

syndicalist fight



PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST FIGHT GROUP

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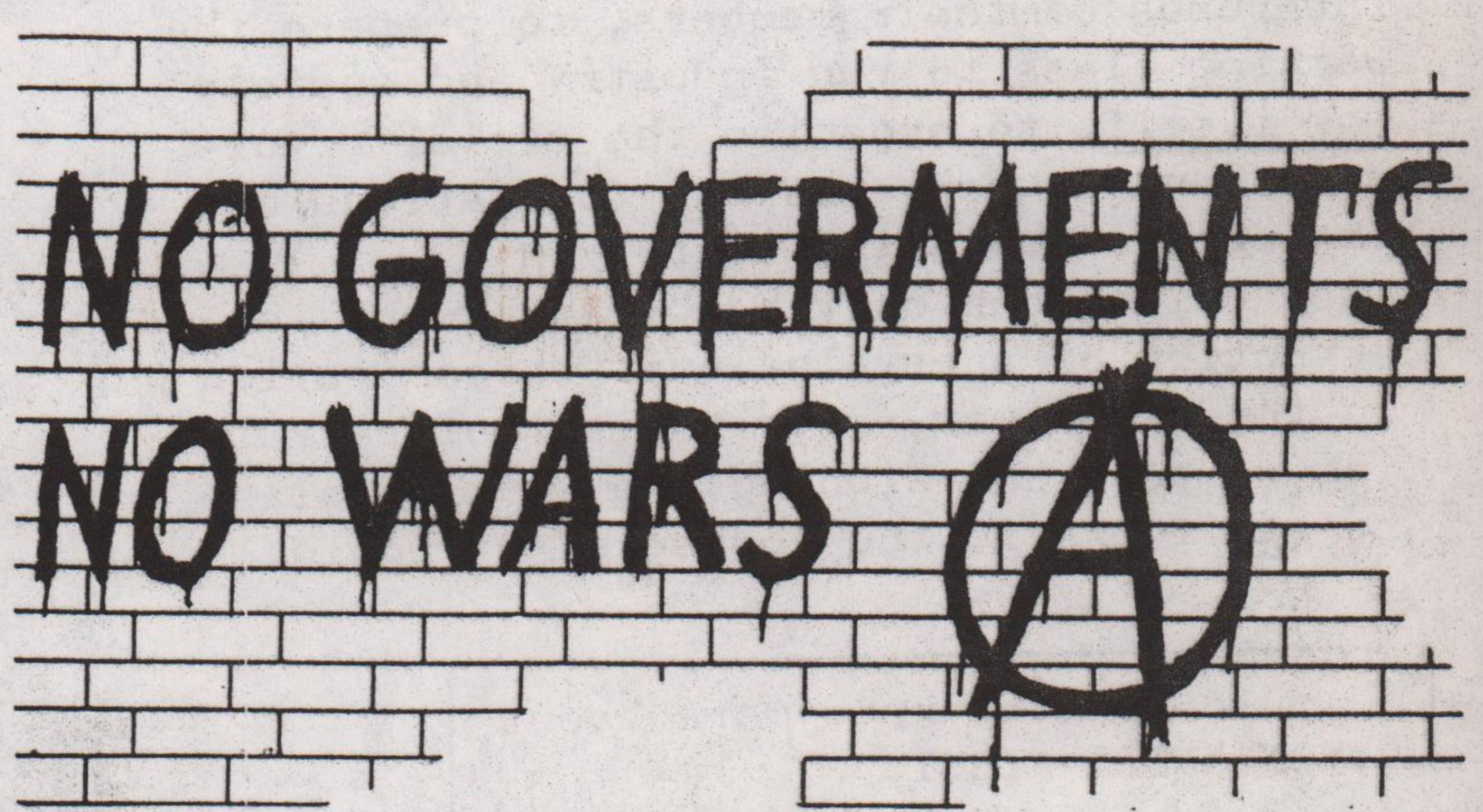
CND: THE NEXT STEP

Once again, on October 26th, thousands have gathered to demonstrate their opposition to the nuclear arms race. And those thousands represent only a small proportion of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's support in this country. But when the marching and the speeches are over, will the fight for nuclear disarmament be any further advanced?

Since its formation in 1958 CND has advocated a number of strategies. Foremost among these have been non-violent direct action and, in recent years, the peace camps. Yet in 27 years the Campaign, for all its massive support, has not prevented the basing of a single missile nor shifted the British Government one inch in its resolve to maintain a nuclear "deterrent". Attempts to bring about change by applying moral pressure on Government, civil servants and military personnel are clearly fruitless. After all, a ruling class that has already murdered countless millions of people in its pursuit of profits cannot be expected to have moral scruples about murdering millions more.

There is a force, though, that can not only end the arms race but can bring an end to wars altogether. That force is the organised working class. It was the working class that ended the First World War in a wave of mass stikes, mutinies and revolutions. And it is the workers who build the missiles, the airbases and the launchers.

If CND is to have any hope of success then it needs a new strategy - a strategy directed at workers employed in the nuclear industry and in related branches of production. The first step must be to build links with the rank and file trade unionis rather than with union officials. There is, of course, an alternative to such a strategy; another quarter centry of fruitless demonstrations.



**RANK & FILE
CONFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD, 30TH NOVEMBER & 1ST DECEMBER

ORGANISED BY THE NATIONAL RANK AND FILE
MINERS MOVEMENT.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

COMMENT

The aim of Syndicalist Fight is the creation of a society based on the principles of STATELESS SOCIALISM.

Only the working class itself can achieve such a society. Parliamentary methods and the Marxist tradition have proved to be dead ends for the working class.

Russia, China and the other so-called "Communist" countries are not socialist but state capitalist.

We are internationalists. The working class has no country. We give our critical support to all genuine national liberation movements.

We are for the real social equality of all, regardless of race, sex or sexual orientation.

We are opposed to political parties, bureaucracies and hierarchies of all kinds. Capitalism, of whatever variety, cannot be reformed. Revolutionary means are necessary to bring about socialism.

The working class must organise into independent unions, based on the workplace and the community and entirely controlled by their rank and file members. These unions, called SYNDICALIST unions, will have several purposes; to protect the immediate interests of their members, to prepare the working class to run industry and society for itself, to organise the social revolution and to serve as the foundations of the future socialist society.

Such unions can only be built by the intervention of a revolutionary organisation in the class war, with the aim of recruiting members and winning the working class to its ideas in the course of struggle.

I would like to know more about SYNDICALIST FIGHT.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Trade Union.....

BANKRUPT COUNCIL: BANKRUPT POLITICS

As local council after local council has backed down in the face of ratecapping and increased government centralisation, the stand taken by Liverpool's Labour council deserves both our respect and our support. We are certainly not among those who would rejoice at a defeat for the Labour councillors. That would, in effect, also be a defeat for working class people in the city.

But the tactics pursued by the Militant councillors have been disastrous. By calling off the proposed indefinite strike, by preparing redundancy notices, and now by attempting to juggle finances they have only succeeded in alienating large numbers of council workers and in exposing themselves to a rightwing backlash against any real fightback.



Such tactics are no accident. They are a logical consequence of Militant's state-socialist politics. The belief that it is possible to create "socialism by decree", that the working class can be ordered around like a stage army, have inevitably led to conflict between the council and Liverpool's workers.

The real failure of the councillors has been their failure to understand that any struggle against central government must be led by the working class itself and not by a small group of councillors, however genuine and determined they may be. Rather than calling off their indefinite strike, the council's manual workers could have ignited widespread resistance by taking action themselves and picketing other workers out.

The debacle in Liverpool should prove once and for all the bankruptcy of state-socialism in general and of Militant's politics in particular.

Cut out and post to Syndicalist Fight, 68 Thorold Road, Chatham, Kent. Tel. (0634) 403852.

WHAT PRICE NON-VIOLENCE??

The possible advent of a Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists seems an excellent time to review the anarchist movement over the past few years, and the effect New Pacifism has had on it.

There can be no doubt that pacifism has greatly contributed to the upsurge in interest in anarchism over recent years. In the late 70s the Punk phenomenon hit the world with a vengeance. From the bands of the time came those for whom anarchy was more than something Malcolm McLaren used to shock.

For the young Punks of the late 70s and early 80s, Crass and their contemporaries were an inspiration. These young people joined our movement en masse, as we saw from the gigantic anarchist contingents at demonstrations during 1981-82. Freedom actually exceeded targets for their deficit and premises fund during that period!

However, the anarchism of Crass was that of the hippy-pacifist 60s brought up to date. This meant that to a generation of young anarchists, anarchism soon became non-violent pacifism.

This led to traditional anarchist tactics of resistance and struggle for liberation being lost. We were soon witnessing people at punk gigs watching their mates being beaten up by Nazi skinheads because to resist would be violent and hence "ideologically unsound". Non-violent direct action soon became sitting down outside air-bases and with smiles on their faces, people would joyfully hold their arms up so that the Filth could more easily arrest them!

Not surprisingly many people rapidly became disillusioned with all this (this may have contributed to the rise of Class War but that's a different story). People saw just how far the State was willing to go against the miners. The reality of seeing non-violent action fail at Greenham Common, Stop the City, Molesworth, Stonehenge etc. made many question the effectiveness of only using pacifist tactics in anarchist struggles. As one Peace Convoy member wrote, "When that happens you don't think about the political ideology of non-violence, you just think that some bastards are out to get you and you are going to do all you can to stop them half-killing you".

