it was invented. What is important is to keep politicians out of music.

Told what to think

Party political considerations aside, the artists who are helping Red Wedge would do well to recognise that young music fans have minds of their own. People can still see what's what, and can do without being told what to think by the Labour (or any other) Party, via their favourite singers and bands. The Wedge artists should also think about the words of folk singer Christy Moore in a recent newspaper interview:

'I don't like politicians and I don't want to be associated with them....You could be singing for Red Wedge this week and they could be locking you up the next.'

DERISORY: Benefits uprating con

The position of the poorest people in society has been re-emphasised clearly, with the publication of the latest social security benefit uprating figures due to take effect in July.

The government will not be unduly worried by protests that the figures do not come anywhere near bringing the poor to a decent standard of living but then, why should they? After all, when you're smacking somebody in the face to keep them submissive, you don't worry too much about the odd scream - especially when you

know that most people will thank you for it and plead for more of the same treatment.

Benefits will remain at a derisory level. There is no point in directing resources towards people who are not producing more wealth for the wealthy. Far better to just keep them alive (or most of them - hypothermia, suicide etc. are useful allies of the state when it comes to a spot of 'pruning') until they are needed, if ever. Added to this are the useful divide and rule effects of a system which divides the unemp-

loyed and poorer-paid sections of the working class against the rest, by ensuring that there is more 'competition' for jobs (ie. people will work for less, and are less likely to flex their industrial muscle), and divides the poor into the 'deserving' (eg. pensioners, people who get laid off after years of work etc.), and the 'undeserving' (the most obvious example being young people who have never had a job).

The negligible increases in benefit are not the product of misguided or miscalculated

policy. They are the state's way of saying 'up yours' to the poor, a vicious, calculated reminder of who is wielding the effective power in shaping the lives of ordinary people.

Fighting back means everybody - claimants, pensioners, single-parents, and those in work - uniting and recognising that we all owe it to each other to take direct action in our own environment. There is no point in different sections of the working class fighting their own little separate battles, we're all in it together.

Nicaragua Revolution on a leash

Since the Sandinistas took power they have

- *repressed all radical unions not affiliated to their own Sandinista Workers' Central (a no-strike bosses' union);

- *put factory workers under military discipline;

- *carried out an intensive persecution of the Miskito Indians, burning 30 of their villages and herding these Atlantic Coast Indians into "open prison farms";

- *militarised the whole of society, with universal conscription against the "Contra menace";

- *put all media, TV and radio under State control;

- *set up a state which rules in the name of the working class whose executive is comprised of Daniel Ortega, a wealthy businessman, Sergio Ramirez, a writer and businessman, two Catholic priests, Cardinal and Di Escutote, and several lawyers.

In the wake of the revolution, agricultural workers took over the Somoza family's lands. The sandinistas sent in the Army to clear them off. Tomas Borge, a Sandinista commander complained, "Private property must be respected".

This concern for private property is reflected in the fact that 70% of Nicaraguan agriculture and industry is in the hands of private individuals, the rest being nationalised.

In Britain the Sandinistas are still a fashionable government among the left, from the middle class home with its stocks of Nicaraguan coffee, to the Marxists passing resolutions of support for the Sandinistas at their union branch.

Ever since the Bolsheviks took over in Russia in 1917 it has been a fault of those anxious to see a revolution to gloss over the defects of a new revolutionary order. It was not until 1921 that the bulk of non-Russian Anarcho-syndicalists realised the repressive nature of Lenin's Red Tsardom. Until then, stories of trade unionists being shot or imprisoned, of the militarisation of labour and of the persecution of anarchists had been rejected as White propaganda.

The US Congress has just refused to pass President Reagan's aid package to the Contras, the ragged remnants of ex-Dictator Somoza's National Guard. This disintegrating rag-bag army is, according to the Washington Post, "bleeding to death"; most of the estimated 5,000 contras are now hiding in Honduras. Even the White House has described them as "abject and undesirable", yet it is the bogey of the Contras (effectively defeated by the Sandinistas over two years ago) which the Marxist-Leninist/Capitalist rulers of Nicaragua use as the justification for their ongoing onslaught against independent unions and workers' rights.

In some quarters today, there is the same blind support for the Sandinistas. It is misplaced. The romantic trappings of revolution they sport, the red-and-black flags, the well-armed militia or the ten-gallon hat of Sandino, their inspirational figure, don't make a revolution.

THE REPRESSION OF LABOUR

With the elections safely out of the way in November of last year, the government cracked down on union activity in Nicaragua.

The right to strike was withdrawn. Borge stated that the Nicaraguan workers had been going too far down the road to self-management. Fishermen at Bluefields were attacked by the Army when they struck against job cuts.

When the dockers' union of the CST decided to form an independent union in 1983 their leaders were imprisoned.

When members of a radical union, the CTN, struck at the Nordaime banana plantation in preference to joining the sandinista union, 300 were sacked and then evicted by police from their homes.

THE CTN

"The CTN reiterates the need to guarantee the development of a union movement that is democratic, independent, unified, revolutionary and class conscious... so as to rebuff every effort to impose a single union hierarchy that would be totally subservient to the party in power."

Thus reads part of the manifesto of the CTN, the 65,000 member union which is the Sandinistas' main opponent on the left. Forged in the revolutionary struggle against Somoza, its championing of workers' self-management has been met with fierce repression from the new bosses of Nicaragua.

- *Armed Sandinista leaders Borge and Telles burst into the congress of Fetsalud, the CTN health workers' union, with troops, to force it to join with the CST.

- *Vehicles owned by CTN militants have been destroyed and CTN officers are kept under surveillance;

- *in spite of the shortage of hard news from Nicaragua

since the crackdown, it seems likely that the CTN was made illegal then.

CRACKDOWN

The CTN criticise the Sandinista ideal as "a model of oppression and new privileges; this model violates the most elementary rights of workers, as has been demonstrated in Cuba, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and most recently, Poland where our brothers have organised Solidarnosc to confront the bureaucracy and corruption of that regime."

This stands in stark contrast to the praise for the Soviet bloc and its ideology lavished on them by the Sandinistas. Ortega, for example has stated that "Marxism-leninism is the scientific (sic) doctrine which guides our revolution". And the government sent a fraternal delegation to the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as well as ordering a day of mourning on the death of Brezhnev.

SANDINISTA POLITICS

The reasons that Nicaragua has not moved completely into the fold of the Communist bloc are dual. Firstly the Sandinistas' party, the FSLN, only numbers some 4,000. They have to tread cautiously, for there simply aren't enough of them to set up and enforce a total marxist dictatorship, with the vast bureaucracy required.

Secondly, Nicaragua is still dependent on aid from Western countries (\$65 million from the US in 1985!). Its government relies on the support of Nicaraguan industrialists and landowners (who make excellent profits from a workforce whose tame union is largely concerned with maintaining strike-free production).

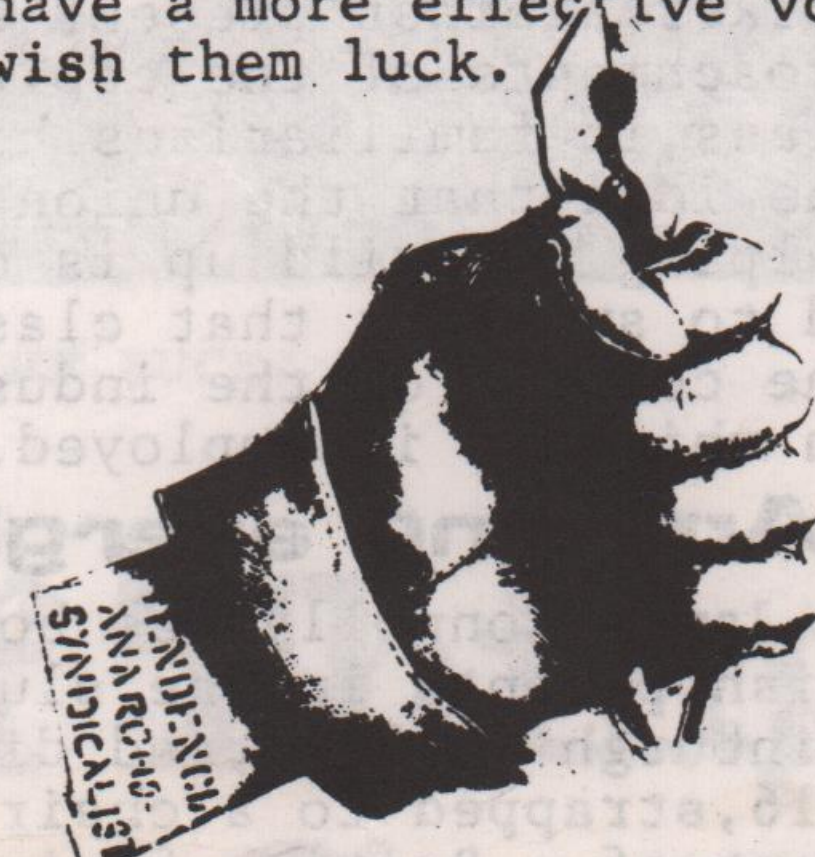
The new rulers of Nicaragua are just as privileged as the henchmen of Somoza were, in their air-conditioned villas in the suburbs of Managua. Of course in the old days all the country's wealth was in the hands of a single family. Now it's different: the wealth has been shared out — among the middle class and more adaptable industrialists. **CONTD. p8**

NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT



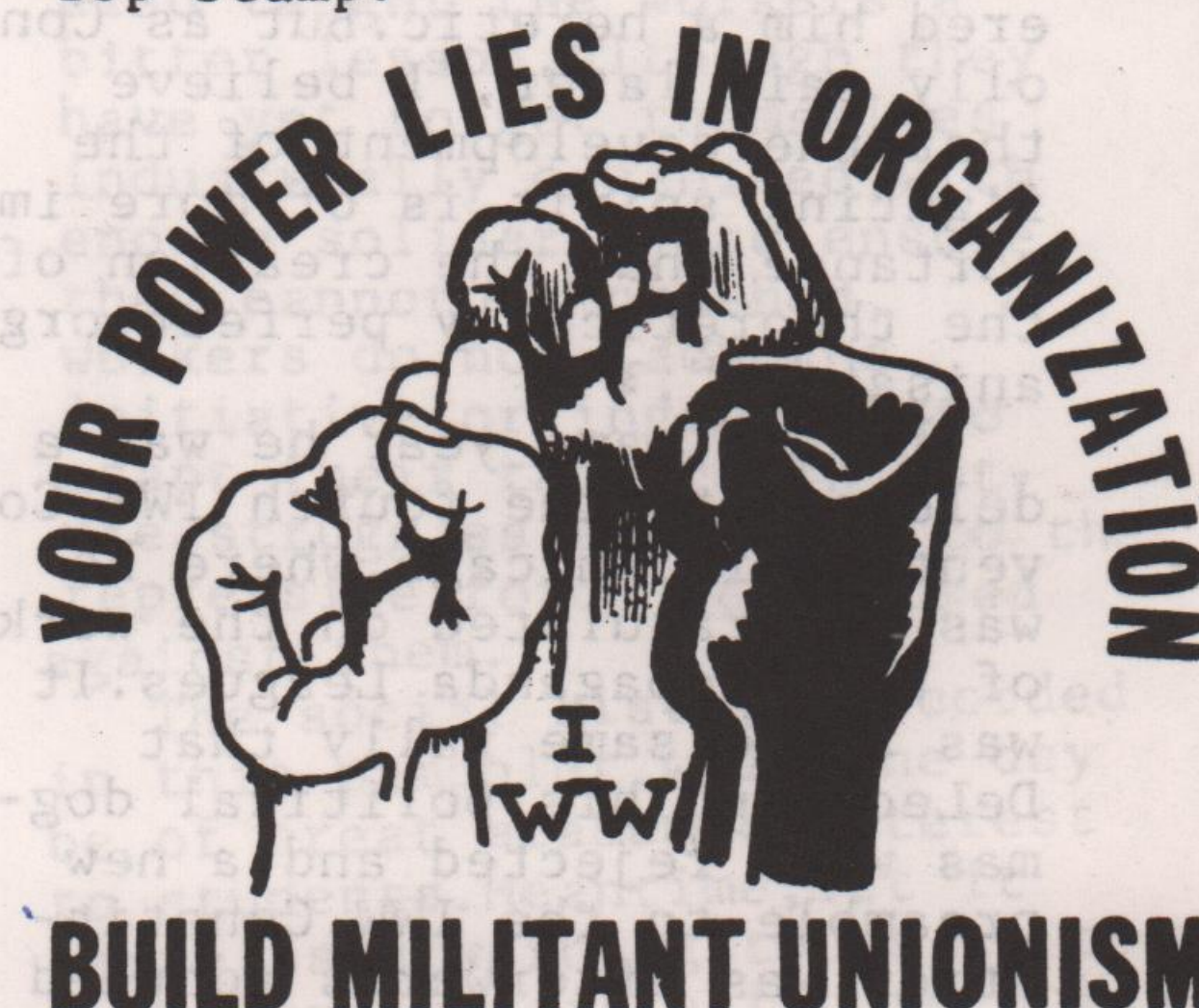
A new anarcho-syndicalist organisation has been formed in AUSTRALIA, the result of a conference held in Sydney at the end of January. The Rebel Worker Group who were the IWA associates there have now become the Sydney group of the ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST FEDERATION. Their bi-monthly magazine, REBEL WORKER is available from PO BOX 92, Broadway 2007, Sydney, Australia, price \$3.00 for 6 issues.

the union movement of URUGUAY is organised in a single confederation the PIT-CNT, which held its third congress late last year after more than 12 years of military rule. The Uruguayan Communist Party sought to manipulate the Congress in favour of their conception of bureaucratic collaborationist party-controlled unionism. However the response of the majority of delegates, 506 in all, was to walk out of the Congress. Many libertarian activists who were present (the libertarian current is deep-rooted in Uruguayan labour organisations, particularly the electrical workers') have reorganised the FAU (Uruguayan Anarchist Federation) in order to have a more effective voice. We wish them luck.



In SOUTH AFRICA 4 members of COSATU, union militants and anti-apartheid activists, are on trial for their lives. They are charged with treason, which carries the death penalty, in an attempt by the state to intimidate all organised opposition to apartheid and industrial slavery. Send letters of support to S&AWU, Room 18, 3rd Floor, Tudor Mansions, 78 Troy Street, Johannesburg, South Africa. 2001.

The North American revolutionary industrial union! the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) has also been struggling hard. They are currently expanding their membership among printworkers, in south-east Michigan, where there are now eight shops with union recognition. An organising drive among apple orchard workers in Washington has been less successful in the face of fearful and apathetic immigrant workers worried about deportation to Mexico, but the work continues, with the use of more Spanish-language literature. The IWW are also adopting the families of imprisoned British miners, and have been helping to raise funds for this cause by donating badges and other materials. Their paper INDUSTRIAL WORKER can be obtained from Hull DAM, PO BOX 102 Hull, for 20p/copy plus a 13p stamp.



BUILD MILITANT UNIONISM

IRAN:

Despite Government repression of all legitimate union activity, reports from Iran indicate that wildcat strikes and other worker protests are on the increase in that country.

