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Direct Action

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CONTENTS

STRIKE REPORTS 2
WAPPING INTERVIEW 3
EASTENDERS 6
SOUTH AFRICA 8
SOCIAL SECURITY CUTS 8

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE !

LABOUR PARTY - TUC SELL OUT!



A NEW DEAL, OR THE SAME OLD SELL OUT ?

After seven years of Thatcherism, people have been frightened into believing the election of a Labour government is the solution to their troubles. But you only have to look at the French Socialist government (which was elected on a left-wing ticket) and the current Spanish government to see that so-called Socialist parties like the Labour Party do not have the interests of the working class at heart.

France and Spain have shown that when Socialist Parties have to run the economy to the dictates of international capitalism, this means making thousands redundant, introducing austerity measures, and generally restructuring the economy away from heavy industry in favour of high-tech industries with their ever-shrinking workforce.

In the past the Labour Party in opposition has promised improvements in the living and working conditions of ordinary people. History shows that this has never been borne out in practice.

In 1939 the Labour Party stated that "no conscript should be required to take duty in aid of the civil power in connection with a trade dispute, or to perform, in consequence of a trade dispute, any civil or industrial duty customarily performed by a citizen".

Within six days of coming to power in 1945 they used conscript troops to break a 10 week old dock strike in London. Troops were used on at least six further occasions against workers in dispute. The reason behind many of these strikes was a wage freeze, a move backed by the TUC - suprise, suprise! - leaving unofficial action as the only way open for workers to defend their living standards.

The Wilson government in the '60's carried on where Attlee's left off. Despite having a unilateralist party policy they retained US bases and independent nuclear weapons - Wilson decided without even consulting the Cabinet to radically extend the Polaris programme. They did not hesitate to use the troops against the minority community in Northern Ireland and of course it wasn't long before they introduced a wage freeze.

Everyone can remember the last Labour government's TUC backed social contract (or "social con-trick" as the workers called it) which froze wages as prices rose steeply, and was aimed at helping the lowest paid. Needless to say the lowest paid were the worst off under the "con-trick" and were forced into the massive wave of strikes known as the "Winter of Discontent". And who can forget the sight of the Green Goddesses as the so-called socialists used troops to break the fireworkers' strike? It was Dennis Healy who first introduced monetarism - a fact conveniently hidden by the Labour Party by renaming it as "Thatcherism". Of course there is a difference between this Labour Party and those that have gone before. In the past they have always promised the world whilst in opposition, only to renege on those promises on coming to power. The new "yuppie" style Labour Party is being more honest - along with their allies in the TUC they are **already laying down the framework by which they mean to hammer the working class!**

Far from repealing the Tory anti union laws, which are already an attack on basic trade union rights, Labour is seeking to extend them. Included in the joint Labour Party - TUC document being presented at this year's TUC and Labour Party conferences is a proposal to "lay down general principals for inclusion in union rule books based on a right for union members to have a secret ballot on decisions relating to strikes". The Labour Party is now trying to do what the Tories failed to do - in effect dictating to unions what they include in their rule books. In the words of that friend of the working class, the Financial Times: "Never before has the Labour Party, created by the unions, attempted to bring in controls of trade union activities on the scale proposed in this document. Never before has Labour tried to make that control statutory, backing it up - albeit in a modified form - with the involvement of the courts, traditionally seen within the labour movement as it's enemy." Surely a case of **Labour Party entryism into the trade union movement.**

Seven years is a long time for people to forget the sins of the last Labour government, but every Labour government works closely with the TUC and CBI, to take power away from the grassroots. They can say what they like to get elected but they can do what they like once they are in power. We must not expect a Labour government to fight for the working class. As anarcho-syndicalists it is part of our task to dispel the pipe-dream that any hope for the future rests in the election of yet another Labour government, doomed to travel the same road as it's predecessors. The only hope for the working class is to organise **NOW** at grassroots level to build an effective rank and file movement. Remember - you can vote only once every 4 or 5 years but direct action works 365 days a year.

BUILD THE RANK & FILES NOW !

HANDS OFF IRELAND!

The Anglo-Irish agreement was finalised last November amid hypocritical claims that it was an important step to everlasting peace in Ireland. Loyalists saw it as an assault on their precious veto. They had failed to realise that the British state used the veto when it was convenient. However nothing has changed in Northern Ireland, especially for the minority community who the agreement was somehow supposed to protect. They are still subject to bigoted policing, shoot to kill and many estates are regularly raided by the R.U.C and army on the pretense of looking for arms - in reality these are exercises to show "who's boss". Now in addition the minority community has to cope with the bigotry that the agreement has unleashed especially since the start of the marching season.

When Thatcher replied "no, no, no" to the 3 proposals of the New Ireland Forum it seemed that Loyalists could rest assured that their veto was still intact. So why, just a year later, should she sign an agreement giving the Irish government an advisory role in the affairs of the 6 counties without even consulting the Loyalists? To answer this we need to look closely at N.A.T.O's interests in relation to Ireland.

NATO AND IRELAND

After the New Ireland Forum's proposals were rejected, Reagan stepped in, having separate meetings with Thatcher and with FitzGerald. So it seems likely that U.S/N.A.T.O policy featured heavily in the Anglo-Irish agreement. It is no surprise that this should happen, as Ireland has the unique position of being the only E.E.C member that isn't in N.A.T.O. With behind-the-scenes talk of a West European super-state closely linked to N.A.T.O, the Irish government

(CONTD. PAGE 6)

SILENTNIGHT

The Silentnight dispute is now well into its second year and the company is suffering from the effects. Sales are dropping causing a fall in both share prices and productivity which is so low that scab workers have been instructed to sweep up the car parks and 20 scabs were laid off before the July holidays.

Meanwhile although their morale is high the strikers are experiencing hardship. New social security regulations mean that all accounts of donations to individual strikers will be inspected by D.H.S.S officials which affects what they can and (more likely) cannot claim. Before the dispute Tom Clarke wrote to the local M.P asking for these new rules to be implemented - obviously he was expecting the strike. These rules mean that donations to individual strikers' families should be in the form of cash or postal orders AND NOT CHEQUES as these can be accounted for by the D.H.S.S. Also donations in the form of food and clothes will get around the problem.

The strikers are now running an adopt-a-family scheme and are asking for union branches, support groups and other organisations to consider this. This means supplying money, food and/or clothes to a striker's family. For further details write to:-

Dennis & Florence Williams,
41 Lower West Avenue,
Barnoldswick,
Colne,
Lancashire,
BB8 6DW.
Telephone 0282 814556.

The scabs, not content with taking over other people's jobs, have burned down the pickets' caravan and have assaulted pickets on several occasions. We never hear about scabs assaulting pickets in the gutter press - it sounds too much like the truth!

It should come as no surprise that Tom Clarke has sponsored the N. Yorks police since 1984 - but of course the police are impartial aren't they? Harsh bail conditions have been imposed on the strikers - e.g one picket who lives in Sutton was ordered not to appear within 5 miles of the Sutton factory. Obviously this meant that he wasn't even allowed to visit his own home! It has come to the pickets' attention that there are always 5 or 6 police on duty with no numbers (probably S.P.G or some other police paramilitary unit, or even army transfers).

Many of the strikers are Pakistani and it is encouraging to see that links are being built up with Asian groups in Manchester and Bradford.

Although there are only a small number of women strikers they are more active in the dispute than many of the men. Because of their commitment and enthusiasm many of the male strikers have changed their opinion of women and their role in strikes. This has been helped by the good links that the women have with Women Against Pit Closures and with the Wapping strikers. In fact they have been down to Wapping a few times and have done some public speaking about the dispute. Terry Bennett, chair of the strike committee, says "we would be lost without the effort put in by the women.