Out of all this even Crass changed their attitudes somewhat. Last year a "member of Crass" produced a pamphlet which suggested that s/he would now consider using violence if it protected others or contributed directly to the greater peace of the world.

Organisation among any anarchists is always welcome. But with the present government and the changing attitudes within the anarchist movement, we will have to see how successful the Anarcho-Pacifist Federation will be.

P. BURDEN

FIGHT THE BENEFIT CUTS

At last the Tories are showing how worried they are about the "poverty trap". They are going to make it worse.

Millions of people live below the official poverty line in Britain; the unemployed, the homeless, the low-paid, the old. According to the Tory theorists, many of these people have no incentive to work because they can be paid more in State benefits than they would be paid in a job. So with true Thatcherite logic, instead of raising wage levels the Government plans to cut benefits. Pensions, housing benefit, child benefit and supplementary benefit are all due to come under the axe along with unemployment benefit.

Labour politicians and trade union leaders have, of course, condemned the cuts. Neil Kinnock has attacked the social security review as "the greatest and most villainous of all the changes this Government has made". But no mention has been made of the fact that the last Labour Government also imposed benefit cuts - unopposed by the union leaders.

We cannot leave it to these parasites on the labour movement to organise a real fight against the latest round of cuts any more than we can trust them in office. We need to build a movement outside the official Labour Party and trade union machine.

A large number of organisations already exist to fight over such issues. At the moment most of these unemployed unions claimants groups and so on are local groupings without any real nationwide links. But while the policies that concern claimants are decided in Westminster local organisation is not enough. We need a national federation of claimants organisations, and we need it now.

AN OPEN LETTER TO CLASS WAR

ANARCHISM TODAY



by Philip Kane

1: The Relevance of Anarchism

Dear Comrades,

Recent months have seen a resurgence of youth rebellion on a large scale. The school strikes reported by your paper, the growth of widespread opposition to the Youth Training Scheme and now the latest wave of riots have shown that many young people are rejecting a future on the scrapheap of society.

It is obvious that you see this as an important political development, as we do. We believe that an increasing number of angry young people are also turning away from the politics of the authoritarian Left as a solution to their problems. But at the moment nobody is providing a clear, coherent alternative that they can turn to. Among white youth in particular this is fast becoming a major problem as the fascist organisations move in to recruit ever more frustrated, alienated, unemployed working class kids.

The situation cries out for the building of an organised anarchist youth movement. In the past many statist organisations have recognised the potential of young people as good, dedicated activists, have channelled their anger into their own youth organisations, and have considerably increased their own size and influence. It is unlikely that the current wave of spontaneous resistance will so easily be turned into recruitment fodder for the state socialists, due to the underlying anti-authoritarian mood. Instead we have the chance to increase the size and influence of the anarchist movement. It is an opportunity that we should not miss.

Yet we cannot make the most of the opportunity without the intervention of revolutionary anarchists. While recognising that there are many real differences between our two groups, we feel that given the importance of this issue Syndicalist Fight and Class War should be working towards united activity in launching a nationwide anarchist youth movement. We hope that you will join with us in discussing such activity and look forward to your response.

Yours in solidarity,

Editorial Collective,
SYNDICALIST FIGHT.

Some time ago, following a meeting organised by our local Trades Council, I found myself arguing with a member of the Communist Party. "Anarchism", he solemnly declared, "is a dead duck". Now this is a fairly common view, and not only on the authoritarian Left. But is it true?

The success of the Bolshevik coup in 1917 was certainly a body blow to the anarchist movement in much of the world. Here was an apparently triumphant socialist revolution. The methods of the Bolshevik Party - formalised as "Leninism" - soon became the norm against which most revolutionaries judged their own activities. The Bolsheviks' counter-revolutionary actions, for example their suppression of the soviets and factory committees and of the Kronstadt rising, went either unnoticed or uncriticised. The defeat of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism in the 1930s seemed to be the "coup de grace" that might finish anarchism as a social movement once and for all.

Yet in spite of this, anarchist ideas continue to attract militant workers. In Spain, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT has been revived and other anarcho-syndicalist groups and unions have emerged throughout Europe, in North and South America, in Australia and Japan. The anarchist movement has refused to lie down and expire.

Such renewed vitality and growth is perhaps not so very surprising when placed in perspective. The various forms of social democracy and Marxism, with their emphasis on creating socialism through the State, have clearly failed to deliver the goods. The capitalist system is caught in an ever-deepening crisis. The apparatus of the State increasingly pervades every aspect of our lives. Utter destruction threatens humanity in the form of nuclear weaponry and the degeneration of the planet into an ecological nightmare.

"Liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice; socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality", wrote the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin over one hundred years ago. Freedom and socialism have always been the foremost aspirations of the oppressed and have always been the twin objectives of the anarchist movement.

The necessity of both is clearer than ever. Anarchism is not dead; it is more relevant now than at any other time in its history.

THE MEDIA, PROPAGANDA AND THE STATE

After the Tottenham riots it was suggested that they had been organised by "Trotskyists and anarchists". This is very complimentary to the anarchist movement! Do they really think that we have the numbers or the organisation to lead large-scale rioting? State lackeys always seem to make up elaborate conspiracy theories rather than accept the truth.

In a fit of hysterical propaganda the right-wing Daily Express suggested that agents from Moscow and Libya were controlling the rioters. The annoying thing is that readers actually believe such tripe. I would have thought that such McCarthyite "reds under the beds" paranoia would have been cast into the journalistic dustbin of history decades ago. Would not information from the recent KGB chief's defection cause such groups to leave the country or go underground? This attitude is also very insulting to the people living in the rioting areas. Conservative ideas permeate British society at all levels. Is it really being suggested that people could so easily be led by outsiders, and Russian or Libyan agents at that?

Film is also being shown of previously prepared crates of petrol bombs. It is suggested that the shady groups organising the riots bring them in when needed. The British secret services like any others have "dirty tricks" departments. Surely it would not be beyond them to construct such "evidence". All this goes to show that in using the media the State will go to any extent to give the public disinformation. You really cannot believe all that you read in the papers, hear on the radio, see on the television...

P. BURDEN

KENT MESSENGER DISPUTE

144 sacked NGA members have been picketing the Kent Messenger printhouses at Larkfield and Canterbury for 24 hours a day since April 22nd. The printers initially staged a sit-in when management broke a house agreement to negotiate the introduction of new technology. Edwin Boorman, KM boss and Monday Club member, responded by sacking them. SOGAT and NUJ members as well as non-unionised staff and even YTS trainees have been crossing picket lines ever since.

Single keystroke technology renders the NGA's traditional typesetting skills obsolete and so threatens their jobs, their high wages and their control over the productive process. Given high unemployment and the lower production costs of single-stroke newspapers the NGA have come to accept the introduction of technology as inevitable. But far from escalating this dispute by picketing the scab Portobello Press in Worthing, the paper mills, haulage depots etc. the strikers have been content to sit and wait for the company to go bankrupt while calling for a boycott of KM papers, eg Kentish Gazette, Kent Messenger etc. Meanwhile management, with the machinery already installed, have been given ample time to train journalists and others to use the new equipment.

The lack of solidarity has again shown sectionalism to be a major weakness among printworkers and while the NGA have called for a single industrial print union, anarcho-syndicalists must also question the closed shop system which gives the bureaucrats muscle at the negotiating table but inevitably stifles rank and file activity.

Obviously the key to victory lies in the rank and file initiating industrial solidarity but there is much that can be done in terms of local support, eg visiting picket lines, public meetings, leaf-letting, flyposting, graffiti and sabotage.

DULEEP ALLIRAJAH

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HERNE HILL
LONDON

syndicalist fight



PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST FIGHT GROUP



SUPPORT SYNDICALIST FIGHT
THE WORKERS' PAPER

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MARCH AGAINST APARTHEID

The Anti-Apartheid Movement has called a national demonstration for Saturday 2nd November. This will be an opportunity for all opponents of the South African regime to extend the fight against apartheid.

We should not doubt that this is the time to increase international pressure on the Botha government. Not the inane "sanctions" applied by governments but the kind of pressure that only the working class can bring to bear - solidarity with black workers in South Africa.

South Africa's bosses are becoming increasingly worried at the prospect of a revolution. Growing numbers of them want Botha to introduce reforms himself or to make way for a government that will do so.

The ruling class do not want a revolutionary situation. They are in the business of making profits and that requires political stability. Rather than facing an all-out fight with black workers South African bosses would like to see the development of a secure black middle class and trade union bureaucracy with a stake in preserving capitalism in South Africa. This would enable the bosses and politicians who actually run the State and the economy to exercise far greater control over the South African working class than they have at present.

That working class has already shown that it has the capacity not only to overthrow apartheid but also to smash the rotten system that created it. It is their power that has already terrified South Africa's rulers, not the shallow protests of governments that have spent years propping up apartheid.

British opponents of the South African regime can join the struggle against it by using the march on 2nd November as a focus for the organisation of solidarity action, as well as mobilising as many people as possible for the march itself.

Trade unionists can organise delegations from their union branches, shop stewards' committees and workplaces to the demonstration. They can also use the opportunity to argue for the blacking of any work connected with South Africa.

Students can organise meetings on the resistance in South Africa in their colleges and can arrange for their Students' Union to send a coach to the demonstration.

Community activists can conduct a door-to-door campaign to argue for support for the march and for the consumer boycott of South African goods.

Build the fight against apartheid NOW.