The protests have been spurred by wage cuts, late pay (often two or three months late, sometimes as much as five months late), deteriorating working conditions, the forced recruitment of workers to fight in the war with Iran's Kurdish minority, and widespread firings and layoffs (which have fallen most heavily on women workers and workers who fail tests of Islamic orthodoxy, as well as on workers seen as activists and organisers).

Protests seem concentrated in the textile and metalworking industries, and have included walkouts, sitdown strikes, slowdowns, and mass quitting (by whole workforces or by groups of hard-to-replace skilled workers). At least one factory, the Tehran Caterpillar Tractor plant, workers (protesting the conscription of some of their fellow workers and a corporate takeover that would have reduced wages and benefits and eliminated pension rights) took over the

A TROUBLED NATION



plant (October 26th) and ran it themselves for 10 days. As of the last report (December 1st) the plant was still under worker occupation.

Repression by the Pasdaran (Islamic Guards) has been extremely severe. The Pasdaran typically surround striking plants and either force strikers back to work at gunpoint or simply open fire on the strikers (the increasing incidence of sitdown strikes may be in response to Pasdaran tactics). Invariably, those workers deemed 'agitators' or 'troublemakers' are arrested, though protest strikes have succeeded in freeing some of these.

Unions in Iran (most of which were formed underground during the struggle to overthrow the Shah, or immediately after the fall of the Shah's Government) have been replaced by Islamic councils, which function as Government-controlled pro-company unions. Protests against these bodies (including a demonstration of 4,000 Tehran taxi drivers protesting election fraud in their Islamic Council) have also been reported.

From INDUSTRIAL WORKER.

IN THE TRADITION

CONNOLLY AND LARKIN: Ireland's Industrial Unionists

An acquaintance, seeing me with a copy of a pamphlet dealing with James Connolly, remarked that Connolly had worked out his brand of socialism after living with a tribe of Indians in the USA. I think he was thinking of the Wobblies (IWW)!

Much has been written of Connolly by all the sides that seek him as a martyr and the corresponding labels have been attached: Marxist, socialist, Republican, anarcho-syndicalist, etc, but he did carry the union card that allows such a manifestation of possible political affiliations, and his writings and actions displayed his basic belief in industrial unionism.

He said that state ownership had its uses, "But the enrolment of workers in unions patterned closely after the structure of modern industries, and following the organic lines of industrial development, is par excellence the swiftest, safest and most peaceful form of constructive work the Socialist can engage in. It prepares, within the framework of capitalist society, the working forms of the socialist republic, and thus, while increasing the resisting power of the worker against present encroachments of the capitalist class, it familiarizes him with the idea that the union he is helping to build up is destined to supplant that class in the control of the industry in which he is employed."*

Amazing energies

James Connolly was born of Irish parents in the slums of Edinburgh in 1868, and died in 1916, strapped to a chair in front of a British firing squad, for his part in the "Easter Rising".

He was one of the earliest organisers of the IWW, having emigrated to America in 1903 after being active in both the socialist and Irish Nationalist movements in Scotland and Ireland. His amazing energies went into not only his own branch but any other workers that came into his reach. At the same time he became New York correspondent of the Industrial Union Bulletin.

His ability to combine his Marxist, religious, nationalist and syndicalist views brought him into many arguments, notably a long-running one with Daniel DeLeon, another founding father of the IWW. Connolly's response to these divisions was, in his own words, "A more thorough organisation of the working class upon the lines of real industrial unionism. At present we are too much afraid of each other. Whatever be our form of organisation, the spirit of sectionalism still rules and curses our class," words of advice still valuable today.

Fighting spirit

In 1908 he founded the IWW Propaganda Leagues, much to the disgust of DeLeon, who considered him a heretic. But as Connolly said later, "I believe that the development of the fighting spirit is of more importance than the creation of the theoretically perfect organisation".³

In the same year he was a delegate to the fourth IWW Convention in Chicago, where he was congratulated on the work of the Propaganda Leagues. It was a the same rally that DeLeon and his political dogmas were rejected and a new preamble to the IWW Constitution was afterwards adopted repudiating political action.



Citizen Army members outside Liberty Hall, the ITGWU HQ, Dublin.

Outspoken

At the same time that Connolly was organising in America another spirit was at work in Ireland. A herculean figure and magnificent orator had arisen to fill the vacuum created by Connolly's departure to the USA: while so different to James Connolly, James Larkin's fierce outspoken attitude complemented Connolly's intellectualism.

Born in Liverpool in 1876, he started full-time work at the age of nine and even at that young age began to have clashes with his employers. In 1901 he joined the National Union of Dock Labourers and in the following years had many experiences with strengthened his concern for the underdog.

Larkin came to notice in 1907, when he joined together the Catholics and Protestants of Belfast against their common oppressors. He then moved to Dublin and formed the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, of which he said:

"Within seven short years these few common, vulgar coal-porters, dockers, teamsters, factory hands taught the Federated Employers of Ireland who controlled industry. And it is to be remembered that we did not allow our organisation to be exploited by any and every

philosophical freak who wanted a platform to air his or her views about 'killing God', limitation of families, eugenics, sex license or twilight sleep. Obliterating the scab, limiting the power of the boss to rob US at the point of production, insisting upon decent homes, good grub, good clothing, a chance to live, absorbed our energies. Wherever a woman or child of our class was degraded or oppressed we rallied to their assistance. Our motto was and will be to the end of time: 'An injury to one is the concern of all'."