This dispute, like most others, can be won. But it will only be won if there is enough practical solidarity. In July, a shop owned by Tom Clarke's son in Huddersfield that sold Silentnight furniture was forced by picketing to close down. The shop, Night and Day, had been in business for less than a year. The CO-OP has been another target for picketing (since the "socialist" CO-OP takes 30% of the scab beds). In London after a picketing campaign initiated by Building Worker Group and supported by South East D.A.M groups and various union branches, the CO-OP wholesalers in the S.E. region agreed not to re-stock Silentnight products or engage in any further promotional activities. The FTAT branch secetary representing the Silentnight workers in London commented that the CO-OP pledge is meaningless, without the co-operation of the CO-OP workforce there is no way of checking that no further re-stocking of Silentnight products is taking place. With this in mind, picketing is continuing on Saturday mornings to impress on the CO-OP workers the need for solidarity action and to demand the removal of all Silentnight products from the stores. The CO-OP in Walworth Rd, South London did remove Silentnight products but replaced them when the pickets had left. The CO-OP in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire has cancelled its' order for Silentnight products and CO-OP headquarters in Manchester have been leafletted by members of Manchester Strike Support Group in order to encourage CO-OP workers to take supportive action. They have also picketed shops stocking Silentnight products throughout the Manchester area.

If the CO-OP is pushed enough, especially if we appeal directly to the rank and file CO-OP workers, then there is a good chance of getting them to black the scab products - which will be a major victory for the strikers. Pressure on the CO-OP must be intensified. All retail outlets must be picketed and leafletted - it only needs two or three people per shop. This must be done regularly and often, not just as a token gesture. Street collections must be organised. Also collections can be done in pubs, clubs and workplaces. As individuals we can order Silentnight products through mail order catalogues - and then cancel the order just before delivery is due. If done en masse this simple act would cause a great deal of trouble for Silentnight and probably cause the mail order firms to drop their products.



members of Manchester Strike Support Group Picketing CO-OP head-quarters

A1 Feeds

This dispute has been going on for 8 months now. It began on January 13th over the sacking of two men for union activities. The workforce withdrew their labour in support but were sacked as well. The management have brought in scab labour from all over the country and have told them to provoke the strikers and lie to the bone to get them moved off the gate. We have had one picket beaten up and two run over without any charges being brought.

We took over the offices for two and a half days before they got us out. The first day we were in there Alan Ford, the manager, ordered the scabs to smash a wall down, and get us out at all cost. They failed. We had a lot of trouble with the police - our mates outside were throwing parcels of food in to us, but the police were playing football with it, then they gave it to their dogs to eat. I have never seen so many police and vans for six pickets. It's about time someone else complained about the policing down here. Mr Simpson (A1 Feeds management) should foot the bill because it's his security guards the police are being used for. The pickets are still fighting but sometimes there are only 6 of us so we could do with some help if we are going to win.

Our funds have run dry now, so we ask for some support to give us the strength to fight this hard, long battle.

We have lost one tribunal but we still have one to go. The scab drivers are stll turning up in force but there is little we can do to stop them. Even the police are getting inside information about some of our plans so we have had to cancel a lot of planning, but we will not give up.

It has taken the police 8 months to realise that our caravan in a layby was obstructing the highway. They have now moved it and told us, no way is it coming back. They are making their own rules up as they go along.

CONTACT: A1 Feeds Strike Committee, Transport House, Liverpool 3.

A1 Feeds Strike Committee.

Nove Leather

On the 3rd of July Janet Bowman was elected as shop steward at Nove Leather in Liverpool. The following day she was made "redundant". The company's owners - the Novelli family - are pleading poverty and muttering about an "economic crisis". This is despite the following facts:

- They currently have major orders on their books.
- They have just awarded a major wage rise to another worker.
- They have just bought new homes, C-reg cars and paid for a double wedding at the Albert Dock.

On top of this, average take home pay is only £65 a week. Health and safety is atrocious: the fire escape is permanently locked and the wiring has been repaired by an unqualified employee. Workers are periodically laid off then re-employed when stocks run low. Even talking at work is forbidden!

On the 8th of July the rest of the unionised labour force (14 out of 17 workers) came out in support of Janet. The same day they were ALL sacked. All attempts to negotiate with the management (through A.C.A.S) have broken down due to Novelli's refusal to re-instate Janet or recognise the union.

Nove Leather are now employing scab labour.

The firms major outlet is Littlewoods. The strikers were told that Littlewoods were boycotting Nove Leather but this boycott only lasted 3 days, and Littlewoods continued to stock the scab products which are distributed from a warehouse in Bolton. An appeal has been made to all Littlewoods workers: DON'T HANDLE NOVE LEATHER PRODUCTS.

The strikers need all the support they can get: at present financial help is pretty poor; there's no sign of solidarity action from other workers and no action from the "socialist" city council who own Nove Leather's premises.

The whole issue is one of blatant victimisation of a union member, and the strikers are calling on all trade unionists and supporters to boycott Nove Leather products and support their right to join a union and fight for an end to sweatshop conditions.

Send donations, letters, requests for speakers to Nove Leather Strike Fund, c/o Tony Hayes, T.G.W.U, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool 1.

Dust to Dust

Deaths and serious injuries in factories and on building sites are rising again dramatically. The trend is most marked in those industries that are notoriously dangerous.

Recently the Health and Safety Commission released figures which show that the "fatal and major injuries" in manufacturing industries rose from 71 per 100,000 in 1981 to 87 in 1984. In the building and construction industry the rate went up by almost half, from 164 to 233 per 100,000 workers in the same period.

After construction and mining (the figure for mining went down because of the miner's strike) the dangerous industries are metal manufacture, timber and furniture trades, and brick, glass, pottery and cement manufacture.

The most common accidents are broken bones, falls on building sites and fingers severed by machinery.

Employers are using the current high rate of unemployment to pressurise workers into cutting corners and dangerous practices. It is proved that the bosses do not care for their employees because the number of "dangerous occurances" notified by employers has declined from 3,645 in 1981 to 2,704 in 1984.

Thousands of people in the furniture industry are being exposed to dangerous amounts of wood dust because the employers representatives on the Health and Safety Commission are blocking new limits on dust.

Dust from hard woods is responsible for a large proportion of the deaths each year from nasal cancer. High Wycombe, the centre of the wooden furniture industry in Britain, has a high incidence of nasal cancer, which is usually fatal.

In May '85 scientists on the commission's advisory committee recommended that the old advisory limit of 5 milligrammes per cubic metre be converted to a legal maximum.

Strike Won!

The strike at the Westhoughton factory of Bellhouse Hartwell is over: with a victory for the strikers.

On the 29th of July the management sacked 2 workers - Dennis Green and Alan Bond - without reason or notice being given. A one day strike the following day resulted in the two workers being allowed back on the shop floor, pending the outcome of an external conference the following Monday.

At this conference, management refused to give reasons for the sackings and restated their position that Green and Bond must be off the shop floor. At a works meeting the same day full backing was given to the sacked men and on the 5th of July a strike began involving all 120 workers from the factory (members of T.A.S.S, A.U.E.W and G.M.B.U).

Since then Alan Bond has left the area, and was therefore no longer involved in the dispute. But on the 19th of August, the management announced the following:

- Dennis Green (apparently sacked for his involvement in the labour and trade union movement) to be reinstated.
- No loss of holiday pay for the strikers.
- The introduction of a system of 3 month trial contracts: workers would no longer be employed on a day to day basis.

We are pleased to be able to report a VICTORY - albeit a minor one - for our class against the bosses. With solidarity and direct action we CAN win!

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Wapping: Sacked Printworker Speaks Out Against SOGAT Leaders!

As the News International strike draws towards the end of its eighth month, it has become increasingly obvious that this is not a dispute involving only the 5,500 sacked workers but is a much wider issue with serious implications for the rest of the printing industry and for the class as a whole. If Murdoch is allowed to sack his whole labour force and get away with it, a precedent will be set and the other newspaper bosses will be able to do exactly the same thing. Eddie Shah is already using non-union labour on "Today", "The Guardian" is also planning a move eastwards to dockland and other nationals are making similar preparations.

Although picketing of the plant is important as a focus for the dispute, it presently offers no solution to stopping News International from getting their scab papers out. The High Courts have now issued writs against SOGAT, NGA, William Freeman, Michael Britton and Chris Robbins forbidding them to interfere with the commercial contracts of News International or to intimidate their employees amongst other things. Over 1000 arrests have already been made and many pickets are on stringent bail conditions including bans from the Wapping area. Over 350 pickets have been seriously injured, many pickets feel intimidated by the police and the numbers on the picket line are rapidly declining.

Faced with this situation SOGAT responded with a letter from Brenda Dean (the general secretary) to all branch secretaries, officers and organisers, to be passed on to all members, and we quote "Accordingly you are advised: all officers and members are hereby instructed that they must not carry on any of the activities restrained in the above orders. The executive council wishes to make it clear that it cannot countenance any action by any officer or member which constitutes a breach of any of the orders. In accordance with the legal requirements of the order, to protect the union, the society will be required to take disciplinary action against any officer or member who takes action which infringes any of the orders and thereby places the position of the union in jeopardy". The letter goes on to say officials and members may be personally sequestrated.

Technically this means that pickets could have their homes and possessions stolen by the courts and then be disciplined by their own union for bringing it into (supposed) disrepute for shouting "scab" on the picket line.

The SOGAT National Executive Committee from the very start of the dispute have shown us which side of the fence they are on and at the bi-annual delegate conference in June, the London leadership followed them in selling out the strikers, as bureaucrats always do. Michael Hicks (Imperial Father of Chapel at London Wholesale) called a fifteen minute adjournment in which he pleaded for support for a motion which "supports the continuation of the dispute and will pursue it with all possible means consistent with ensuring the maintainence of SOGAT as an independent trade union". Of course delegates from outside London followed the people who they see as leading the strike, so the motion was passed and the union committed itself to doing nothing to bring themselves into conflict with the courts, which in practical terms means doing absolutely fuck all.

We would like to ask SOGAT what their definition of an independent trade union is; is it one which is tied to the confines of the state and its laws or is it one which will be prepared to fight for its members' rights whatever the legal implications.



"DIRECT ACTION" interviewed Larry Hyatt, a sacked printworker active in the Printworkers' Support Groups and the Fleet Street Support Unit (a rank & file printworkers group), to discover how the strike is progressing...

SCABBY DEAN

Q: What is the mood of the strikers following the writs and the latest kick in the teeth by Brenda Dean?

A: There has been very little in highs and lows in the mood of the strike; the surge at the purging of the contempt was about the highest level of activity of the strikers in disgust at Brenda Dean, followed by the mass meeting at Central Hall which was the highest level of their involvement and determination. The lowest level has been at this stage, following the bi-annual delegates conference decision to adopt a motion which basically said "there would be no action taken which would interfere with the independence of our trade union" (i.e the possibility of sequestration).
Following that conference, and the pledge of the leadership to continue and to propagate the strike, we have seen no positive action coming from the leadership. I think the reason for this is that there has been a marked underlying non-political involvement by the leadership; by non-political I mean no militant political involvement by the leadership to try to motivate the strikers to actually win. There has been an underlying tone of "new realism"; wait for a new labour government and see where we go from there. As for the mood following the writs the only people who are fully aware of what the writs indicate and what their implications are, are the F.O.C's and the middle bureaucrats. The rank and file printworker still thinks we can carry on as before, without it having any effect with regard to the judiciary. What we have got to understand is that the activities we continue now will be breaking the law, and for us to give a clear lead as rank and file members we must break the law to win the dispute. As we have seen from Brenda Dean and the London leadership they are prepared to accept the Tory judge's decision and limit the activities around the strike. This is what we must oppose and fight to regain the hearts and minds of the strikers, to go forward in the strike.

Q: Since the National Executive Council recommendations were rejected by the ballot, how has the dispute been run? Brenda Dean was rebuffed, but has she been handed back ultimate control of the strike?

A: When you say the N.E.C made these recommendations, they didn't actually recommend accepting the offer, but they didn't campaign for a "no" vote. The London District Council (L.D.C) along with the alleged "new left" of the Executive Council (recently elected from the London area) have along with the rest of the N.E.C fully supported Brenda Dean at the bi-annual delegate conference in the motion we spoke of earlier about the independence of the trade union. If we seriously think that the new London leadership elected to the Executive Council are going to change their ideas and support the strikers in escalating the strike, I think we would be bitterly disappointed. The leadership was handed back to Brenda Dean at the bi-annual delegate conference, without the consultation of the strikers.

Q: What tactics are the L.D.C using to further the strike?

A: I would say they are using no tactics to develope the strike; they are adhering totally to the recommendations of the Law Courts with regard to the way we picket. They are now saying there will be no picketing unless it has the full support and direction of the Executive Council of SOGAT. Now when we asked this question, "if we support that line as rank and filers can you give us an indication of how many dates you have planned for picketing activities in the near future", Danny Sergent (SOGAT general president) replied that "there are no dates being organised for this function". We then asked him "how do you propose to win this strike with these sorts of tactics" and he said "by organisation". Now we don't understand what HE means by organisation, but our understanding of organisation would be the return of mass meetings so that the pickets could decide the objectives of the strike and carry those out and mandate those on the platform, who are allegedly leaders, to implement the tactics of the strikers.

The boycott campaign, as far as I know, is being carried on as a means of fighting the strike, and this is the sole initiative taken by the Executive Council in winning the dispute. I do not hold any hope in safeguarding our future, the union's future and the labour movement's future with the boycott campaign. As far as the L.D.C are concerned there are no flying pickets; they are organised by the strikers themselves with the object of closing down T.N.T depots. If you asked Chris Robbins or George Holmes about flying pickets, I should imagine they'd have a heart attack. I believe the flying pickets should be bigger and appeal to the whole labour movement who should carry out and support them. Fleet Street coming out is essential and has always been the centre of this dispute; we should see this as a step towards a national print strike and gaining wider support for the whole trade union movement. The executive have done nothing to support this.

The L.D.C, a number of F.O.C's and certain Branch Committees have been opposed to a strike committee. I think the reason for this is fairly obvious as they would then be under the mandate of the strikers and not the Branch Committee. You would then see a power struggle as the strike committee would actually challenge the structure of the trade unions, especially in London. I don't think at this stage they would be prepared to tolerate that. The strike committee is the obvious vehicle for implementing the strikers' wishes and taking the strike forward on an accountable basis.

Q: What do the strikers think of the so-called outside agitators whom Brenda Dean has denounced as unwanted?

A: I don't believe there are outside agitators; I believe these are genuine trade unionists who are fully supportive of the strikers and I would ask Brenda Dean to look to herself as to where the outside agitators are coming from. I would say the outside agitators and specifically the unwanted ones are the police force themselves. I am of the opinion that the police force are of growing concern to the majority of people in this country and I believe that the police force are getting beyond the control of normal workers and something will have to be done about them soon. As for the outside agitators - no, the supporters - from outside political parties and trade unions, I welcome these to our picket line as they have a wealth of experience in confronting the state and other employers. We welcome these comrades and the opportunity to learn from them how to win on the picket line. I must admit we've had very few victories on the picket line; this is due to the lack of political understanding of the situation that these strikers are in. When we look at the situation you can only look at the union and chapel structures to alter that. This is where we have got to do the groundwork; if we want to win on the picket line we must win in the chapels first - and if we want to win on the picket line we must confront the state.

Q: What is your attitude towards the revolutionary left? Do you think they have made a positive contribution and why do you think the majority have now dropped the strike?

A: Well, I've seen what might be described as "revolutionary left" and I've been in some cases very pleased and surprised. I don't know if it's true to say the majority have dropped the strike. I would certainly say a number have changed their attitude towards whether or not we can win. I think there have been some positive contributions by the left especially in the early days of the heavy picketing around 3rd May; I think these were positive moves and if we could have maintained those types of pickets we would have a positive conclusion to the strike by now.

Q: Could you describe what the Fleet St. Support Unit is?

A: It is a unit made up of militants in the Fleet St. area who were concerned about the lack of escalation in the strike. The unit is two-fold; firstly to escalate the strike and make more strikers aware of the collaboration of many members of the branches and the L.D.C within Fleet St. The only way we felt we could do this was to build our own platform. We wanted to carry out an exposure programme as well as to escalate the strike. Secondly, in the future we want to build a national rank & file movement in the printing industry. We want to be able to respond to appeals both inside and outside London with regards to the printing industry and any other industry which finds itself in struggle.

EXPOSURE

Q: What do you see their role as in this dispute and have they been effective in achieving their aims?

A: I think we were very effective around the time of the exposure of the national leadership in its collaboration with the courts and the establishment in the purging of the contempt. We predicted this and put out many leaflets trying to indicate the way forward for the rank & file. We predicted that the London leadership would support Dean at the bi-annual delegates conference. We have tried to make the membership aware of these things and tried to predict the result of certain events within the dispute. I think we have been fairly successful to date but unfortunately I must be honest and say that the Support Unit has not won the support that it deserves. Therefore we've had very limited success on an industrial basis (i.e Bemrose pre-prints being used in Fleet St. and the copy being sanctioned by branch officials to be sent to Wapping. Stopping these would be major steps forward) but I still don't think it's

(CONTD. PAGE 4)

Printers' march 9th August

Printer Speaks Out (cont.)

too late. I think we're only seen as a thorn in the side rather than as an alternative.

Q: Could you explain why it is so important that Fleet St. comes out on strike?

A: I think the first reason is that other trade unionists see the strike as an isolated dispute, concerning Murdoch and the 4 titles. This is a gross understatement of the strike, because the importance of this strike is for the right to organise and for the right to strike without having a scab organisation being recruited whilst you're on strike and then to be sacked. To win the labour movement over, we have to take the road towards a national strike, and it must be seen that the rank & file are showing the rest of the trade union movement that we are prepared to escalate the strike beyond its limitations at the moment. I think the first step would be the pre-prints and the copy, and then into various Fleet St. houses where thousands of jobs have been lost and the demoralisation of workers is most prominent. People say that Fleet St. coming out would give Rupert Murdoch a clear slate. What I would say is that we would have enough strikers and pickets to restrict the movement of copy from the Wapping plant. Also the strike is running out of finances and if Fleet St. came out other trade unionists would see it as a very serious attempt at protecting our trade union and jobs overall; they would probably have a prick of conscience and weigh off some money to our members who are in a desparate situation. (Send money to: F.O.C, LONDON MACHINE BRANCH, CASUAL CHAPEL, c/o SOGAT HOUSE, 84 BLACKFRIARS ROAD, LONDON SE1

Q: As the miners' strike was spread by unofficial flying pickets, do you think this sort of action could still bring Fleet St. out?

A: I do believe we would win support with flying pickets in Fleet St., but then you must ask yourself what sort of support we have already. When and if this situation arises we cannot say that we would win another office with between half a dozen and a dozen people standing outside handing out leaflets. If we are determined we must have hundreds upon hundreds of people prepared to picket that office and restrict the movement of workers going in or out. We must also put out a direct appeal prior to putting on that picket; we must win the workers' minds and we must convince them that their solidarity would be the winning of this dispute. Followed by a flying picket to put the screw on and win the action required. Whether it would bring the whole of Fleet St. out, I don't know but I would look on the optimistic side and say "yes", although in my heart of hearts I think the strike has been protracted with a non-political direction for too long, but I may still be proved wrong.

Q: Finally, can we still win?

A: I don't think any question like this is as easy to answer as it is to ask. First of all we need to analyse what we need to do to win and whether we can actually achieve these things. We've got to convince the strikers to return to the strike as there has been a lot of drifting away. One way of doing this is showing that the London leadership will not support them but only a rank & file organisation can support the strikers. If we can convince them of that there is a good possibility of the strike being won. If we continue with the "wet" issue of the boycott, trust the leaders and their "new realism" then the strike will go down and the effects will be with us for generations to come. I think that it will give the Tories and the employing class the advantage they have been looking for for many years, and they will exploit it to every worker's expense and there will be a massive escalation in the dole queue. I personally believe that if this dispute is lost it'll take a revolutionary situation to go forward again.

Interview by Mick Wood, South London D.A.M/I.W.A.

Headache? Tense, Nervous Headache?

RELIEVE SYMPTONS OF CHRONIC POVERTY, FRUSTRATION, ALIENATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT FAST, WITH...

adopt a scab

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Addenbrookes: BACKSTABBED!

After being out for more than 21 months the striking cleaners at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, have decided to call an end to their dispute. The domestics walked out in protest at the private firm O.C.S being awarded the cleaning tender on Oct 1st 1984, and have been in dispute ever since.

Although primarily the reason for the dispute was the appalling pay and conditions offered by O.C.S, many cleaners were also protesting at the staff cuts the contract would entail; from more than 300 full-timers to 200 workers, many only part-time. They predicted, rightly, that these numbers would never be able to achieve the hygiene standards required. Rather than enter into negotiation, O.C.S sacked the strikers and employed a staff of untrained scabs. The standards of hygiene plummetted and have remained at such a low standard ever since that in May 1985 Cambridge Health Authority decided that O.C.S was "not suitable" to be considered for other contracts. The government's policy of having contracts awarded to the lowest tender means that we, the patients, get the worst possible service, and the staff get the lowest possible pay. O.C.S have used every dirty trick in the book to make a profit at Addenbrookes, even employing 14-year olds to do the cleaning.

The strike was successful in squeezing some concessions from both the Health Authority, who gave a further £96,000 for 40 more cleaners, and O.C.S, who offered marginal improvements in the employment contract. The cleaners rightly stuck it out for more. However in Feb of this year their unions NUPE and COHSE effectively stabbed them in the back by withdrawing support and strike pay. The unions had ordered the strikers to accept a "deal" arranged with O.C.S but the cleaners decided, by ballot, to reject it. Since then they bravely struggled on, supported by donations and collections, but have now decided to call it a day.

In a bitter piece of irony O.C.S recently announced that it had made a £250,000 profit on its cleaning contract at Addenbrookes, while the hospital said that due to financial shortages many beds would have to be closed. Meanwhile the hospital is still filthy - yet another case of profit before people. The government, through its privatisation and anti-union laws, are the attacking the health service workers, picking them off one by one. Many workers were too scared to even hold meetings in support of the strikers, on hospital premises, preferring to keep their heads down in the hope that nothing would happen to them. Only an organised fightback by health service workers and patienes can halt the government's destruction of the health service. Let's build that fightback now.

Wapping Update

The numbers picketing at Wapping, which were in decline up to the ballot on the "final offer" have since stabilised; while the daily picket numbers are from fifty to a hundred, the Wednesday and Saturday night demo's still produce from 2,000 upwards. Police tactics, however, have been to extend control over the area around Wapping with the result that on Wednesday and Saturday nights, in addition to the stationary police and cavalry lines, the area is covered in touring riot vans, rented "Kenning" hire vans and unmarked police cars parked both on the main roads and surrounding side streets with their lights off. During the day the police have taken to exercising their cavalry around the area.

In an attempt to evade the set-piece confrontations encouraged by the police, the pickets spontaneously march around the area on Wednesday and Saturday nights. These mostly entail reaching Commercial Road through which lorries and scabs pass at shift changeover times to form a "gauntlet" to harangue scabs and distribution lorries. At the same time slow moving "blockades" at zebra crossings force the lorries and scab buses to stop or slow down. Slow moving convoys of vehicles have yet to be fully utilised. The police have responded by sealing off even more streets and installing even more "traffic control" camera's covering the zebra crossing and side streets. Police notices have also been erected stating that Metropolitan police permission is required to park anywhere in Wapping or the surrounding area.

As such events become routine manouvers of the Wapping picket it is increasingly apparent that if effective disruption is to be achieved simple activism is, not only insufficient and a tax on the pickets and printers but a divergence from the need to gain and extend political control of the strike. Despondency is turning up for a Saturday night Women's march and picket and hearing Brenda Dean, decked out in evening dress, make a two minute speech and excuse herself as she has "another engagement" that evening. Ultimately, for this strike to succeed Fleet Street and the distributers must be picketed out. Something which will only be realised by inter-union, cross-branch, rank and file strike committees.

Source: East London D.A.M.



Women Resist Eviction

Privatisation of hospital cleaning services has cost many working class women their jobs. For some women, it will also mean the loss of their homes and their community.

As we go to press, women cleaners at St. Mary's hospital in Paddington are facing eviction from the hostel in which they have lived for between 8 and 22 years.

Most of the women are from Spain, Portugal, Morrocco and the Philippines. Many arrived in this country speaking little English and were admitted on the condition that they work in 4-year residential jobs. Working long hours for low wages meant that most of the women had no time, money or education to move elsewhere or get higher paying jobs. Many sent part of their earnings abroad to support their families. They formed a close community which is now threatened with dissolution due to privatisation, despite the fact that half of them are still working at the hospital for the private contractors, Mediclean.

Twenty two of the women have refused to move out of the hostel. Their union GMBATU has occupied the building in support. John Edwards (GMB General Secretary) has written to Norman Fowler demanding that the eviction threat be lifted and that a ministerial guarantee be issued that all ancillary workers with NHS accommodation will not lose their homes if their jobs are privatised.

The hospital now reportedly wants the hostel to houses nurses. The cleaners have not been offered alternative accommodation elsewhere. They were given 6 months to look for housing on their own, in a rather cynical abdication of responsibility by health officials. According to one member of the GMB the health authority could nominate people to the housing commission for accommodation, but this is generally only done for doctors and nurses, not for non-professional staff. The housing situation being what it is (10,000 people on the waiting list in Westminster), it is unlikely that the women will find suitable housing that they can afford. They certainly will not be able to keep their community together. The cost of hostel accommodation was less than half the cost of the lowest B&B in the area. The women's already low wages are being further cut by the privatisation move and they won't be able to afford £45 p.w B&B rates.

These women were recruited by the government into jobs which gave them little chance to pursue any other course and now they are being dumped by the government in an attempt to cut costs. Members of S. London DAM are trying to get in touch with the women to see if any support action can be set up.

Sued for Doing Your Job

On September 17th 1985 the Copyright (Computer Software) Amendment Act came into force. This act provides copyright protection for computer programmes. It could also lead to computer programmers being sued for simply doing their jobs.

The act covers such things as the selling, hiring or distributing of a programme without the copyright owner's consent, and the copying of programmes for such a purpose. These actions are liable to criminal prosecution.

As well as these criminal actions there are two other types of activity which could lead to proceedings being taken in the civil courts. These include many day-to-day jobs which are done by computer programmers. These being reproducing and adapting the programme.

The term "reproduce" includes such activities as storing of a programme in a computer and the copying of a programme on to a disc or tape. Many computer operators use more than one computer and programmes are often moved around. Most, if not all, computer operators have several copies of the programmes and files which they use in case the copy that is in use is damaged. The term "adapt" includes "converting the programme from source code to object code"; this makes it much easier to use the programme and so it is done all the time. If an employee of a company reproduces or adapts a programme without the copyright owner's consent, then both the company and the employee can be sued.

The employee has not gained anything from this infringement. Furthermore s/he may not even be aware of it; the people who are most likely to know the details of a programme's licence are the computer managers and not the programmers. So it would seem manifestly unjust that the individual programmer can be sued in such circumstances. As it stands, her/his position is completely dependent upon the honesty of the employers. If the employers are honest then the employee is not in any great risk from this act, but if they are dishonest then employees could find themselves being sued simply for doing their jobs.



Mayday Around The World

Anarchists and Anarcho-syndicalists the world over took to the streets to commemorate the hundredth Mayday, and remember the Haymarket martyrs for what they were : unrelenting class struggle anarchists. Below, we reproduce three of the reports we have received.

BRAZIL: SAO PAULO

The week leading up to the first of May saw an exhibition of worldwide anarchist papers at the Social Culture Centre, which was a great success and stayed open for thirty days. On Mayday, two hundred demonstrators with anarchist flags, banners, placards and leaflets marched through the city centre, it was the city's first specifically anarchist demonstration in over twenty years. This was followed by a theatre performance and a successful public meeting.

The following day, a meeting about the state of the labour movement and the idea of forming I.W.A nuclei in Brazil was held with a view to re-organising the C.O.B (Brazillian Workers' Confederation) with a specific anarcho-syndicalist tendancy. Delegates from Bahia, Rio De Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande De Sul, Paraiba and Sao Paulo attended and a decision was taken to start I.W.A nuclei through occupational categories. Each nucleus is to have decisional autonomy, will be federated and form the embryo of a future union. The paper "A Vox Operaia" (Workers' Voice) will be circulated, and another meeting is scheduled for May 1987. In the meantime, agitation will be centred on: the six hour working day with no loss of wages; the abolition of union commands (direct translation - Eds.) and free trade unions outside state control. This was followed by a public meeting on things of interest to the anarchist movement - the struggle against compulsory military service and the question of gay rights.

The events recieved good media coverage in the dailies, with headlines like "The return of the anarchists", and even got on the radio and T.V.

ITALY: REGGIO EMILIA

A meeting of anarchists took place on the 3rd of May, on the question of building the revolutionary labour movement for which the Haymarket Martyrs died. The meeting drew together militants from the USI-IWA (Italian Syndicalist Union), the Union of Anarchist and Libertarian Railway Workers, along with members of other libertarian unions as well as militants working within the reformist unions. Issues covered included the problem of uniting the employed and the unemployed, and attempts at working within the framework of the bureaucratic unions. After the conference, a thousand anarchists took to the city's streets to demonstrate their solidarity, and show their anger and concern over the Chernobyl disaster, the Middle East wars and the recent prison death of a comrade, Marco Sanna.

USA: CHICAGO

Over 400 anarchists from the USA and Canada attended the Haymarket Centennial Gathering. On the evening of 1st May they joined the traditionally Marxist Pilsen march through a predominently working class area of Chicago, narrowly missing a major confrontation with the police when they tried to head towards the city centre. The following day there was a specifically anarchist march that took place in, amongst other things, the jail, the city hall, the stock exchange, the I.B.M Building (where money and a US flag were burned and the building temporarily closed down), and the South African Consulate (where a similar scene took place). The marchers then swelled the numbers on the picket line at the "Chicago Tribune" in solidarity with striking workers there. Finally, there were 38 arrests for "disorderly conduct" and "mob action against the state", when chaos was caused and damage was done at a posh shopping precinct. Many people worked all night to secure the release of the imprisoned comrades.

Throughout the weekend there were numerous workshops on topics such as technology, feminism, Spain 1936, building the anarchist movement, the first Mayday, prisoners' support work and much more. And there was still time for socials!

The event ended with a visit to the graves of the Haymarket Martyrs, where songs were sung and the martyrs were remembered. This was marred when a scuffle broke out with a group of liberals and stalinists who objected to a black flag being hung from the monument. It stayed, and the point was made: the martyrs were not reformists, liberals or party builders, but revolutionary fighters and agitators for their class. The graveside vigil ended with the dying words of George Engel and Louis Lingg: "LONG LIVE ANARCHY!"

Sources: Industrial Worker
Fifth Estate
Umanita Nova

MAYDAY IN SOUTH AFRICA

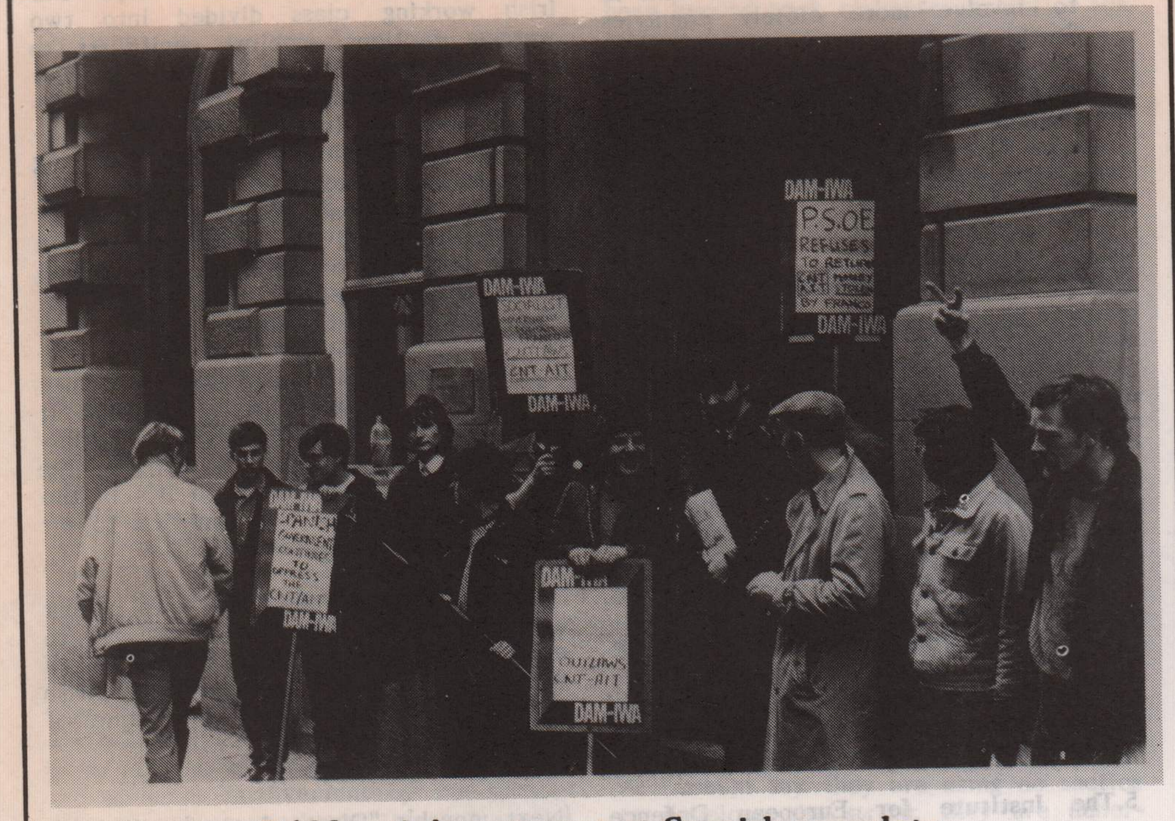
Over 1 million black workers celebrated the 100th anniversary of Mayday in South Africa, by staying away from work and declaring a public holiday. Thousands flocked to rallies in every major centre to demonstrate their solidarity with the working class the world over. Schools throughout South Africa were empty as the students joined with the workers.



Mayday in Chicago

The biggest public meeting occurred at Orlando Stadium and was attended by 30,000 COSATU members. During this rally police fired tear gas at the crowds, prompting union president Elijah Barayi to comment that if this was part of Pik Botha's "reforms" then "reform could go to hell!" The workers were reminded that it was their hands that made South Africa rich, and that only by workers' struggles could liberation be achieved.

Elsewhere, 20,000 COSATU members met at Durban where Buthelezi was slammed for his attempts to split the union movement with the formation of his moderate United Workers' Union of South Africa. In the Transvaal more than 80% of the workforce stayed away; in areas of Natal 60% stayed away and in parts of the Eastern Cape 100% stayed away.



DAM activists protest at Spanish consulate

On June 23rd a judgement was given denying the C.N.T-A.I.T (National Confederation of Labour - International Workers' Association) the use of the initials "C.N.T", and recognising the "Renovada" C.N.T (who left the C.N.T-A.I.T in 1979) as the only organisation legally able to use the initials. This is despite the fact of the "Renovadas" consisting of a minority of the members of the C.N.T in 1979, and that most of those people who were associated with the C.N.T during the Spanish revolution who are still alive today back the C.N.T-A.I.T. On receiving the judgement the C.N.T called for international solidarity - over 100 messages of protest or support were sent to Spain from abroad, and in many countries there were protest actions at Spanish embassies and consulates. In Britain D.A.M members held a protest on August 2nd outside the Spanish consulate in Manchester.

It was obvious at the time that the judge was under political pressure from the Spanish government as well as from the heirarchy of the Catholic church to come down against the C.N.T-A.I.T. The appeal has since been heard and the judgement overturned due to the allegations against the judge of bribery and corruption. This means that everything is now back to square 1 and the Spanish government still has possession of the historical syndicalist patrimony (offices, printing presses, lost union dues) that were either confiscated by Franco or lost due to the C.N.T being an underground organisation while Franco was in power. These rightfully belong to the C.N.T-A.I.T.

Chile: Workers Sold Out....

The self-activity of the Chilean labour movement has been paralysed for a long time. Part of the reason for this has been the way in which each union has been tied to a particular political party, either Socialist, Christian Democratic or MAPU, another "socialist" tendency. And though it was expected that the M.S.U. (United Syndicalist Movement) would avoid this trap, the politicos seem to have won.

The MSU was formed in 1984 in an attempt to wrest political control of the unions from the Social and Christian Democratic Parties in whose hands the unions were deflected from any fightback against the State. A nucleus of union militants and party dissidents met together and published an appeal to all member unions of the existing confederation in Chile, the CNT (no relation!). In their statement the MSU emphasised the need to adopt a revolutionary and rank and file position on the class struggle and demanded that the CNT form a National Committee of Union Federations with autonomous powers of decision making and action, free from party ties. This appeal won wide support from within the ranks of the CNT which, because of the protest sparked off by the MSU, quickly agreed to form a National Committe, without however, the powers asked for. As a result , the MSU decided to go it alone.

During the 19 months between the founding of the MSU and its first conference last November, the political parties tried frantically to muscle in on the act under various slogans that seemed to be in touch with the MSU's thinking.

Meanwhile two commissions had been set up to co-ordinate the conference, one for organisation under J.Thuma, the other for propaganda chaired by Oscar Ortiz, an anarchist. Though 15,000 dollars had been raised for the conference commissions, it soon became clear that control of this money had fallen into the hands of CEDAL, a "socialist" grouping consisting of MAPU, the Socialist Party, etc. CEDAL managed to deny Ortiz the funds he had been allocated and coincidentally (?) was able to fly in large numbers to attend Castro's anti-IMF Rally in Havana just before the November '85 conference. At the same time, the socialists were busy power-bargaining amongst themselves for positions on the MSU Executive Committee which was just about to be elected.

The Socialists' manoeuvering at the conference itself was open from the start in the accreditation of delegates. The two commissions were over-ruled by the CEDAL group who ignored the lists of delegates previously drawn up and substituted their own on the grounds of computer failure.

The conference was also developing well for the Socialists in other ways, particularly for the MAPU who were able to dominate their allies. Nevertheless, a powerful challenge came from a large independent union grouping, particularly the Fishery section, who not only openly criticised MAPU's tactics but also managed to defend non-sectarian and delegate based initiatives at the conference.

A set of organising principles of syndicalist unity was drawn up based on the autonomy, participation and struggles of all sections; a plenary of rank and file MSU-affiliated unions was to be the source of all political direction to which the MSU Executive would have to adhere. This structure would allow real involvement by all the rank and file and be an effective antidote to the party poison already seeping into the MSU leadership. This structure was approved by the delegates present despite the politicos.

Nevertheless, MAPU and the Socialist Party succeeded in capturing most of the National Executive seats. Now, six months after the conference, it is clear that the MSU has become just another play-thing of the left parties, a common experience in Chile over the last forty years. MAPU plans to incorporate MSU within its own political orbit.

Once again events have proved that a revolutionary syndicalist movement will only take off when Chilean workers fully understand the links between the party cards constantly played by the politicos and the corporatism of Church and State. Social and economic oppression will only end with class struggle syndicalism where unity of workers within their own economic organisations replaces the power seeking devisions the left have always spawned.

From "Hombre y Sociedad",
Organ of the Coordinadora de Estudios,
May 1986.

Free Omori Now!

Have you got a bag of sugar in your house? Or perhaps some batteries? Maybe you haven't got a fire extinguisher? Watch out then, because YOU could be arrested for terrorism!

This, along with the testimony of one unreliable witness, is the evidence against Japanese anarchist Katsuhisa Omori, who has been imprisoned for 10 years and is awaiting the death sentence. His crime? Supporting cultural autonomy and the resistance against Japanese imperialism. In fact, a perfect person to frame up for the bombing of a regional government H.Q. A verdict for Omori's appeal is due soon. We believe he is innocent.

On the 11th of August there was an international day of action to mark the 10th anniversary of Omori's imprisonment. Here in Britain, about 60 protesters (including people from D.A.M, the Anarchist Black Cross, A.C.F and London Greenpeace) peacefully picketed the Japanese embassy in Grosvenor Street, London for 2 hours, giving out leaflets and chanting "no State frame-up - free Omori!". Following this a flying visit was paid to the showroom of the state-owned Japanese Airlines, where workers were leafletted and proletarian redecorating to the tune of a few thousand pounds was undertaken! Unfortunately, 4 comrades were later arrested, and held at Saville Row pig shop for several hours for suspicion of criminal damage. They refused to make statements, and were eventually released without charge.

Omori still needs all the support he can get - TIME IS RUNNING OUT. Send letters of protest to the Japanese Embassy, 46 Grosvenor St., London W1; and to the Minister of Justice, Hiroshi Shimasaki, Homo Sho, 1-1 Kasumigaseki,. 1-Chome, Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo 100, Japan.

Donations and support to Omori Support Committee, No. 35 Chitose P.O Box, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo, Japan.



FREE OMORI!- PROTESTERS OUTSIDE THE JAPANESE EMBASSY

Direct Action & Anarcho-Syndicalism

There seems to be a popular misunderstanding both among anarchists and non-anarchists about the ideas of direct action and anarcho-syndicalism.

When the phrase "direct action" was first used during the 1890's it meant no more than the opposite of parliamentary action. In the context of the labour movement it meant industrial action - strikes, boycotts, sabotage - which were regarded as the rehearsals for revolution. The point was that the action was applied not indirectly through representatives but directly by those most closely involved and was intended to succeed, not just to gain publicity.

But then, as now, direct action has been confused with propaganda by deed and with civil disobedience. The technique of direct action was actually developed in the French syndicalist movement in reaction to the more extreme techniques of propaganda by deed - assassinations, bombings. Instead of being sidetracked into dramatic but ineffective gestures, the syndicalists preferred to get on with the work of spreading libertarian revolution - duller but more effective - amongst the working class.

Today many still see direct action solely in terms of "bash the rich" marches, "stop the city", invading bases, etc., etc., but D.A.M sees it in its original meaning. D.A.M attempts to spread the idea of direct action, encouraging people to join together in voluntary associations, based on mutual aid to fight for changes without recourse to "representatives".

This means, in industrial and workplace struggles, the formation of rank and file groups controlled by the workers and run on democratic lines with no links to any political party, defending their hard-won rights and their jobs. In the community, residents and community groups using rent strikes, occupations, etc., to have more of a say in the running of their area. Amongst the unemployed, the setting up of independent unemployed centres and groups where people can get together to campaign against attacks from the state. These are all in the shorter term of course, but people learn through experience that there is no need to depend on others and to take responsibility for their own actions. Struggles could be linked together as people would be involved in more than one group - workplace/community, community/unemployed, and so on - solidarity and mutual aid would be the basis.

This brings us to anarcho-syndicalism and the anarcho-syndicalist union. D.A.M is not and does not see itself as such a union. It is a group of militants whose aim is to promote the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism with the eventual aim of forming a revolutionary, independent union controlled by the members of that union.

An anarcho-syndicalist union would not, as many seem to imagine, be based exclusively in the workplace but would involve people from the three groups already mentioned, workplace, community, and unemployed federated nationally and locally so each would support the others in struggle. The aim of the anarcho-syndicalist union would be to agitate for the social general strike - a general strike where instead of simply withdrawing their labour, the workers would occupy and take over their places of work and produce goods for the community. It would involve everyone working together as the ruling class would not sit back but bring all its forces of coercion to bear to regain power.

We must organise before the state and capitalism can be defeated and we must organise on libertarian lines, otherwise we would be crushed by the state or by a new elitist vanguard minority.

Ireland (contd.)

is under pressure to give up it's neutrality. Such a move has support among the ruling class in Ireland.

Willi Brandt once stated that Ireland should make a "full defence and military committment" to the E.E.C, while the West German government has urged Ireland to give up its neutrality. This pressure was backed up by a crude attempt to accustom Irish people to the sight of N.A.T.O forces in Irish territory when 5 West German submarines visited Cork Harbour last year. There is much opposition in Ireland to the ending of neutrality but a subtle propaganda campaign has already started and a number of shady, N.A.T.O backed organisations have recently been turning their attention towards Ireland:-

1.The Council of Europe:-

Founded after World War 2 to reduce the possibility of war - its statutes state that "matters relating to national defence do not fall within the scope of the council of Europe". Although there are 21 member countries, it is now dominated by those which are also in the E.E.C and N.A.T.O, so ideals of peace are conveniently forgotten while N.A.T.O policy is promoted instead. The Irish section of this organisation has recently been set up again to promote the abandonment of neutrality.

2.The West European Union:-

A military alliance of West European states and a N.A.T.O off-shoot with close E.E.C links. It "will rely on the appropriate military authorities of N.A.T.O for information and advice on military matters". A report by an E.E.C commission, headed (as it happens) by a former minister of foreign affairs in the present Irish government, Senator Dooge, proposed that there should be "a committment by member states (including Ireland) to a common weapons planning and procurement policy". It also suggested close ties with N.A.T.O and the West European Union. Thus the E.E.C and "neutral" Ireland are to be subservient to N.A.T.O in military matters.

3.The American Trilateral Commission:-

Founded by David Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger - one of its aims is to involve more closely countries "such as Ireland and Japan" with N.A.T.O. Its membership includes several prominant public figures in Ireland - among them are members of both Fine Gael and the Labour Party, who together form the current Irish government.

4.The National Democratic Institute:-

Established by the Reagan administration in 1983 to help further American foreign policy by giving C.I.A-type aid to certain groups and organisations. Through its subsidiary, the National Endowment for Democracy (with people like Walter Mondale and Henry Kissinger on its board). $30,000 was channelled to the S.D.L.P in Northern Ireland a few months ago. So N.A.T.O has obvious strategic interests in Ireland, and the S.D.L.P (Catholic middle class party) are their stooges, being used by American intelligence to try to influence events in Northern Ireland.

5.The Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies:-

Another organisation backed up by the U.S government and N.A.T.O. In a report it described Irish neutrality as "essentially a national symbol" and that if war broke out in Europe neutrality would be unlikely to be maintained. It also tries to dismiss Irish neutrality as due to "anti-Britishness" within Irish ruling circles.

It is clear that the Irish government, under the influence of Britain and America, are moving towards membership of N.A.T.O. The advantages to N.A.T.O are obvious - there are many deep-water harbours along the Irish coast where N.A.T.O bases could be sited, not to mention the possibilities for nuclear missile sites, U.S airforce bases and radar installations. Also, Ireland occupies a strategic position on the Atlantic approaches to Europe. In short Ireland would become a second unsinkable aircraft carrier.

ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

The agreement must be seen as part of the wider N.A.T.O designs to gain Irish membership. Therefore it must be remembered that the other side of the coin to Irish involvement in the affairs of the 6 counties through the Anglo-Irish Council, is the involvement of British civil servants - and therefore N.A.T.O - in the affairs of Southern Ireland.

The American role in the deal can be clearly seen. Part of the agreement was American aid "promised" to run into billions of dollars to both north and south of the border, while an extradition treaty has already been approved. And with this might come a clampdown on NORAID by the American authorities - even Bob Geldof has been getting in on the act, appealing to Irish Americans not to give money to NORAID and the I.R.A.

Although Sinn Fein's electoral progress was halted in January's by-elections the main consequence of the deal has been increased sectarian tension. Just as British interference has caused the mess that ordinary Irish people find themselves in today, you can be sure that N.A.T.O's meddling does not have the best interests of the Irish working class at heart and won't improve anything except for those who play political games with people's lives.

British interference has kept the Irish working class divided into two warring factions enabling capitalists to make enormous profits. Wages were low and conditions primitive due to sectarian competition for jobs and the inability of a religiously divided working class to unite and fight the bosses. Now with the Yanks set to invest billions of dollars in Ireland these same tried and tested methods of dividing the working class will be used to make profits for American multinationals.

The Anglo-Irish agreement is not designed to bring peace to Ireland. It is merely a tool of American imperialism. While sectarianism exists the working class won't unite so it's in the interests of Britain and America to pit Catholic against Protestant.

As anarcho-syndicalists we must oppose both the attempts of N.A.T.O to militarise Ireland and the attempts of foreign capitalists to keep the Irish working class divided in the name of profit.

R.O'C.

(Next month's "Direct Action" will focus on the national question in Ireland, how it affects the class struggle, and how anarcho-syndicalists in Britain and Ireland relate to these issues.)



ANARCHY AT THE OLD VIC

The August 7-14th issue of City Limits magazine ran a feature story on London's East End in which the soap opera "East Enders" was highlighted. An interview with Tom Watt (Lofty) produced the interesting disclosure that he is an "anarcho-syndicalist". We were curious about this, as it is not unusual for people who are vaguely liberal to call themselves "anarchists", but "anarcho-syndicalist" is pretty specific and not generally a household word. Has he contacted some branch of the DAM? Will there be an anarcho-syndicalist union at the Old Vic? Is that really a black and red flag behind Tom? We're still puzzled.

APOLOGY

We would like to apologise to readers of "Direct Action" for the gap in production and especially to those who read the bogus edition of D.A 32 that was put out in July and which DAM groups refused to sell. This was produced by the previous editorial group, now known as Hull Syndicalists, who had taken the decision to leave the Direct Action Movement before producing it as a final snub. It was done as a deliberate act of sabotage to try to cause trouble between the DAM and other IWA sections. As well as this they showed a lack of solidarity with comrades abroad and stole an electric typewriter that belonged to the DAM. It is not our normal policy to attack other anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist groups and organisations in public (even if their political beliefs are questionable) but on this occasion there is a need to warn others of the actions of Hull Syndicalists.

This is the first copy of D.A to be produced by Manchester DAM - note our new address:-

Box D.A,
c/o Raven Press,
75, Piccadilly,
Manchester.

Send letters, articles, donations, etc. to this address.

Plastic Bullets Video Tour

As we go to press a DAM organised Plastic Bullets video tour is underway. The video is very informative and well worth seeing and will be accompanied by a short talk to lead off a discussion. The remaining dates are:

8th September - Bristol - St Werburgh Community Centre, Horely Rd, Bristol 2 - 8.00pm

10th September - Liverpool 8 Law Centre, Princess Avenue Toxteth, Liverpool - 7.30pm.

11th September - Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St, Bolton - 7.30pm.

12th September - Burnley - AUE Rooms, Hargreave St., Burnley - 7.30pm.

13th September - Manchester - Millstone pub, Thomas St., off Tib St, Central M/CR - 7.30pm.

15th September - Leeds Trades Club, Saville Mount, off Chapeltown Rd., Leeds 7, - 7.30pm.

19th September - Nottingham - International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd., Nottingham - 7.30pm.

20th September - York - Priory St. Community Centre, Priory Street, York - 7.30pm.

21st September - Newcastle - contact Newcastle DAM, c/o Days of Hope Bookshop, 62, Thornton St., Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

22nd September - Doncaster - contact Doncaster DAM, P.O Box 96, Doncaster, South Yorkshire.

Printed at Aldgate Press, 84b, Whitechapel High Street, London.

PUBLIC MEETING

Rank & Files, the Unions, and the Police

18th September - Streatham Library - 7.30pm.

Speakers from:

SOGAT London Machine Branch (sacked News International worker); Campaign Against Police Repression; Rank & File Miner; Rank & File Building Worker; East London DAM.

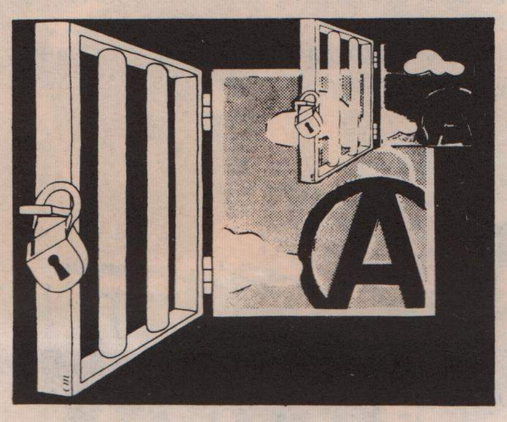
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South London DAM	.....	£100
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Manchester DAM	.....	£65
P. (Manchester)	.....	£10
I.S. (Selby)	.....	£10

Review:

"The Free" by M. Gilliland, £1.80 post-free, Hooligan Press, BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX.

This inspiring and exciting novel is about revolution and counter-revolution in a united "independent" Ireland in the near future. Unusually for modern fiction the revolution is **anarchist** - the foremost organisations being the syndical industrial unions (the "Free Unions") and federated community groups (the "Co-ops"). Events are described mainly from the point of view of Co-op members (which is a pity), but the revolution is precipitated by the Free Unions after a period of growth from rank and file groups within the old, decaying bureaucratic trade unions.



Ordinary people, workers, poor and unemployed will be able to identify with characters in the story, and their development in their groups hints at how meaningful anarcho-syndicalist organisation can be. Not in the distant future, or by developing trendy-left middle class sensibilities, but as we are, **now** (well, soon).

Unfortunately the author gets very carried away in describing the fighting during and after the revolution at the expense of developing the characters and exploring the structure and relations of the revolutionary society. If this can be forgiven the book makes very good, almost compulsive reading. It's not great literature, but why would it need to be when it's so effective?

TAMESIDE DAM

Future Meetings on Unemployed Month

6th September - Butchers Arms, Stockport Road, Mossley - 1p.m.
20th September - AUEW Rooms, Margaret Street South, Ashton-under-Lyne - 1 p.m.
27th September - Tame Valley, Park Road, Dukinfield - 1p.m.
4th October - Church Inn, Huddersfield Road., Millbrook, Stalybridge - 1 p.m.

DAM PAMPHLET SALE

13th September - Highland Laddie, Old Street, Ashton-under-Lyne - 1 p.m.

LAUNCH OF THE NORTHERN ANARCHIST NETWORK (NAN)

SATURDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER

Assemble at the art gallery in Leeds city centre at 12pm with flags, banners, etc. for a march through the city to Leeds Trades Club at Saville Mount (off Chapeltown Rd.). where the launch will take place.

BENEFIT

20th September - Benefit for the Silentnight strikers - Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St., Bolton.
Organised by Bolton DAM/Bolton Socialist Club.

——Claimants...(contd.)——

ments for maternity needs will be abolished.

FAMILY CREDIT

This will replace Family Income Supplement (means tested cash benefits for low-paid workers with children) in April 1988 and will be payable when the bread-winner works at least 24 hours p.w, at a rate intended to ensure the family of a low-paid worker is slightly better off than they would be on I.S. Although it will generally be slightly more than F.I.S, taking into account the loss of free school meals, free milk for the under-5's and housing benefit cuts, many low income families will be worse off.

HOUSING BENEFIT

All householders at I.S level (whether or not they receive it) will get housing benefit, but all, even the poorest, will have to pay 20% of the rates themselves. And for each additional £1 of income above I.S level, there will be a withdrawal of 60p rent rebate and 20p rate rebate. