

DIRECT ACTION

DA will be taking a break until the end of January so we can have a bloody good Christmas. After that, we'll be coming out every six weeks until May, while we learn how to use the marvels of modern technology we'll not be getting from Santa. After May it'll be back to monthly issues with a new improved DA.

Merry Christmas,
DA Collective

DIRECT ACTION

THE VOICE OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

Paper of the Direct Action Movement - International Workers Association

IWA

Issue number 77 Price 40p

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM FOR BEGINNERS

While we recognise that all parliamentary parties tend to behave in an anti-working class fashion, it is particularly important for us to show up the shortcomings of the Labour Party. It is the Labour Party (or at least the Left of the party) that claims there is a reformist road to socialism. By so doing the Labour Party channel working class militancy and direct action into the parliamentary cul-de-sac, discouraging self-organisation, and claiming to be the sole representative of the working class.

This issue is important for two main reasons. Firstly, that we need to make clear the vicious attacks Labour will make on us once they gain power, and secondly we need to address the problem that the mass of working people still look to the Labour Party to 'put things right', despite their history of betrayal. The present Tory government has been in power for half of my life; there are many people in this country who have never experienced Labour in power. What sort of alternative do they offer? Would life be better under Labour?

Well, probably not. Their xenophobic behaviour during the Gulf War, their reluctance to support the anti-poll tax campaign and industrial struggle points towards a grim future. They've already admitted they'll not be scrapping the Tories' anti-Trade Union laws if they gain power. Let's not forget that it is the Labour Party who are in power in a lot of the local councils that have caved in to government pressure to cut services and sack workers. Kinnock supports this, as we saw when Liverpool council announced massive cuts and redundancies. He

WHY WE SAY NO TO REFORMISM DON'T VOTE — ORGANISE!



appeared on TV grinning from ear to ear saying how much he agreed with the council's position.

LABOUR In The Bosses' Pockets

These things should not surprise us. Labour has always acted to the benefit of the bosses and to the detriment of the workers. A Labour premier introduced Nuclear Weapons to Britain without ever consulting the cabinet, let alone parliament. Labour introduced the first racist immigration laws, it sent troops to Ireland and introduced the repressive Prevention of Terrorism Act, it has used troops against strikers more times than the Tories.

To understand why Labour has, and will, continue to behave like this, we need to understand the reformist attitude to electoral politics. The myth of reformism is

the belief that given sufficient support and electoral victory, a party such as Labour is able to gain control of key capitalist political institutions, with which they can remould existing society in a way which makes the lives of workers more satisfying, and takes away the need for revolution.

This paternalistic attitude is rife with problems. The two most important problems are the overemphasis on the effect of holding political power, and a failure to understand the methods by which workers secure concessions and defend living standards. The approach of a reformist parliamentarian is to separate political issues from workplace issues. Real working class power lies in the level of success achieved in class struggle in the workplace; parliament, whoever holds the majority, is held back by the nature of the institution and its dependence on ruling class support.

Anarcho-syndicalists argue that even in the event of a Labour government elected on a 'socialist' programme, the real masters would still be company directors, bankers, law lords, top civil servants, security chiefs and army generals — in other words, the ruling class.

These people who hold real power (be it financial or other) are able to undermine a government that threatens their interests. These are the people Kinnock must really convince that Labour is fit to govern, ie, fit to maintain the pretence of democracy in a system where all the power and wealth is in the hands of a few.

So, the reformers are only able to reform as far as the ruling class will allow them. The only way the working class can achieve its more radical aims is by gaining direct

economic and physical victories over the employers, the capitalists, the army and the police. Class struggle is an inevitable result of a capitalist society. It is also the only way that workers can pursue their own interests without having to use biased representatives or having to pander to, or be directed by people with a vested interest in the outcome.

Only by taking direct extra-parliamentary action do workers gain lasting victories. Parliament may then take action to reform or make law changes, but the key is to organise where our strength is and confront capitalism on our terms, where we are strongest — AT WORK.

This position is directly contradictory to reformist ideas. When workers make demands reforms are made until the ruling class would become endangered by further reforms. If we want to move forward and make further demands above and beyond that, we must be prepared to challenge the authority of the ruling class, in the final analysis we need to despatch them from their position of power. Either they have power or we do, we can't both have it.

Reformism makes the mistake of thinking that political power enables us to influence and control the oppression metered out by the ruling class due to their economic power. This is a dangerous lie. It has led to workers' defeats throughout history around the world. The lesson is clear.

**SAY NO TO LABOUR
— NO TO REFORMISM
WHAT WE NEED IS
REVOLUTION
AND WORKERS CONTROL**

The DAM recently held a delegate conference specifically concerning the paper. It was held at the Red Rose Club in North London on Saturday 23rd November. The purpose was to clarify some immediate objectives and also look at the long term future of Direct Action.

The conference was a great success and we'd like to thank all those that participated (some of whom travelled a long way) for their contribution to a day of constructive discussion and debate. The most important decision made was for DAM to formally approve the plan described below to increase the quality and streamline production of the paper.

November — Production of issue #77 (that bit was relatively painless, touch wood).

December — No paper. £750 to be raised in order to buy a scanner,

'92 — Direct Action is produced at six weekly intervals enabling us to: a) learn how to use and incorporate the scanner into production techniques and b) build a polished system where a

correspondents on a range of issues. Particular individuals who will monitor news and activities in particular fields, enabling us to be more topical and precise in our news and information.

The session left open for criticism was remarkably short! Seriously though, people's criticisms are important and although most of the solutions are long term things such as use of scanner to improve the front page and mast-head, it will be possible to address many criticisms within the next two months.

Direct Action will again be subtitled 'The voice of anarcho-syndicalism' which was only absent due to an oversight on our part.

It was great to receive such a big vote of confidence; the next step is to get the scanner bought and make DA the best it's ever been.

HAPPY NEW DA

through contributions from DAM members and DA readers. Total to be raised by mid-January (this is important to keep us on schedule)

change of personnel causes minimal disruption. After National Conference the paper will revert to monthly production.

Discussions on writing were constructive. The main conclusion was that to generate copy people had to get into the habit of writing and not worry too much about their particular writing style.

January — To National Conference

Another major decision was to have

SUMMARY

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS: The fight against fascism and racist immigration laws

- Editorial & Centre Pages -

NEW UNIONS: Union amalgamations — the TUC in crisis?

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COMING SOON

CRISIS IN EDUCATION

WHAT WE MEAN BY WORKERS CONTROL

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Direct Action is the newspaper of the Direct Action Movement, British Section of the International Workers Association, which has sections in France, Spain, Italy, Norway, Germany, Japan, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, USA and Finland.



EDITORIAL COMMENT

Western governments are trying to divert attention away from the depressed state of their respective economies by writing racist scare stories on the 'perils' of immigration

Fascists around the world are playing on the depressed state of economies in attempts to gain influence in working class communities.

Within Britain racism is an integral part of the state. On a general level it is the bosses' interest to divide us any which way they can. More specifically, Britain's imperialist past perpetuates a xenophobic attitude amongst the ruling class, most blatantly expressed when it serves their immediate purpose.

The relationship between the ruling class and fascism is one of necessity, bosses seeing fascism as the last resort when faced with a revolutionary working class.

Both fascism and racism are tools of the ruling class used in desperation.

NO ROOM.....FOR NAZIS

The fight against racist governments and fascist groups are different and priorities have to be made. We have to look at the immediate threat, the weapons at our disposal and where we can win.

We must fight anti-immigration laws with our propaganda. We can defend individuals threatened with deportation through workplace and community action, and this is something we must continue to do. But short of a social general strike we have no effective means of defeating a racist ruling class.

While organised fascists have no chance of achieving power they do present an immediate threat to working class communities, but one that can be smashed.

The fight against fascists must be direct and based in the areas they try to organise. They must never be allowed to organise on our streets or in our communities.

DIRECT ACTION

is the paper of the DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT, the British section of the International Workers Association (est 1922).

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For a revolutionary Anarchist (Non-governmental) society through Syndicalism (the struggle for workers control) to free communism (common ownership and no state).

AFTER WAPPING - EXCLUSIVE BINGO

After the picketing died down and the police had scored a great victory in the street fights to enable Rupert Murdoch to transfer his porn empire to Fortress Wapping, the Fleet Street press workers were defeated in one newspaper after another. The technological revolution by which the old craft skills were out-moded was pioneered by 'Eddie' Shah, who got forced out himself in the process by the other barons. It was carried through with skill by Murdoch and then Maxwell. Other papers followed suit, some not quite so suddenly or so brutally, but the upshot was that the workers were defeated.

The print unions were the oldest and proudest in the British labour movement, and had made great gains in the class struggle. One can pick out scapegoats in leadership or lack of will in the membership but they were defeated because the new technology made it possible to disperse with them. The Thatcherite laws were designed to smash the unions but the workers were defending a lost craft as well as the freedom to organise.

The public at large weren't sympathetic because of antipathy to the print unions which had been successful in gaining for Fleet Street workers' wages to which only the middle classes feel themselves entitled, and the journalists enviously denouncing this as 'greed'. However, with the miners unions smashed and industry destroyed, with the dockers and shipbuilders unions smashed and industry destroyed, with the print unions smashed and a new industry substituted and the

railway unions weakened prior to some sort of reorganisation, the rich have become enormously rich and not only these industries but all the industries' and workers' servicing trades have sunk.

Inside the Murdoch fortress, with the unions resolutely kept out, management became supreme. No controls were on the journalists bar that of obeying their masters, so the standards dropped, with no likelihood of a refusal to print. The entire Murdoch Press, from his acquired 'Times', once relied upon all over the world, to the despicable 'Sun', plumed the depths of journalism. With others following suit, British journalism became at one bound the worst press and the least free in the world — just as press restrictions were being lifted in Russia!