Dublin 1913

When in 1909 Connolly returned to Ireland and met Larkin, he joined the ITGWU and in 1910 became Belfast secretary. For the next couple of years Larkin and Connolly actively figured in the syndicalist movement in Ireland culminating in the Dublin "lock-out" of 1913. This battle between the employers and the ITGWU lasted some four months and five strikers were killed.

During a tour of England to rally support for the Dublin workers, Larkin argued that "A great many of the Trade Union leaders seemed to think that they existed to apologise for capitalism, to try and stop strikes and smooth difficulties over, to put a healing salve in the wounds and ban-

dages and to heal it for a while. But you cannot heal this disease with a salve. It is a root remedy that you must apply. The poison is the employers' power over labour. The power to exploit your flesh and bone and brain."

Despite the efforts of Larkin and Connolly there was little help from the main body of British trade unionists and the Dublin workers gave in. However this did not deter them and they continued to propagate the idea of industrial unionism.

Easter Rising

During 1913, Larkin and Connolly helped to found the Irish Citizen Army, to defend the workers from police brutality, and Connolly took over command of both this and the ITGWU when Larkin left for the USA in October 1914, to raise funds for the labour movement.

As has been stated Connolly held extremely diffuse views. By the beginning of the Great War he found himself taken into the confidence of the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) who were bent on a nationalist rising against the British.

Taking advantage of British involvement in the War the Nationalists, or rather, a small faction of them, decided to launch an uprising using the Irish Volunteers and Connolly's Citizen Army in Dublin.

The rising went off at half cock, Connolly himself cheerfully admitting at the outset that the rebels didn't stand a chance. Nevertheless, a thousand Irishmen, commanded by Connolly, held out in Dublin against 30,000 British troops and their howitzers for a week.

Though mortally wounded in the fighting, Connolly was executed by a British firing squad.

He and the other leaders of the insurrection knew it would be crushed, but they also knew it would succeed in igniting the flames of Irish nationalism.

Deported

Larkin remained in America and worked with amongst others the IWW, speaking at Joe Hill's funeral in 1915. He was imprisoned in 1920 on a charge of "Criminal Anarchy". After much campaigning he was released in 1923 and deported to Ireland, where all that he had fought for had been sold out.

These were two of the greatest fighters for a united industrial front, who might have been successful, but for the attitude of craft unionism — a poison still at work in the labour movement today. Connolly said, "The most dispersive and isolating force at work... is craft unionism; the most cohesive and unifying force, industrial unionism".⁶

These two men not only recognised that industrial unionism was the only sure way to success in the class struggle. They also practiced what they preached.

MP.

FOOTNOTES

*James Connolly, "Socialism Made Easy, 1908.

²James Connolly 1914.

³James Connolly, "Old Wine in New Bottles", 1914.

⁴James Larkin, Irish Transport Union.

⁵James Larkin, speech, 1913.

⁶James Connolly, "Industrialism and Trade Unionism", 1910.

EASTER 1916

- our view

How did a prominent socialist and syndicalist like Connolly come to be holed up in the Dublin Post Office fighting against hopeless odds? How did the author of influential syndicalist pamphlets like "Axe to the Root" find himself involved in a cross-class nationalist conspiracy which resulted in nothing more glorious than De Valera's solidly conservative Green State?

The Easter Rising and the 1919-1921 war against the British was one of the earliest successful national liberation struggles. In those days the fact that national liberation does not mean liberation for the working class was less clear than now. Led by the middle classes since the days of Wolf Tone, the rebels never challenged capitalism. Connolly and his Citizen Army opposed British rule over Ireland because the British controlled the economic life of the country, not realising that the replacement of the British by a native boss class would be inevitable.

A coup carried out by a minority only brings a new, strong state. Only the action of a unified working class, industrially organised, can bring about a free society.

We see a similar situation today in Ulster's six counties. A part of the working class, animated by Nationalism and using terror tactics to either be incorporated into Eire or to form a new Marxist dictatorship is opposed to the other part, which allies itself with the bosses in defence of marginal advantages over their Catholic fellow workers.

The importance of Connolly's and Larkin's pre-war activity is clear to see. They tried to form a united, militant labour movement EMBRACING ALL WORKERS REGARDLESS OF RELIGION OR POLITICAL VIEWPOINT. Such a unionism is still the only way out of Ireland's tragedy.

GC



LETTERS



Dear Direct Action,

I attended the recent Anti-Fascist Action Conference as an observer and was disgusted to see the witch-hunt conducted by the Marxist left against "Class War", claiming they were fascist.

Personally I have little liking for "Class War", tiresome clowns who give Anarchism a bad name, but I have even less time for the Communist hacks who try and tar Anarchists with the Fascist brush. Compare the record of Communists with that of Anarcho-syndicalists as regards Fascism.

In '30s Germany, the IWW dockers were regarded by the Gestapo as formidable opponents...until the Communists gave their names to the SS.