The obsession of new style management, as seen first in Wapping, has been re-education or brainwashing. Imitating the municipal and civil service sectors, they have been running 'courses' — but not on technical skills or standards, health and safety or the like, always on management, attitudes, personnel reactions. These have been to pick 'lower management' (no more foremen or supervisors!) and are modelled on the corporate state idea.

The Daily Telegraph followed the Murdoch/Maxwell path with far more caution, and avoided friction by avoiding their confrontation mistakes. Instead of concentrating into one building, they split into two companies — pre-production and production — so the laws against secondary picketing would break up a powerfully unionised workforce. They warned if SOGAT and the NGA merged, they would 'de-recognise' the union, and this has happened. It now will only deal with people individually. Like Wapping, it has gone for 'courses' to pick new 'under-management', a health and safety structure built up for years has gone by the board. (In one of the lectures the management referred to a former TU H&S rep — pushed out when they moved four years ago — as a "creature from the dark ages" and said they weren't going down that path again. That's the nicest thing anyone ever said about me!)

The system operating in newspaper production, now the press lords and masters have turned their backs on trade unionism, is fascism without the party. The Tory cry is that the TUs used to 'rule' (by virtue of existing) but what rules instead is managerial dictatorship with the State being relegated to an outside role. The H&S committees were there to see rules

agreed by the government itself were obeyed. Naturally they interfered with profits. Now they are abolished, the rules are not observed, minimum standards, times of work and so on are not obeyed.

The New Order does not have the classic fascist ideal of the State via the party making up the unholy trinity. The capitalists control the State anyway. Their 'councils' are of management and workers. (Originally some bright spark in management — possibly a former 'leftie' student? — thought of the name 'workers councils', but this proved too comic a parody so it was amended first to 'works councils' and finally to 'staff councils' on the new Spanish model of fascism without fascists). The workers are not elected representatives as in Spain but an open assembly. As the worker has no power whatever, few turn up for the meetings (if they are voluntary, nobody does) — what for? — and the councils might as well not exist. They are window dressing, or an intended safety valve.

The printworkers, like many others, need to organise again from scratch. At present what keeps them down is the fear of unemployment and the fact that so many are waiting to take their jobs no longer surrounded by a

craft mystique though with grossly unsocial hours. Sunday working, advocated for other industries too, soon becomes seven-day working, without overtime but with the occasional day off thrown in now and again. Now they don't need 24-hour police protection, the bosses don't need the State to interfere! When they do, they will shed their rugged individualism.

The new corporate bosses have it their own way at present, just as the Russian commissars (with whom they have much in common) once did (and are now changing as rapidly as possible to be exactly like them in the 'free' market).

It won't last forever. People can be pushed too far. Even the pulp-fed public is beginning to feel uneasy at the drive they get on the press now that no consideration of how much the workers will stand presents the continued degeneration of the press. If the workers don't make a comeback, it won't just be the old craft that is obsolete, it will be newspapers themselves.

Meanwhile, the fact of lack of organisation, plus the spread of the idea everywhere that 'joining a union', paying dues and hoping for its intervention is the be-all and end-all of organisation, means that the people at the top get richer. It also means that there is less spending power for the majority and so there is recession. That is what it is all about, not some mystic inevitable world force as the economists would have us believe, and which is the stuff of electoral politics.

LETTERS

Dear DA

Whilst generally agreeing with the article 'Anarcho-Syndicalism for Beginners' in issue 76, I thought that the statement "workers can no longer hope to achieve anything by insurrection because of the state's control of the armed forces" was a depressingly defeatist load of liberal nonsense, and certainly not the view of the majority of anarchists I know. Articles with such statements should be signed and not put in as what effectively was a DAM opinion.

I'm certainly not into glorifying 'insurrection' or revolution, but how exactly are we going to take over production, the cities, etc from the state and then defend it from reaction? Workers throughout history have been forced out of and into workplaces at the point of a gun. There is nothing to suggest it would be any different now (quite the opposite, I'd say).

Also, the state control of the armed forces is nothing new! The only times they don't is either in a revolution or a coup. Our objective should be to try and divide the armed forces, preferably along class lines, but at least between those who will side with us and those who will side with the state. It was good so see this particular point debated in the letters of previous DA's, especially those from 'Albert'.

There is no "natural form of conflict". Throughout history we have fought by whatever means have been at our disposal — sticks, stones, occupations, riots, strikes, insurrections and even insurrectionary strikes! As long as it's consistent with the ends we want, the triumph of the workers, it is valid. I personally hope that the bosses and the state will give in without a fight and go for mass euthanasia, but I can't see it somehow, can you?

There are many factors that will make

a 'revolution', just as there are many which prevent it — in this country, for example, the control of the press and TV/radio, means of persuasion, is just as effective to the British state as, say, death squads are in Latin America. Possibly more so. In countries where there has been relative 'stability' for decades now, people fear revolution or civil war or an 'Irish' type situation, mainly because death and destruction are not very appealing to many people (something many 'revolutionaries' don't seem to grasp). They fight when they are confident of winning or when there is no choice left.

This is the stuff of debates, but it needs said whether DA is the place or not. Simplistic statements on both 'sides' won't get us anywhere near what we all want.

An anarcho-syndicalist,
South East London

Dear DA

I am surprised that your article on anarcho-syndicalism for beginners in your last issue stated that insurrection is impossible these days. Perhaps the author has been hibernating and has not noticed what has been going on in Eastern Europe recently, as well as what nearly happened in China a while back.

The key to successful insurrection is for the insurgents to remain non-violent and try to neutralise the state's forces by winning over their sympathies. With so many people in this country unemployed and/or living below the poverty line, the potential for non-violent insurrection is there, and surely the Direct Action Movement should be organising it.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Davies

Dear DA

In response to the letter of Mo of Hackney Solidarity Group (DA75) about the Irish Freedom Movement demo on 10th August...

The point that Anarchists should march together on demos is an important one. The fact that Anarchists do not points to the political disunity and organisational inadequacy of British Anarchism today. Organisational remedies such as calling for united contingents on demos are insufficient without tackling our political divisions. Even if Anarchists did march together on IFM events, they would not necessarily agree on why they are marching or more importantly what they should be arguing for.

It is equally pointless attacking the Revolutionary Communist Party on the grounds that they are better organised than Anarchists or that they actually show some enthusiasms for selling their publications. We must develop our organisational capabilities and theoretical understanding so that we can challenge Leninists for the political leadership campaigns instead of winging from the sidelines.

Anarchists remain confused and divided over the war in Ireland. The task for revolutionaries in Britain is to lay the blame squarely with the British state and not with Irish nationalism. The IRA is not a "reactionary organisation", it is an armed response to British terror that has taken a nationalist form. In Britain it is not possible to build a 'neutral' anti-war campaign of any significance capable of withstanding state repression or a reactionary backlash when IRA bombs kill civilians. Only by taking sides in the Irish war by giving unconditional support to those struggling for Irish self-determination can we begin to challenge the nationalist consensus which remains the main obstacle to building a truly

internationalist socialist movement. Our task is to create the political basis for the only force that can secure British withdrawal, a working class movement clearly led by anti-imperialist politics that calls for a British defeat and gives its political support to Irish revolutionaries fighting for a 32 counties workers' republic.

Alan Robertson

We're sure there are a number of our readers who would like to reply to some of the points raised in this letter.

Dear DA

In a recent letter concerning a previous article on AIDS, a correspondent implied that frequent sexual partner exchange was not a risk factor for people using condoms. Unfortunately this assertion is dangerously incorrect. Condoms probably provide as much protection against AIDS as they do against pregnancy — in other words, they probably lower the risk per sexual act by a factor of about 10. The risk of AIDS being transmitted during homosexual intercourse without a condom, with an infected partner, is thought to be about 1 in 100. If one arbitrarily assumes that only 10% of the partners chosen will be infected and that a condom is always used, the risk per

sexual act becomes about 1 in 10,000. However, this is still a very considerable risk per lifetime since the average person will have several thousand sexual acts. It can be seen that the lifetime risk will be several chances in 10.

By contrast, if a person has a lifelong mutually monogamous relationship with one partner, then the risk of getting infected cannot be greater than the risk that the partner chosen was already infected. The risk that such a partner will already be infected will probably be less than the risk that a partner chosen for a brief encounter will be infected. However, even if we ignore this aspect of the situation and take the risk of the partner being already infected to be the same arbitrary figure of 1/10th, we see that the lifetime risk of infection in this case can be no greater than one chance in 10.

These ideas can be explained more precisely using mathematical notation and there has been a lot of research work on the mathematics of the AIDS epidemic. Further details can be supplied to any interested reader.

Yours faithfully
Dr David Kaul
Research Fellow in AIDS Epidemiology
Anton Breinl Centre for Tropical Health & Medicine

EH?

BULK ORDERS!!

If you, your group, or bookshop, etc, has received in the past (or present) invoices incorrectly asking for a lesser amount than is actually due could you please send DA the difference. This is part of our distribution bugs and will one day in the happy future be fixed.

DEADLINE
FOR ISSUE 78
SATURDAY
25 JANUARY 1992

SUBSCRIBERS

As much as we'd like to we can't continue sending papers once subs run out as it costs too much. After two issues grace we'll have to cancel until you renew your sub.

Towards Eco-Capitalism (or Why We Hate The Green Party)



They want to save the exploitative boss-worker system from its ecologically disastrous present phase.

The Green Party: Save The Planet and Keep The Human Race In Chains. CHANGING THE COLOUR OF THE OPPRESSORS.

head of the CEBG during the inquiry was quoted in the Guardian as saying "I expect to get approval in about a year's time. By that time the British public will be bored to tears by nuclear power, that of course is the purpose of having a public inquiry." The CEBG also ordered £12 million worth of equipment for the Sizewell B — nine months before the verdict was expected.

Clearly environmental groups are

barking up the wrong tree, by putting their faith in 'democracy'; experience has shown this, anarchists have always known it. But however wide the gulf between reformist and revolutionary politics, we must avoid the tendency to dismiss the basic concerns of pressure groups along with their reformism. If environmental groups have made liberal 'causes' out of the multitude of threats to our well being through the destruction of our environment, it is

more important that issues are placed in a genuinely radical context — a participatory and revolutionary movement. And in some instances individuals within such groups are rapidly losing faith in the channels offered by parliamentary democracy. Anarcho-syndicalists should be proposing a viable alternative to reformist groups by offering anarcho-syndicalist perspectives on environmental issues.

DIWU ON THE ROAD

The Despatch Industry Workers Union, an anarcho-syndicalist union for cycle couriers, motorcycle couriers, van drivers and the relevant non-managerial office staff has had its fair share of strike action since it started in March 1989. Most of the despatch industry is based on the 'self-employment' of couriers doing express deliveries. As such it is a difficult industry to unionise because of the individualism. Indeed, the Transport & General Workers Union have tried at least twice to organise this sector but failed miserably. The humble DIWU has proved to be far more successful and resilient than the massive TGWU.

The despatch industry is similar to sweatshop industries. If any individual mentions the Union, he or she will usually be sacked straight away. This is, incidentally, why the TGWU big-wigs are completely powerless against the tiniest of employers, because only strong workplace organisation can prevent victimisation (by all threatening to go on strike for re-instatement), whereas the TGWU puts all its massive resources into services based outside the workplace. So in the despatch industry it is advisable to have a majority of the workforce at any particular firm in the Union, and braced for action, before telling the boss that any members exist there.

However, most industrial action involving the DIWU starts when the

boss reduces the rates of pay in some way or another. The Union may have only one or two members there so it is up to them to call a mass meeting. Union members from other firms might be invited along to give advice and assistance, but only the workers at the affected firm take the (collective) decisions. Prevention of victimisation has got to be the number one consideration at a mass meeting, even more important than the issue of a pay cut or whatever.

Because of the high-pressure nature of the despatch industry strikes are normally won or lost within hours, even minutes. Strike pay is therefore not necessary, although the DIWU could not afford to pay any anyway.

It can be almost impossible to get 100% solidarity during a strike in this industry. The problems can fall into two categories. Firstly, not everyone at the affected firm may go on strike. It may even be a minority. In such cases the strikers can hold the 'transmit' button down on their radios, thereby blocking the channel. This tactic was used with impressive results in the dispute against West One Despatch.

Secondly, the boss of a strikebound firm might call in another firm to cover the work for the duration of the strike. In such cases the DIWU advocates that all the strikers go en masse to stand outside the main client's address. This upsets the client,

keeps the strikers solid, and if a courier arrives to pick up a job, he/she can be persuaded to go away empty-handed. If a courier insists on scabbing it can be hinted that their vehicle might not be in tip-top shape when they come out.

Finally, on an anecdotal note, it can be said that there are plenty of left-wing and anarchist people in the despatch industry, and they have invariably proved completely useless when it comes to strikes or anything else. It seems only anarcho-

syndicalists and other sensible members of the working class are prepared to 'put their money where their mouths are'.

PROMOTE AND SURVIVE!

Much of the libertarian literature around on sexuality is very theoretical and rarely comes from the heart or talks about our own experiences. We're trying to put together a pamphlet written about and by gay men, lesbians and bisexuals who are involved in radical politics or lifestyles, based on our personal accounts and thoughts. Articles, writing, pictures, graphics or cartoons on accounts and thoughts of coming out; relationships; sex; AIDS and safer sex; police, prison, courts and the law; sexuality and class consciousness; pornography; parenting, adoption, fostering and custody; responses and attitudes from others involved in anarchist and radical politics and lifestyles; or any other aspects of sexuality that you want to focus on would be welcome. Please send contributions as soon as possible to:

Promote and Survive!
PO Box 73
Norwich



LESBIAN & GAY GUIDE BANNED

The lesbian and gay guide to Manchester and Salford, called the 'Pink Guide', produced by students in the Manchester area, was temporarily banned, and safe sex pages removed by the President of Salford University Students' Union.

The guide, which is mainly about pubs and clubs, also contained verbally explicit safe sex hints for sex between men. After fear that the publication may be 'obscene', 'offending' pages were removed.

The guide, however, is now available in its uncensored version in the 'Welfare' area of the Students' Union. And no where else.

DEFEND THE COLCHESTER 16

The trial of 16 people arrested for fighting the poll tax began in Norwich on 18th November. Some face heavy sentences if they are found guilty.

The cases arise from one of the many demonstrations which took place throughout England and Wales when the first poll tax rates were being set during March 1990. Cops attacked the demo in Colchester and victimised anti-poll tax activists, who are being tried in Norwich in attempts to avoid protest.

But Norwich Anti Poll Tax Union held a benefit gig on 8th November, a public meeting on 14th November and a picket of the court on 18th November.

The trial continues and Norwich APT have organised pickets of Norwich Crown Court every Monday from 9.30 am.

More information from:
NAPTU
PO Box 158
Norwich NR1 1AA

NEW IMPROVED SCANNER APPEAL

DA needs £700 before Christmas to buy a scanner which will enable us to dramatically improve the presentation of the paper, and to make life a lot easier for the people that produce it.

SEND US SOME MONEY!

We don't have any rich backers but £1 from each of our readers would mean we could set up our own print shop, as well as a scanner, but seeing as it's PRETTY unlikely that everyone will send a quid, more will be appreciated.

The British Trade Union movement is in a financial crisis. At the same time it is entering an ideological crisis. These two facts are closely linked. Since Thatcher was elected in 1979 Trade Union membership has fallen markedly, and continues to fall. (From a recent report by the Certification Officer, Trade Unions and employers organisations, a government office). The 1990 report showed a dramatic fall in Trade Union membership. Previous to this TUC affiliated unions had managed to more or less maintain themselves despite relentless attacks from the Thatcher government.

Compared to the membership fall in 1988, the 1989 drop in numbers was greater by 340,000. The AEU (Amalgamated Engineering Union) was one of the worst hit, with a drop of 6.5% from 1988 to 1989 (representing approximately 30,000 members). This was primarily put down to the recession experienced in manufacturing industry.

Even more drastic was the 27% loss of membership experience by the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers). The NUM's move to negotiate a merger with the TGWU (Transport & General Workers Union) may well have been prompted by this. Interestingly, the T&G is also pursuing negotiations with the Democratic Mineworkers Union, the scab union formed from a split in the NUM).

But it's not only those under threat that are looking to amalgamate. JCAT, the building workers union, actually increased their membership by 3%, yet are being pushed to amalgamate with the GMB, as the GMB are having so much success at poaching members from UCATT.

Whilst there has been a general fall in union membership we should note the rise in income many unions are getting. NALGO's (National Association of Local Government Officers) went up from £48 million to approximately £54 million. Despite this massive income a report from the TUC states that 10% of every union sub goes to the repayment of the debt.

The decline of the Trade Union movement is summed up by the TUC itself. Its annual report shows that union membership has halved since the Tories came to power, down to 6 million entitled to vote in union elections.

AMALGAMATIONS

Anarcho-syndicalists in the earlier part of the twentieth century played a very significant role in the moves towards various union amalgamations. However, these were amalgamations or the restructuring of the existing unions along industrial unions lines, not of general trade unions. They raised and acted upon the slogan popularised by 'Industrial Workers of the World' (IWW) of the United States.

THE 'ONE BIG UNION' IDEA

While it may be possible to see the current moves toward trade union

amalgamation in this light, and certainly the trade union leaders have attempted to present it this way, that is not our opinion. No one of good will could see shot-gun marriages leading to a strengthened industrial organisation. Moreover, it is insulting to compare the current jockeying and manoeuvring to the valiant role played by the syndicalists in formation of unions like the NUR. The scared bureaucrats of today have nothing in common with those fighters for solidarity and workers unity.

strength exist in a number of European countries. Here in Britain, despite the in-fighting, the trade unions are still very much in the grip of social democratic ideology, even if the Labour Party's hold over working class people has weakened over the past two decades.

The collapse of 'stalinism' in Eastern Europe has put an end to any Marxist influence at shop-floor level, although it may linger in the hierarchy of the TU leadership. Consequently,

Trade Unions seek to negotiate amalgamation with other TUs which share their view point, rather than sharing a common enemy or common interest.

NALGO

NALGO, the main council workers' union is currently conducting negotiations with two other unions, NUPE and COHSE, which have members who are mainly 'blue collar' council workers and health workers respec-

Power within the TUC has in recent years shifted from the manual 'blue collar' unions to the 'white collar' unions like NALGO. NALGO and similar unions have retained their membership fairly well, while unions like the NUM and other unions in heavy industry and manufacturing have had a dramatic loss of members.

Some Trade Unions, not all of them in the TUC, now see themselves as professional organisations representing a certain interest group. They are committed to a no-strike policy. These bodies see themselves essentially as pressure groups articulating the view point of their members. These bodies have swallowed 'interest group' theory hook, line and sinker. They fully intend to fit themselves into the ideals of representative government. They believe that the State should take notice of their viewpoint, elegantly expressed by professional negotiators without any threat of strike action or other sanctions. Union leaders would be recognised by government ministers as fellow professionals if not equals.

This view of the role of unions is prevalent in the USA, where 'conflict' occurs between the various interest groups which vie with one another to put their argument to the State. We believe that British Trade Unions are heading in this direction. Generally, amalgamations will reinforce the trend away from the workplace. These new 'super unions' will be almost completely divorced from the workplace and will become totally alienated from the membership and therefore unable to anything of real value for working people.

It is possible that these unions will become so estranged from the workplace that a vacuum will appear which in turn would be filled by a radical workers union of a new type. This is the aim of the Anarcho-syndicalists.

ADVANCE!

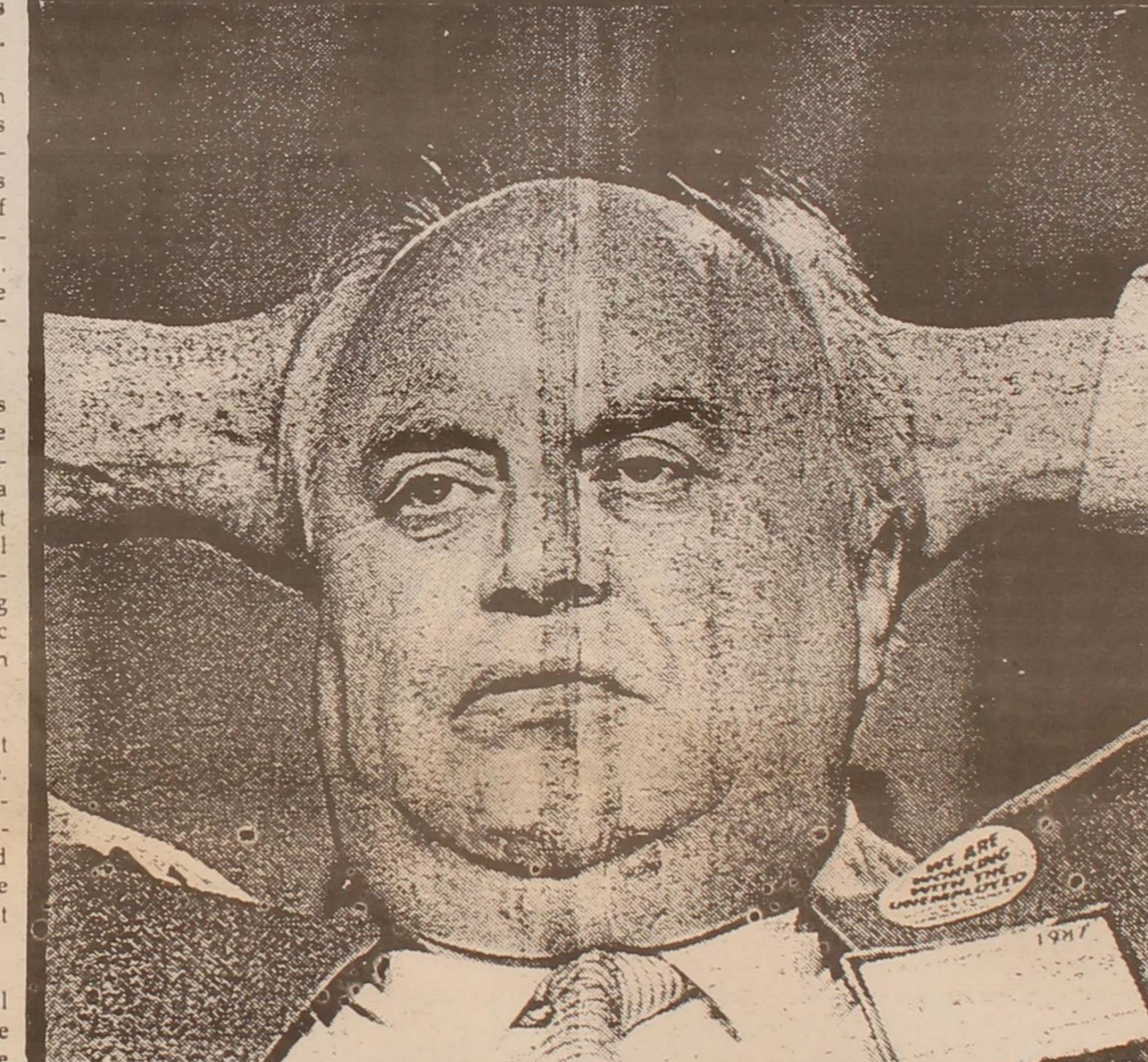
What are we to do to advance this aim? The Trade Unions are in disarray and are hoping for the return of a Labour government. They make no attempt to defend the interests of the working class. Our pay and conditions hardly merit a mention, while they push credit cards, mortgages and insurance. After years of neglect and decay the workers union we advocate cannot be built overnight. Consequently, at first we want to set up networks in every industry working towards building revolutionary unions. Initially these networks would provide information and support for workers in struggle.

While rejecting the existing unions as beyond reform, we will continue to work inside them to defend working class interests. We will, however, be promoting workplace resistance, not standing in union elections on so-called radical platforms. It is in workplace organisation and not in New Unions formed through amalgamations that the future of the working class lies.



INDUSTRIAL

NERO FIDDLES



WHILE ROME BURNS

However, it has to be stated that the Trade Unions' reasons for wanting amalgamations nowadays are totally different than those of the anarcho-syndicalists and industrial unionists who wished to see a strong united working class. The current amalgamations are only inspired by the desire to retain power and financial viability.

THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Britain is one of few EC countries with only one central Trade Union body, the TUC, to which the various unions are affiliated. The majority of Western European Countries have three or four union confederations or centres. These correspond to the major political tendencies and parties, eg. social democrat, christian democrat or marxist. Anarcho-syndicalist union federations of varying

the social democrats are able to lord it over a declining membership without a challenge on the horizon. However, in spite of their hollow victory they feel anxious and uneasy, rightly suspecting opposition from some as yet unknown quarter. The bureaucrats look frantically to the US unions and increasingly to the EC for gimmicks to get themselves out of the situation they have allowed to overtake them.

Now we have arrived at a situation where each 'Trade Union' is competing with all the other Trade Unions for members. This is because they all will accept just about anyone and have left craft based or industrially based union structures behind, and have become the most generalised of General Unions. In fact, each Trade Union is more like a mini-TUC in its own right. Politically these

tively. These negotiations are well advanced and, despite various hitches, hope to achieve the formation of a 'new union'. This new union will have combined membership of 1.5 million, about half of this coming from NALGO.

These Trade Unions have been subjected to the dual assault of mass unemployment, and Thatcherite anti-union legislation. The resulting fall in union membership has fuelled the movement to merger and restructuring. However, we believe that these are not the only reasons for amalgamation presented to the membership. The reasons for merger have been given a radical tinge, ie. 'we need to be able to present a common front to the bosses'. However, one of the unstated reasons is to increase the power and influence of the inner circle of the TUC.

BRING DOWN THE WALLS

The last year has seen a frightening growth in racism and fascism across Europe. Old nationalisms have been enflamed, with the EEC and various other governments willing participants. The already advanced plans for 'Fortress Europe' — a Europe where the entry qualification is the colour of your skin — have gathered momentum.

In Germany, refugees are fleeing the smaller towns, particularly in the 'New Federal States' (what was East Germany), for the relative safety of the big cities. Attacks on refugees' hostels have become common-place. In September a mob of 500 neo-nazis and racists attacked a hostel with petrol bombs in Hoyerswerda, Saxony. After anti-racists from Berlin mobilised to protect the hostel, the refugees were evacuated. One man said he would rather return to Iran than Hoyerswerda. After a 20,000 strong anti-racist march in Berlin was attacked, demonstrators fought back. After the demo dispersed, young Turkish workers and anarchists took to the streets to drive out the police in Krenzberg. Over 60 were arrested. The media ignored the demo and said the evening's events were typical of anarchists and Turkish youth gangs.

In France in October, the government withdrew family allowances from unauthorised workers, and are cracking down on their employers. A fast-track asylum-claim system is to be introduced too. To this racist background, the leader of the fascist Front National, Jean-Marie Le Pen, presents himself as 'the leader of the centre'. He is campaigning for Presidency of the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region, and may well succeed. He has been lent respectability by the racism of the centre-right and socialist leaders.

...we need to build a real internationalism, based on common understanding and solidarity, and make an anti-racist agenda firmly part and parcel of working class politics.

In Sweden, the populist New Democrats, using racist rhetoric, capitalised on the disenchantment with the Social Democrats, and now hold the balance in the Parliament. This has given a boost to the nazis on the ground, and race attacks are increasing. In June, John Major said that he wanted to see "a strong, tight perimeter fence around Europe" in order to "curb" third world immigration. This is a recurrent theme across Europe. Nearly 75% of all immigration into Germany is ethnic Germans from

Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Immigration is OK if it's white South Africans, but not from black Africa, Asia, Turkey or even Albania.

But the concept of immigration is being challenged. One of the reasons for the Europe-wide attack on asylum rights is that it assumes immigration shouldn't happen. Considering there is not emigration from most European countries, Britain included, this is garbage. The routine harassment of immigrants seeking to join families has been extended from Asians and Africans to Jamaicans. These processes are humiliating to all who endure them, and the racist assumptions about Jamaicans' family life are insulting. The racial overtones become clearer when you remember Zola Budd, the white South African runner who got British citizenship faster than she could run (and that was fast).

The EEC heads of state and their lackeys in the media have tried to explain these actions by raising the spectre of fascism. "If we don't do what the fascists want, they'll take over and do it themselves". This Neville Chamberlain school of politics never had much content to it. It's never used as an argument when the working class makes demands — "Oh, we must give in or they'll take over", but the fascists' agenda matches that of the ruling class at this moment.

The attack on asylum rights is doubly hypocritical. Most refugees are in the Third World, usually just over the border from where they fled. And the regimes they are running from are usually propped up by the West. Britain takes substantially fewer refugees than other European countries. The emphasis of the State's immigration policy has been on doing the dirty deeds outside Britain. This extends to refugees, and one of the provisions of the Asylum Bill is to make airlines pay more if refugees' papers aren't in order.