In Spain the Anarcho-syndicalists met Fascism with a social revolution...until the Communists stabbed the workers in the back, smashing the collectives while starving the militias of arms, ensuring a Fascist victory. This success was celebrated by the Communists by a friendship pact with Hitler in 1939.

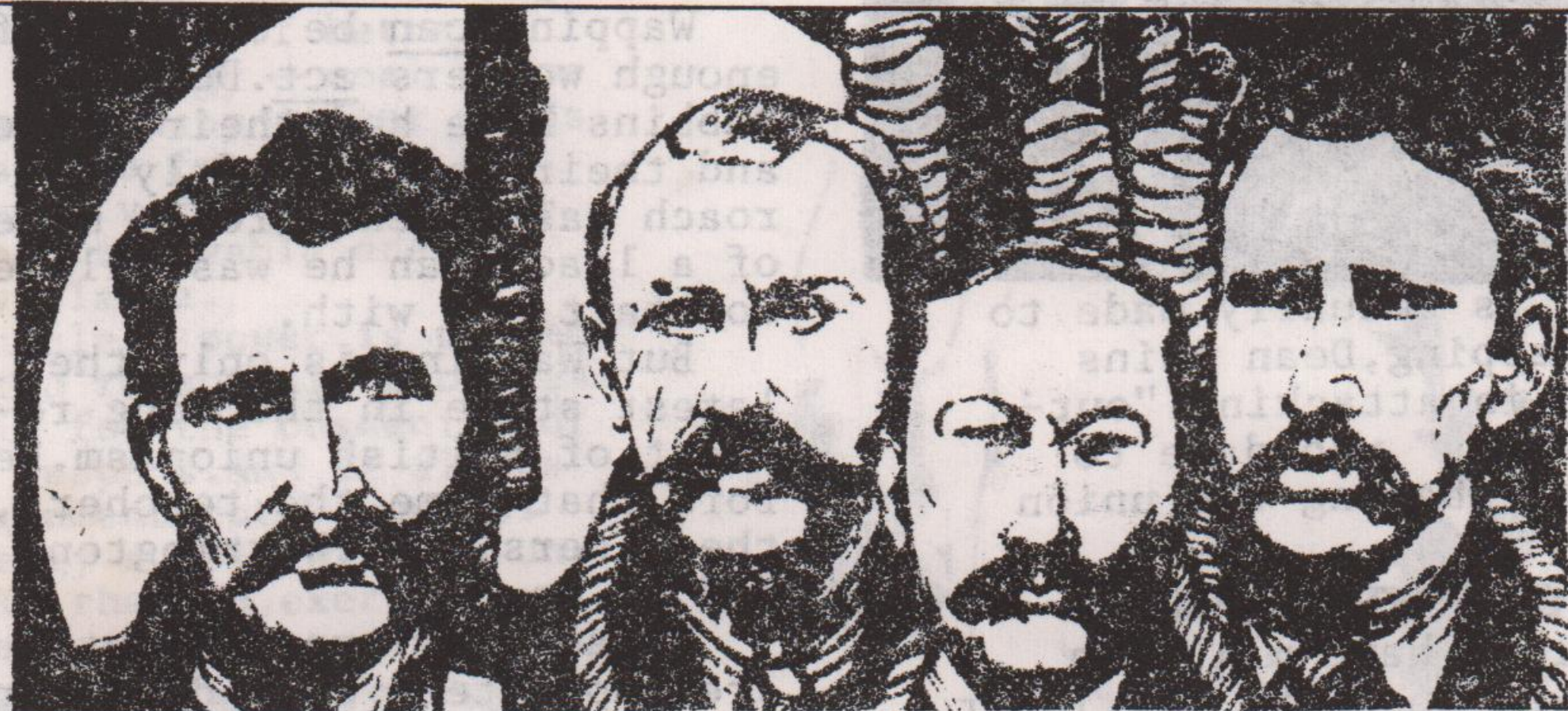
And the likes of the CP and NCP dare to talk of Anarchism being synonymous with Fascism!

E Wood, (AUEW)

NICARAGUA' CONT. p5

A revolution led by a small party elite will never bring a free society, only privilege for a few. For the workers it may bring carefully regulated handouts and concessions — eg improved literacy, which makes for more exploitable workers — but at the price of new repression.

This is the Nicaraguan experience — no revolution, only revolutionary rhetoric. Safe from its own working class and the battered remnants of the Contras, the new regime sits back in its impoverished little country, creaming off whatever wealth the workers produce. The same old story played again. GC.



Next month, May '86, sees the centenary of the first May Day. To commemorate it, DIRECT ACTION will contain a free poster, so make SURE of YOUR copy — or why not take out a sub?

YOUR shop, organisation or DAM group can send MAY DAY GREETINGS to all our readers in next month's issue.

Just send your greeting, with or without artwork, and a minimum donation of £3.00 to Dept DA, PO Box 102, Hull, by April 15th.

YOUR LOCAL DAM CONTACT IS:

DAM GROUP ROUNDUP

BOLTON DAM recently held a well-attended public meeting on HEALTH SERVICE CUTS with a speaker from the National Hospitals Action Committee. They will soon be holding an Anarchist Day (see below).

In BURNLEY DAM members organised support for the Anti-Police Harassment march in Manchester.

EDINBURGH comrades are picketing the CONNECTIONS shop there weekly and they report that this has been quite successful. They have also raised funds for the Contracts strikers.

LEEDS comrades have been active recently. They too have a weekly picket of French Connection. In addition they occupied the premises of Ernst & Whinney, the firm who sequestered SOGAT, along with other comrades. This gained local and national press coverage.

Leaflets in support of the WAPPING strikers were distributed outside WH Smiths. A leafletting campaign has been held outside the JOBCENTRE to protest against a racist survey being carried out there despite union opposition. Leeds DAM have also campaigned in support of French CNT members in the postal services who are being denied union recognition (see DA 29).

LIVERPOOL DAM have been supporting 11 workers on strike at A-ONE FEED SUPPLEMENTS who have maintained a 24-hour picket since early January. They are campaigning energetically against an upsurge of fascist activity in the city. They are also beginning

a campaign on behalf of Michael Davies, currently imprisoned in Park Lane Hospital and denied access to political literature.

CENTRAL LONDON comrades have been active in support of the WAPPING PRINT WORKERS.

MANCHESTER DAM members were instrumental in organising the march against POLICE HARASSMENT, and are still picketting FRENCH CONNECTION outlets in the city.

MIDDLESBROUGH DAM have formed a support group for the WAPPING STRIKERS. They are also engaged in collecting and translating Spanish material about the Revolution of 1936 for a COMMEMORATIVE PUBLICATION.

NEWCASTLE COMRADES have just brought out a new edition of the excellent "SYNDICALIST", in addition to their close involvement in the CONTRACTS strike.

Comrades in YORK have worked to raise funds for SILENTNIGHT strikers, and supported their pickets. They held a well-attended public meeting on the POLITICS OF PSYCHIATRY, and are now engaged in setting up a Claimants Union to help oppose the FOWLER REVIEW.

DAM GROUPS PLEASE SEND NEWS AND REPORTS OF YOUR ACTIVITIES FOR REGULAR INCLUSION IN ROUNDUP.

ANARCHIST DAY

TO COMMEMORATE THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF MAY DAY THERE WILL BE AN ALL-DAY EVENT AT BOLTON SOCIALIST CLUB, ON SATURDAY MAY 3rd.

THERE WILL BE DISPLAYS, BOOKSTALLS AND VIDEOS, AS WELL AS WORKSHOPS ON UNEMPLOYMENT, SPAIN, & ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM, ANARCHA-FEMINISM, ANIMAL RIGHTS, EDUCATION AND BUILDING THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT IN THE 80s. THESE EVENTS ARE FREE.

BANDS WILL PERFORM IN THE EVENING.

PUBLIC MEETING. RECAPTURE MAYDAY! THE HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAYMARKET MARTYRS. A public meeting to be held by East London DAM at Hackney Trades and Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane, E8, with speakers from DAM, LAINGS LOCK-OUT CTTEE, NUM and others. May 1st 8pm.

DAM GROUPS

A NEW DAM GROUP has been set up in BRISTOL. Readers can contact them via BOX DAM, 37 STOKESCROFT, BRISTOL 2.

NEWCASTLE DAM HAVE A NEW ADDRESS. They can now be contacted c/o DOH, 62 Thornton St, Newcastle upon Tyne.

PIT STRIKE BOOK

COVENTRY MINERS' WIVES SUPPORT GROUP have been working on a book about their experiences of the 84-85 strike and it is now ready for publication. The group are urgently seeking funds and will probably need around £4,250. Anyone who could help should contact E Sugrue, 79 Bennets Rd, Keresley End, Coventry, CV7 8HY.

VIDEO

FURTHER TO LAST MONTH'S ARTICLE ON THE CASE OF MS WENDY SAVAGE, THE MANCHESTER BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST INFORM US THAT AN HOUR-LONG VIDEOTAPE FEATURING MS SAVAGE IS NOW AVAILABLE. VHS or BETA, the tape costs £17.50 from NCT Tapes, 76 Humphrey Rd, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 9DG.

D.A.M.

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 by 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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DONATIONS

OUR VERY GRATEFUL THANKS ARE DUE TO THE FOLLOWING FOR DONATIONS: T.B. (LEEDS), MIDDLESBROUGH DAM, BOLTON DAM, BURNLEY DAM. BUT WE STILL NEED MORE, SO HANDS IN POCKETS, PLEASE!

NEXT MONTH'S COPY DATE WILL BE APRIL 15th. WE WELCOME ARTICLES LETTERS ETC BUT PREFER TYPED COPY IF POSSIBLE.

PUBLISHED BY D.A.M.
PO BOX 102, HULL.

DIRECT ACTION

The weakness that led to WAPPING

Murdoch has been planning this dispute for a long time. In an interview with the NEW YORK TIMES he is on record as having said "They (the unions) have been through here seeing the presses. What we didn't show them was our computer... And they never saw the extent of our preparations for typesetting. Yet the place had hundreds of construction workers and people here all the time. Anyone could have worked it out."

The SUN and NEWS OF THE WORLD made Murdoch £47 million clear profit last year. Over a year, it is obvious that he can afford to lose thousands or even millions of copies a week without worrying. Against this, the "Boycott" campaign — morally right that it is — is clearly ineffective.

CAREFUL PLANNING

Murdoch's success at Wapping isn't just down to luck, or even careful planning, though there was certainly plenty of the latter. His ability to get away with it reveals once again the fundamental weakness of the unions in this country, as did the failure of the TUC to support the miners.

With their police mercenaries, their anti-union laws and their cruel economic policies, the bosses have in the eighties embarked on a concerted strategy to maintain their privileges by attacking workers. The response of the TUC, supposedly the defenders of our class, hasn't exactly been emphatic. Put simply, Thatcher's mob know exactly what they're doing, while our class is stumbling from one defeat to another.

The fact that the print unions, traditionally among the strongest in the land, find themselves impotent before Murdoch, shows just how far the rout has gone.

THE COURTS

The shape of things to come was plain to see during the Stockport Messenger dispute in Warrington in 1983. The print unions brought Fleet St to a standstill, only to back down while still on top. Eddie Shah ran to the courts which duly hammered the NGA. The union appealed to the TUC for support and when none was forthcoming the NGA leaders had an excuse to cave in. If the labour movement had fought then, it wouldn't find itself camped outside Wapping now.

UNION LEADERS BLIND

Murdoch was allowed to move to Wapping overnight. While the unions were holding a secret ballot on strike action, so as to remain within the law, Murdoch was busy packing. Granted, new technology had weakened the printers' hand, but over the years that the Wapping plant was being built, and made operational, did none of the union leaders ask themselves what it was going to be used for?

UNION SLOW

It's all very well for Brenda Dean of SOGAT and Tony Dubbins of the NGA to cry now about the scab electricians at Wapping, but it was known that EETPU officials were recruiting for Wapping last autumn! While Murdoch was preparing for a showdown, when the writing was on the wall, what the hell were the unions doing?



Now that over 5,000 print workers have been locked out by Murdoch, why is the rest of Fleet St working normally? Do people still think that Shah and Murdoch are mavericks? The other newspapers will have to follow them to stay in business. Besides they know their class interests — we are the ones who let ourselves be isolated and picked off group by group.

The print unions have been content to court "public opinion" (you know, that decaying grey mush inside the heads of SUN readers) and hold a few rallies and token pickets. When

an attempt is actually made to blockade Wapping, Dean joins the police in attacking "outside agitators" who dare to act without obeying the union generals.

SEQUESTRATION

The unions have millions stashed away in banks (at least until they're sequestered) and yet in a situation like that at Wapping they're totally impotent. The COB in Bolivia, COSATU in S. Africa, or the Solidarnosc underground go from day to day on a shoestring budget, but they show more imagination, more fight, more audacity than the TUC unions will

The sacked printworkers will not get their jobs back on the strength of picketing alone, but it can effectively delay distribution of papers; eg on 15th March lorries were slowed by five hours until 2.30 am. But pickets need to be more organised and purposeful, rather than crowds of aimless people waiting to be dispersed by the police. The numbers should be spread out to make the best use of them. Talk of "storming the main gate" is the stuff of left-wing fantasy and only serves to boost the adrenalin of leftie paper-sellers. It won't help workers.

show in a million years. Of what use now is the £17 million sequestered from SOGAT? (Mind you if someone manages to burn down Wapping, no doubt Brenda Dean will need it to compensate Murdoch).

It's a massive uphill battle now if the sacked printworkers are to recover anything out of this shambles, and things aren't being helped by the confusion being spread by the union hierarchy and others. The leaders' strategy of "public opinion" hasn't hurt Murdoch in the slightest, yet much of the revolutionary left can only offer an obsession with mass picketting and set-piece battles which give the police good truncheon practice.

SOLIDARITY NEEDED

First, all the Fleet St printworkers should be out. They either fight now or else they'll be defeated group by group later. Mass picketting has a part to play and must be stepped up, but that won't win on its own. Workers in other industries must show solidarity to ensure that essentials like mail, electricity and water dry up. Blacking must be increased and distribution disrupted. Sabotage is a legitimate weapon.

Wapping can be cut off, if enough workers act. Dean and Dubbins have had their chance and their softly, softly approach has given Murdoch more of a lead than he was allowed to start off with.

But Wapping is only the latest stage in the long retreat of British unionism. Before that came the teachers, the miners, GCHQ, Warrington and so on.

We anarcho-syndicalists are supporters of a different kind of union organisation: a unionism that wouldn't be embarrassed by Arthur Scargill because he is foolish enough to take the TUC rhetoric about "standing and fighting" seriously. A unionism that is controlled by the rank and file workers, with no place for the likes of Hammond, Willis and Dean.

A revolutionary unionism that is nobody's tool, that is not a transmission belt for charlatans like Kinnock, and which isn't prepared to wait until the next election to take on Thatcher. A fighting unionism which defends the working class and points it toward a better future instead of leading us to the slaughterhouse... SYNDICALISM.

MAY DAY

1886

1986



IN COMMEMORATION OF 100 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

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MAY DAY 1986