There is a right of appeal to be introduced, but it's useless. The UN and European Court have condemned Britain for the practice of sending asylum seekers back before allowing them to appeal. The Bill also threatened to withdraw legal aid to all refugee and immigration cases. The refusal of the UK Immigration Advisory Service to co-operate looks likely to scupper this clause, but the Tories are pressing ahead with the Bill. Kenneth Baker, Home Secretary, has said it will be given top priority.

The main effect of the bill will be to prevent refugees entering into Britain, and to criminalise those who do. Already asylum-seekers are held in detention centres, and a Zairean man died while being restrained in Pentonville Prison in October. Any criminalisation of refugees will lead to even more



HERE TO STAY HERE TO FIGHT

The battle against racism and fascism took a new turn in the Netherlands recently. Two bomb blasts demolished the house of the Junior Minister of Justice, Ad Koeko, who is responsible for immigration and asylum policy, and wrecked a floor of the Home Office in The Hague.

Members of the Dutch Radical Anti-Racist Action group, RaRa (who certainly don't mess about!), claimed responsibility for the attacks in protest, they said at 'an asylum policy that writes off, excludes and dehumanises people.'

Koeko, responsible for laws similar to those the Tories are attempting to bring in, had hoped to set the trend in racist laws, giving in to the Far Right's paranoid anti-immigration views. He received prior warning of the blast and so, unfortunately, escaped unhurt.

RaRa believe that the new laws are merely 'EC sanctioned racial discrimination', fuelling the Right's claims that unemployment, housing shortages and generally everything bad in the world is the fault of immigrants. RaRa are continuing their tradition of using dramatic direct action to hit the ruling class where it hurts, whilst at the same time getting good press coverage for principled anti-racism.

When RaRa last mounted a similar campaign against companies with South African links, their method of 'blasting' racism into changing their behaviour had some degree of success. Several manufacturers and supermarkets relinquished their South African based activities after RaRa attacks. Only Shell were rich and stupid enough to maintain their links, losing a fair few petrol stations in the process.

Attacks on property do affect the ruling class and should be supported, but isolated attacks are not enough. The decisive and most meaningful way of fighting racism and fascism is for black and white workers to unite and hit back economically as well as physically.

November 10th saw one of the biggest political marches in London in recent years, outside of the anti-Poll Tax demos, as Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) followed up its highly successful 'Unity Carnival' by attracting 4-5,000 people to march through East London. The British National Party (BNP) has marched three times through the same area in the past 18 months, mustering no more than 2-300 on each occasion.

The object of the march, like the carnival, was twofold: firstly, to highlight the level of racist harassment — East London has one of the highest in Britain — and the opposition to it; and secondly, to make a clear statement that fascist organisations will never be allowed to operate freely in ANY working class area. Until AFA, almost alone, took up the challenge of confronting the fascists two years ago, the BNP were starting to work in the estates around Bethnal Green with impunity — a sure sign of the weakness of the 'Revolutionary' Left. They (the BNP) made it their national priority.

The success of both the march and the carnival has been the culmination of hard work. Whereas a few years back such events would have elements of the Left and not much else, now we are beginning to see more of the local population coming out, which we have always sought to achieve. With the exception of a couple of incidents with hecklers, the march passed off without trouble. Once again the BNP bottled it and gave up what they see as 'their' area. Lucky for them, what with the size and mood of the march they would have got trashed, and the police, who completely underestimated the numbers, wouldn't have been able to save them, and knew it.

Of course, the Left of all shades were present, with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) having the largest contingents among them, though not huge, and certainly not dominating the proceedings as they would have wished. There was also a sizeable libertarian presence.

The SWP are, of course, a constant source of amusement and no doubt amazement to their own members. For quite a while they had been informing us that there was no real problem or threat from the fascists, even though their paper sales were, and are, getting attacked almost weekly. They decided to mobilise for the march only 2-3 weeks prior to it, with posters and stickers appearing, none of which mentioned the fact that AFA was organising the event. This isn't too surprising really, but they went one better on the morning of the march when one of their members appeared on GLR radio station and had the nerve to say that the SWP had organised it! The RCP, under the guise of Workers (sic) Against Racism — 'WAR!' — once again resembled a religious sect rather than a political organisation. And they would do well to understand that the physical intimidation of AFA supporters at the rally and of libertarians elsewhere will not be tolerated.

All things considered, the day was successful in many ways. Certainly it is not enough. There is a lot of work to be done and we have no intention of easing off. Quite the opposite.

BEATING THE FASCISTS

When AFA relaunched itself in London two years ago with a militant, working-class outlook, it was through recognising that fascist groups, by now mainly the BNP, were again beginning to appear on the streets, with racist stickers and graffiti becoming a familiar sight. Although we knew that they weren't huge in numbers then or now, the conditions existed (and still exist) for them to try and fill a vacuum; a permanent recession in some areas of London, a disenfranchised working-class, a weak labour movement and an even weaker 'Left'. Couple all that with a depressingly high level of racism and racist violence.

People said we were paranoid, or alternatively just a group of thugs looking for any excuse for a 'ruck'. But what we saw as a problem which could grow within limits in the right circumstances has now been given a shot in the arm on an international scale. The unleashing of a wave of nationalism, seen in its most archaic forms in what was the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and on the back of which openly fascist and extreme right-wing organisations are finding new life, using xenophobia and anti-semitism mixed in with populist slogans.

Germany and France are the most obvious examples of this; France being on the verge of giving the Extreme Right its biggest political breakthrough for years; while in Germany fascist violence is at a level not seen since the 1930s (with the libertarian 'autonomous' groups and the Turkish community seemingly being the only people prepared to confront them). In Austria, Sweden and recently Belgium the Far Right has gained in elections; in Spain the fascists may once again begin to feel confident, looking out at what is happening across Europe — recently a large rally was held in Madrid to commemorate the death of Franco.

But there will be no 'Fourth Reich' looming, simply because the bosses don't need it. The working class is divided, the labour movement is weak, the Left in tatters. Reasons why those in power, from politicians to the media to the bosses can get off with blaming the victims of this violence (eg. refugees) rather than the fascists.

In Britain the situation on the surface doesn't look anywhere near as bad, but it is early days yet... With the government trying to patch itself together for the next election, once again the 'race card' is being deliberately used as a diversion from what will be the main electoral issues (Health Service, the economy, etc). Their friends in the press are of course all too willing to oblige. Again, the object is division.

The BNP and the National Front (NF) have both stated their intention to put forward candidates around the country. Although it may not match the numbers they are claiming are going to stand, (they're more likely to concentrate their forces in specific areas, ie. East London), undoubtedly we are going to see a high level of activity. This is going to

have to be matched and bettered by anti-fascists.

The real crunch is not likely to happen immediately after a Labour Party victory (not assured), but when they once again show their incompetence in trying to manage capitalism whilst under constant pressure from hostile forces — the media, the city, the CBI — and hopefully a militant working class! The similarities with the 1970s, with the inheritance of an economic mess, are plain to see. Should this be repeated then that is when we'll see the fascist threat at its worst. No one should be fantasising about a re-run of an Anti-Nazi League-style campaign, or the police being brushed aside like in Lewisham 1977. Everyone's got a lot harder, including PC Plod. Be prepared.

Of course, there's no chance of the BNP or the NF taking power, but that will be of no comfort to those on the receiving end of their violence, direct or indirect. We must offer support and encouragement to people in any area who are prepared to take defensive and offensive action against fascists and racists. There is no substitute for organised working class action, and AFA certainly doesn't claim such a role.

We cannot and never have relied on the police or authorities to deal with this problem. We are not going to wait for the labour movement to open its eyes just as we have not waited for the Left. Over the last year AFA has concentrated its work on trying to build a bigger base of support, with some success too, as more and more people and organisations are contacting us. This work will continue. However, it has not stopped fascist activity. There is only one way to do that...

We must offer support and encouragement to people in any area who are prepared to take defensive and offensive action against fascists and racists.

At a conference recently held, AFA decided to change its emphasis on the political organisations affiliated (who have done much good work) to trying to build strong AFA branches, where the main activity will come from. A sizeable Anarchist presence is a most AFA events, but this needs to be backed up with day to day work, in whatever field is deemed suitable. We are calling on all anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists and libertarians to prioritise this work and to help strengthen what is an already growing, militant anti-fascist movement. We see no reason why we should wait until the fascists grow in numbers or influence. We want to see them smashed now.

AFA has elected an international liaison officer. Could all IWA/AIT sections, anarchist and anti-fascist organisations abroad contact us with any news/information on the fascists and resistance to them via the DAM or direct to AFA, BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX.

The destruction of manufacturing industry suffered in Britain over the last 15 years has been mirrored in the US. The mass unemployment this brought has also led to a weakening of organised labour and a pattern of struggle and defeat for the working class as employers have an increasing labour pool from which to draw scab workforces.

The following article is an abbreviated section of the Workers Solidarity Alliance's report to the forthcoming International Workers Association's 19th Congress. We are presenting this article in an effort to familiarise our readers with the situation of American workers and the current state of the organized labour movement in the USA. In future issues of Direct Action we will feature short pieces on the American class struggle written by WSA members.

GENERAL TRENDS IN THE WORKFORCE

For the foreseeable future the number of industrial workers in the US will continue to decrease and those in the administrative and service sector will increase. For example, the already hard-pressed textile and garment industries will see a further 31% decrease in the number of production workers employed in these already shrinking industries. And while the number of engineers (general and electrical/electronic) will rise by another 80%, the number of metalworking production workers will drop another 7%. Furthermore, the number of 'paper pushers' like accountants and auditors will increase by another 40%, thus increasing the trend towards a post-industrial (manufacturing) society in a very serious and significant way.

Conversely, the average growth rate by the year 2000 in management related occupations, engineering/computer, lawyers, service workers, teachers, health care, marketing/sales and administrative support/clerical will grow by an average of more than 30% for all fields combined. The only exception will be among data entry clerks, typists and work processors, who will see a combined average loss of 15% of all jobs in those fields.

In regards to these latter job classifications, it should come as no surprise that the percentage of jobs lost would be this high. US bosses are starting to move these type of jobs to "places where wages are cheaper", reports the pro-capitalist Wall Street Journal (August 14th, '91). Such jobs are being moved to Barbados, Jamaica, the Philippines, Singapore and Ireland. The days of only factory jobs being exported by the greedy capitalists is slowing down a bit, while the pace is picking up for this sector of the workforce.

Despite this trend away from a traditional manufacturing based society (from 27% of the total workforce in 1980 to 19% of the total in the late 1980's), the actual yearly salaries earned for the largest white collar professional, technical and admin-

istrative positions are generally identical to those of higher skilled factory or construction workers. Furthermore, continuing shifts in manufacturing processes will further blur the distinction between white collar and blue collar workers.

In addition, nearly 25% of all jobs today are either temporary, part-time, contract or home based. These jobs generally predominate in the private service sector, but many of these jobs can also be found in the industrial sector as well. We should add that such part-time, etc workers generally do not receive the usual benefits and compensation (pensions,

was parity of wages, similar working conditions and unity of all workers in, for example, the steel, paper and meat-packing industries to name but a few. Currently there exists a situation where fierce competition between factories in the same company and industry exists, and where different wage rates and working conditions also exist. This has created much disunity among formally united workers. Although there have been some attempts by militants (such as the P-O meatpackers) to stop this trend, these attempts have been far and few inbetween and have met much resistance by the trade union leadership.

employers continue to seek concessions from unionised workers. The major concession currently sought after by the bosses is in the area of health benefits. (Unlike other countries the US does not have a national health insurance plan).

Despite the disunity created by the destruction of industry and the threat of scab labour, a number of successful strikes have been waged against the bosses. In airline, telecommunications and health industries strikes have been won where solidarity across union-employer barriers have created an atmosphere of unity and purpose amongst workers.

that victory can be won if workers stick together, are aggressive, militant and well organised.

POTENTIAL FOR BUILDING REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

With only 16.1% of the American working class organised into unions, and shrinking yearly, and the failure of the reformist unions in mounting effective, militant class-wide organising campaigns, it is only obvious that a new unionism is needed. However, some problems do exist.

In the post-Gulf War period there exists what we hope will only be a transitory conservative attitude among many sectors of the working class. Yet, we would continue to argue, the social and economic basis, not the political, exists for the creation for such a new unionism, a revolutionary unionism. The dilemma for US anarcho-syndicalists, then, becomes many-fold.

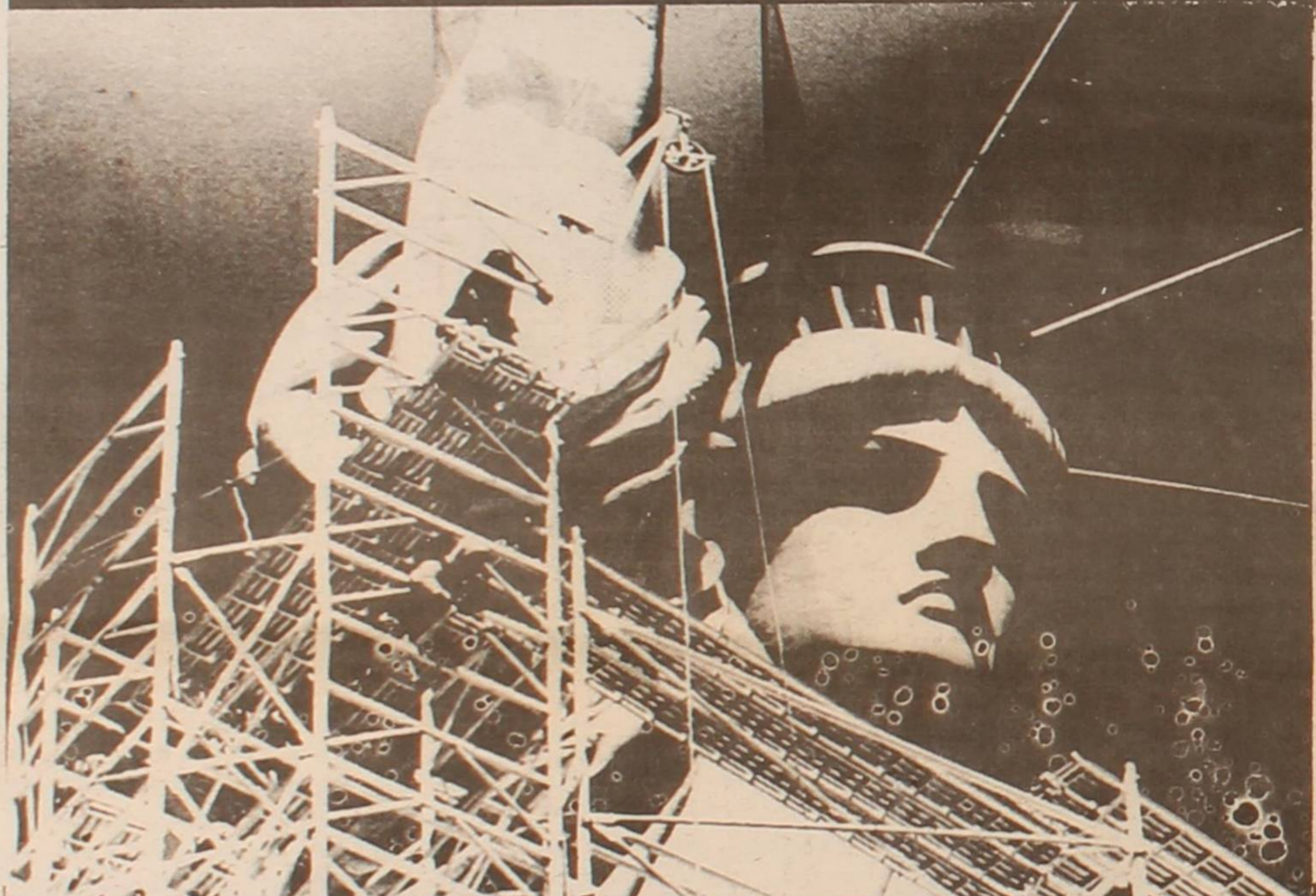
Do US anarcho-syndicalists simply wait for another day to build revolutionary unions? Do anarcho-syndicalists attempt to build militant, yet not explicitly revolutionary, unions? Or do we proclaim the formation of anarcho-syndicalist unions without a real base and concentration of militants in any one or more sectors? Can we pretend that workers will automatically, or just like magic, remember the revolutionary traditions and ideas that existed at the turn of this century? Or should comrades simply proclaim, as some would like to believe, that they have formed a union simply by saying that they are the union of all the working class? We would think not.

Today there are many discussions occurring inside the militant sectors of the labour movement, among unorganised militant workers, within the WSA and elsewhere as to what direction the workers' movement in the USA should take. We try as much as possible to be a part of these discussions (and movement for an independent, radical unionism). At the moment, the WSA attempts to act as a centre for solidarity, information, discussion, ideas and, where possible, workplace action. We believe that it is currently possible to build small groups of militants and begin to take small steps in building militant, revolutionary workplace organisations, be they unions, committees, councils, associations or whatever term the particular group of workers deem to call themselves. The name is less important than the contents and goals.

Tangible revolutionary unionism will not be built in a day, magically proclaimed by a few or organised in marginal sectors or built on propaganda alone. We believe that small, practical steps must be taken and are beginning to be taken and evaluated by the WSA and others.

In closing, we hope that our efforts, actions and educational activities will aid in the efforts to build a new unionism, and a new world. Again, we hope that the current phase of heightened nationalism and militaristic thinking and emerging racism, will soon come to end. Such thinking, we all would agree, only diverts our attention away from the real enemy: the capitalist class.

MOM'S APPLE PIE AND THE



DEATH THROES OF US CAPITALISM

health benefits, vacations, etc) as many full-time (and nearly all union members) do. Regardless of how toothless the National Labour Relations Act may be, many such workers are exempted from the NLRA and can not pursue even basic legal action in case of unfair dismissal.

While this 'restructuring' continues, redundancies will tend to be of a permanent rather than a temporary nature. The rising unemployment is also reflecting the in-built racism of American society, as African-American and Hispanic workers suffer higher proportions of unemployment than white American workers.

COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENTS

Industry-wide bargaining since the 1980's has virtually been destroyed. During this period nearly all unions who enjoyed industry-wide bargaining gave those hard-fought-for rights away to the bosses. Formally there

Throughout the 1980's wage cuts and freezes and two or more levels of pay for similar work (as well as other economic concessions) where the general negotiated trends, despite membership resistance in many cases. Since that time these trends have generally given way to a recoup of these earlier concessions, except in the area of work-rule changes.

Even as basic industrial workers (and many in the retail sector) regain lost wages and holidays they have in no way regained any purchasing power equal to the cost-of-living. Current wage settlements for the second quarter of 1991 average only 3.4% over the life of 2-3 year agreements. Sure, this is better than the 2.2% for 1989, but lower than the 3.8% for 1990. In real dollars, workers earn 15% less than we did in 1973.

Despite the fact that many workers have been regaining lost wages, the

On the negative side, reformist unions obeying the letter of anti-union laws have lead workers to successive defeats, particularly in the transport industries.

One strike that gained international recognition during this period was the Pittston coal strike of 1989-90. This strike captured many hearts and minds, both in the US and abroad. The Pittston Coal Group tried to bust the union with demands for massive concessions over subcontracting, work-rule changes, health care benefits for current and retired members and many more items. The workers took up the age-old working class battle cry: 'an injury to one is an injury to all'. Unionists from around the country and the world sent money and supplies and joined the picket lines. In the end workers' solidarity won the day. The miners walked away with a victory, gave needed spirit to a somewhat tired and defeated union movement and showed

DENMARK

Health Service cuts in Denmark are leading to an increasing number of people suffering from mental illness being imprisoned. The exact numbers are not being made available. In an amazing piece of 'logic', William Rentzmann (Assistant Director of the Prison Bureau) commented that "everybody agrees that insane people should not be imprisoned. Therefore the number of those imprisoned is not relevant".

The 'respectable' facade of Danish racism, Den Dansk Forening (DDF)

has recently collapsed after their true face was exposed by leaked internal documents. In the past they had won lawsuits against people calling them racists, but two recent documents, one a bomb making manual, the other saying that "words are not enough in the fight against immigration" and it was "necessary to act in the dark", showed everyone what they're about. Fortunately they were unable to survive the ensuing scandal and split asunder amid much acrimony and many accusations.

NUSSR THE SUCCESSFUL PUTSCH

The following is a translation of an article first published in KASKOR, the bulletin of the Soviet Union Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists.

"The August coup was not defeated, but won by the bourgeois democrats. The new capitalists (ex-bureaucracy) are consolidating the power they acquired in the autumn, nationalist conflicts are increasing in frequency and ferocity as the union disintegrates. Georgia is now a dictatorship on the verge of civil war. There is now a real danger of the situation in Yugoslavia being repeated in a country covering one sixth of the planet."

Russia itself is still a one party state, with 'democratic Russia' taking control of the Communist Party infrastructure in the name of privatisation. At the same time the economic situation in Russia is worsening by the week. Inflation is out of control,

food shortages have reached unknown proportions, and the financial sharks are making a killing as they monopolise production and couldn't care less for the people they plunge into poverty.

In order to protect themselves from the malcontent, the new capitalists are introducing anti-trade union laws. The conditions exist for an authoritarian dictatorship to grow."

While it makes depressing reading it does show that the battle lines drawn in the industrial revolution are becoming increasingly polarised. While the conditions exist for the rise of fascism, these same conditions could bring the bourgeoisie' downfall. The growth of independent unions is the best hope of building a revolutionary organisation free of Stalinist or capitalist wannabe tyrants.

CNT — FRANCE — AIT

The Confederation Nationale du Travail (CNT), the French section of the IWA, has been very busy recently. Here are three examples of their activities.

ERMONT

Freelance organisers in sports and leisure centres had their social security contributions increased and their holiday pay withdrawn. The organisers, with strong involvement of CNT members, sent a delegation to the Town Hall, a joint letter, and used the broad sheet of the Health-Social-Education Union of Val d'Oise to get the message across to other workers. The Mayor replied to the CNT, and back holiday pay was awarded. Union organisation in this sector is non-existent. However, the CNT are increasing their presence there.

SPES

A CNT section was established at SPES, and over half the workers voted for the CNT candidate in the workers delegate elections. The bosses responded by financing a leaflet of the 'Employees and Members of SPES Workplace Committee Delegates Free Organisation'. Below we reprint extracts of this scurrilous rubbish:

"We stand firm in our condemnation of the wave of violence that has struck SPES...we say No! to gratuitous and political violence...No! to a 'joke' union...We say Enough! to all of this. We are counting on those who elected us and on those who have been tricked by the CNT, in order to build SPES for tomorrow through dialogue and negotiation with management." Are they worried or what?

COMATEC

The CNT continues to grow within COMATEC (Paris metro cleaners). Over the summer, management implemented a scale of penalties against drivers. The CNT intervened to organise resistance. The dispute isn't over yet but already management have started to back down. Within the CNT's defined position the CNT section put forward candidates for the worker's delegates elections, and one was elected, the CNT getting 8% of all the vote.

COMATEC continue to attack those workers they believe to support the CNT by transfers, racist insults etc. The CNT section is now looking to organise at other metro workplaces and in other regions such as Lille and Lyon, with the help of their CNT locals.

INTERNATIONAL



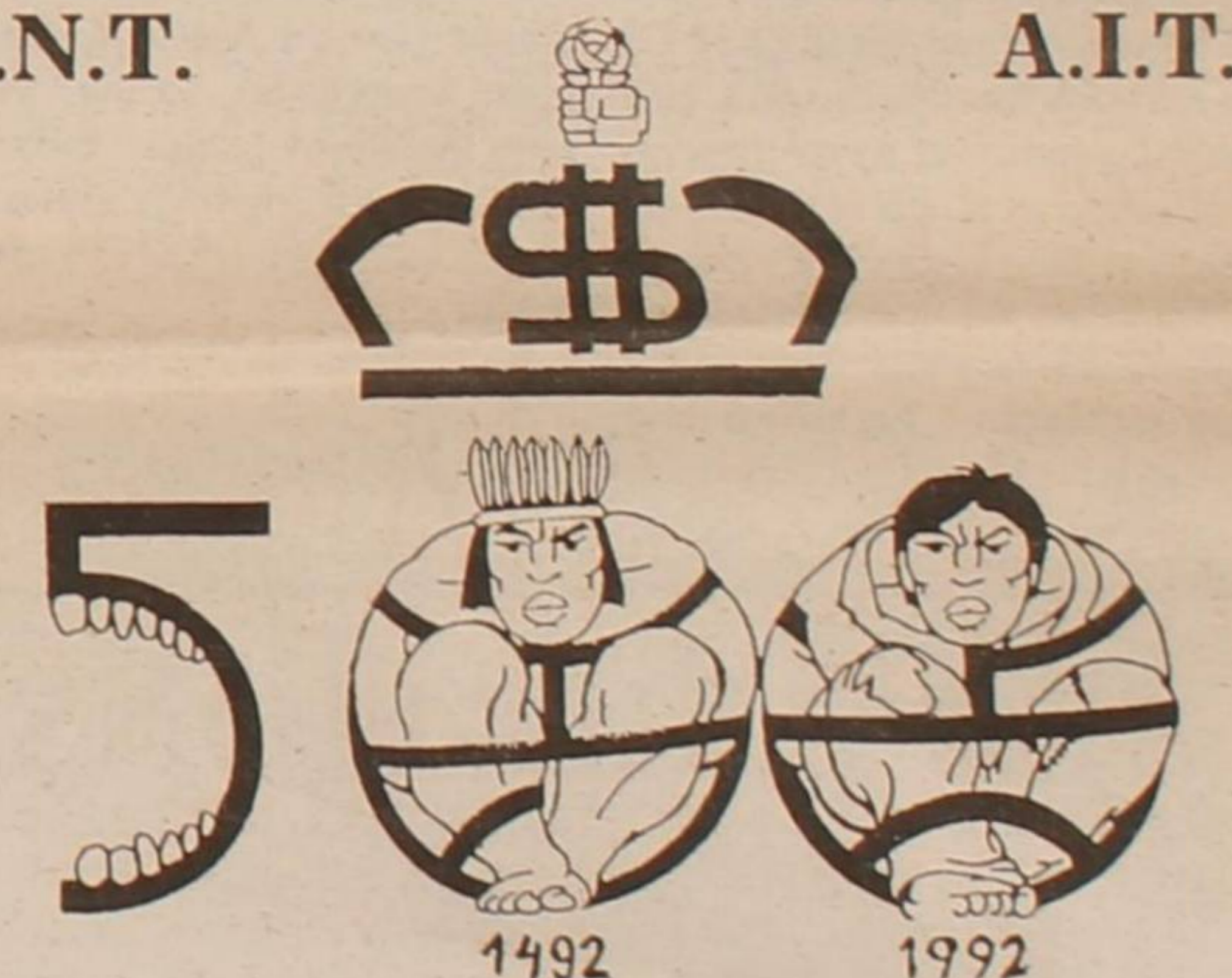
In response to a skinhead attack on CNT members in Barcelona, the Regional Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalist Unions of the CNT staged a 500-strong demonstration against fascist aggression. This is one of the many actions that CNT workers and Iberian Anarchist Youth Members (FIJL) have carried out this year, and stands to prove yet again that anarchists and syndicalists are not interested in flogging the latest paper, but in crushing fascists wherever they raise their heads.

CNT — SPAIN — AIT

1492 AND ALL THAT

C.N.T.

A.I.T.



BOICOT A LA CELEBRACIÓN
DEL Vº CENTENARIO DEL
GENOCIDIO

PABLO SERRANO CAMPAIGN

Pablo Serrano was arrested 8 years ago in northern Spain on charges of political murder, two bombings and theft of police weapons. The following year, 1984, Pablo was found guilty of the murder (Luis Ascaso, Spanish Employers' Association Consultant) as well as the theft. He was given a 33 year sentence. As a category B prisoner since 1990, Pablo is now automatically eligible for parole. He has now been refused parole for the tenth time.

In the Spanish Parole System, it is almost obligatory for the authorities to grant parole in respect of ordinary prisoners involved in murder after 5 years. In every case of political murder, committed by fascists or the police between 1984

and 1987, early parole has been given — the 'Atocha' murder of union lawyers by right wingers and the 'Almería' torture and murder of 3 youths by the Guardia Civil.

The Prisoners' Committee of the CNT-IWA in Spain continues its action on Pablo's behalf. Also involved is the Anarchist Black Cross.

Letters of protest should be sent to: Sr. Director del Centro Penitenciario de Torrero
Avda. de America, 80
50007 ZARAGOZA
Spain

(Information from ABC and 'CNT', paper of CNT-IWA, October 1991)

REVIEWS

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'ANARCHY IN THE USSR

— A new beginning

Edited by Philip Ruff, ASP 1991, £3.00

Available from ASP BCM Box 3714 London WC1N 3XX and good radical bookshops.

This new book is a compilation of reports, manifestos and interviews detailing the growth of the new libertarian left in the former USSR. Some of the pieces have previously appeared in *Black Flag* or *Direct Action*, but others have not had a wide circulation. The introduction by Phil Ruff is an excellent summary of the repression and reflowering of anarchist and libertarian workers' currents throughout the cold, hard years of Stalinist misery. Many of the fragments of news on the new movements in the former USSR have indicated a good deal of confusion. This could be damaging if it lasts, but was perhaps inevitable given the isolation of Soviet radicals and free trade unionists. Also, the effect of living in a society that was ruled by terror in the name of Communist dogma has made it very difficult to discuss any ideas relating to communism, socialism or the working class.

The book details the rise and ideas of the main radical organisations — the SMOT, the KAS and the IREAN. Of course, a book like this can only be a snapshot, a record of development. The situation in much of what was the 'Eastern Bloc' is constantly changing. However, the contents of this little book are very encouraging for radical workers in both East and West. The struggles of our comrades

in Russia and the other republics are more inspiration for those of us seeking to build a new revolutionary movement to challenge the bosses' 'New World Order'. Hopefully what is set out in the book will prove to be only the small beginnings of something much bigger.

'GREEN REVOLUTION'

Green Revolution is a new paper (and organisation) which aims to work together with greens, socialists and anarchists in the fight for the planet. It's obviously highly critical of the 'greening' of capitalism and the current direction of the Green Party. However, I remain to be convinced that their attempts to bring together diverse political approaches will not cause problems. They seem keen to plug 'Marxists prepared to work in a libertarian way', but I wonder why those who reject the authoritarian Marxist groups can't seriously examine anarchism as an obvious alternative.

However, any libertarian tendency within the green movement which recognises class as a factor in ecological destruction is a move in the right direction. They also intend to tackle the issues of sexuality, sexism and racism, often overlooked by greens (and, it has to be said, by some anarchists). So far I've only seen their introductory broadsheet and I'm awaiting their first issue — watch future issues of DA for more details.

More information: T Bishop, PO Box 845, Bristol BS99 5HQ

'LEFT WING COMMUNISM IN BRITAIN 1917-21 — AN INFANTILE DISORDER?'

Bob Jones
Pirate Press, PO Box 446,
Sheffield S1 1NY
No price given

It's all too rare to get a pamphlet from a libertarian viewpoint about British history, so this is a refreshing change. It looks at the derailing of the vigorous British communist movement into the Moscow-obedient Communist Party of Great Britain, a task aided by Lenin's publication 'Left Wing Communism — An Infantile Disorder'.

In the workers' movement of 1917 onwards, there were a number of tendencies who shared the same basic politics. These are now usually thought of as anti-parliamentary communists to distinguish them from the lukewarm, CPGB, parliamentary variety. At the time there was little dispute amongst communists of the necessity of anti-parliamentarism. This included both anarchists and marxists. Other areas of argument included the centrality of class struggle, the importance of direct action, and an analysis of the Russian revolution, which saw its success in terms of soviets rather than the disciplined revolutionary party.

This faith in the ability of the working class to conduct their own revolution, also led to a rejection of the Labour Party. The main aim of the British socialists and communists was to win converts and raise class

consciousness. The Labour Party was not socialist (then as now) and hampered the development towards socialism.

To Lenin, who needed control of the worldwide movement for his own ends, these were dangerous ideas! In 'Left Wing Communism' he argued that revolutionary consciousness is 'brought about by the political experience of the masses, not propaganda alone'. From this common-sense starting point, he argued that 'British communists should participate in Parliamentary action...[and] from within Parliament help the masses of workers see the results of a Henderson and Snowden government in practice'. Anyone arguing against this was dismissed as 'naïve'.

Meanwhile, the non-sectarian industrial-orientated movement threw up two attempts at a larger organisation, before the Communist Unity Conventions shut the door on the anarchists and anti-parliamentary communists. These were the Communist League, made up of dissidents from the Socialist Labour Party, 'The Spur' (an anarchist paper), the London Freedom Group and the Labour Abstentionist Party (LAP). The Communist Unit conventions united many communists into the CPGB, including Edgar Whitehead who had founded the LAP. The CPGB promptly ignored British conditions, took Lenin's advice and applied to affiliate to the Labour Party! But more importantly, it deflected activity away from workplace struggle, emphasising instead politics, particularly Parliamentary politics.

Since Lenin's 'Left Wing Communism' was published, the working class has 'been through' the experience of a Labour government on a number of occasions — 1924, 1929-31, 1945-51, 1964-70 and 1974-9. Despite this, us poor fools still haven't seen the light, so the descendants of the CPGB, the various left parties, still call on us to vote Labour. They were wrong then, and they're wrong now.

The Labour Party was never socialist. Sadly, our initial task remains the same as our forebears — to make socialists (real ones, not the pale pink version that infest local councils and the Union bureaucracies), and to raise class consciousness. We believe this is best done where it most matters to ordinary people — where they work and where they live. The possibilities opened up by the experiences of the fighting sections of the anti-Poll Tax movement show the relevance of our politics, and our methods. Our class was diverted by Party-builders and bureaucrats before. We must not repeat the same mistake.



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NO FUTURE WITHOUT SOCIAL REVOLUTION

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THIS IS THE DAM

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 the 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 the 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 world wide 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 environment.

8. The Direct Action Movement is resolved to initiate, encourage and wholeheartedly support the creation of independent workers' unions based on the principles of anarcho-syndicalism.

9. 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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CONTACTS - UPDATE

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NATIONAL SECRETARY, Manchester DAM-IWA, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY, Edinburgh DAM-IWA, PO Box 516, SW DO, Edinburgh EH10 5JJ

EASTERN REGION

NORWICH DAM-IWA, PO Box 73, Norwich NR1 2EB

MIDLANDS

LEICESTER DAM-IWA, c/o 70 High St, Leicester
For contacts in Leamington, Nottingham, Northants and Worcester, write to National Secretary

NORTH EAST

LEEDS DAM-IWA c/o Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds LS2
MIDDLESBROUGH DAM-IWA, c/o Leeds DAM
SOUTH YORKSHIRE DAM-IWA, PO Box 122, Doncaster, S Yorkshire
For contacts in Doncaster, Scunthorpe, Sheffield and York, write to North East Regional Secretary, c/o Leeds DAM

NORTH WEST

BURNLEY DAM-IWA, 12 Kingsland Grove, Burnley, Lancs BB11 3PY
LIVERPOOL DAM-IWA, PO Box 110, Liverpool, L69 8DP
MANCHESTER DAM-IWA, PO Box 29 SW PDO, Manchester M15
PRESTON DAM-IWA, PO Box 172, Preston, Lancs PR1
For contacts in Cumbria, Lancaster, Salford and Stockport, write to North West Regional Secretary, c/o Burnley DAM

SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH DAM-IWA, PO Box 516, SW DO, Edinburgh EH10 5JJ
GLASGOW DAM-IWA, PO Box 226, Glasgow G1 5RX

SOUTH WEST

BRISTOL DAM-IWA, c/o National Secretary
For contacts in Avon, Devon and Plymouth, write to National Secretary

SOUTH EAST

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE DAM-IWA, PO Box 245 St Albans, Herts
DEPTFORD DAM-IWA, PO Box 574, Brockley, London SE4 1DL
EAST LONDON DAM-IWA, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
NORTH LONDON DAM-IWA, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE
SOUTH LONDON DAM-IWA, PO Box 761, Camberwell SDO, London SE5
For contacts in Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, write to South East Regional Secretary, c/o North London DAM

IRELAND

There is no section of the International Workers' Association in Ireland, but we maintain links with:
ORGANISE! (Anarcho-Syndicalist group based in the Six Counties),
c/o 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast 1, Ireland

All other international contacts should be sought via the International Secretary.

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INDUSTRIAL

Council Workers Network, c/o Manchester DAM and North London DAM
Transport Workers Bulletin, c/o Deptford DAM, PO Box 574, London SE4 1DL
Despatch Industry Workers Union, c/o 489 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AU
Independent Education Network, PO Box 29 SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW
Health Workers Federation, c/o PO Box 761, Camberwell, London SE5

OTHER

IDEAS & ACTION (US Anarcho-Syndicalist paper), PO Box 40400, San Francisco, CA 94140, USA
REBEL WORKER (Australian Anarcho-Syndicalist paper), PO Box 92, Broadway, NSW 2007, Australia
ANTI-FASCIST ACTION (North/South/East/South-East London Branches), BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX

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LISTINGS

NORWICH ABC FORMED

Members of Norwich DAM and other individuals have decided to set up a Norwich branch of the Anarchist Black Cross. After a high profile campaign for Martin Foran including stalls, leafleting, flyposting and a demonstration which gained local press coverage, an open meeting was held at which it was decided to initiate an ABC group.

In common with other ABC groups, we aim to support anarchist, revolutionary and class struggle prisoners including poll tax prisoners, anti-fascist prisoners, Sara Thornton (jailed for killing her violent, alcoholic ex-cop husband), the Tottenham 3, as well as prisoners from other countries.

The Anarchist Black Cross have also recently organised in Essex. If you live in the Essex area and want to join or simply find out more, please write to:

Essex ABC
c/o Grapevine Bookshop
Unit 6, Dales Brewery
Gwydir Street
Cambridge

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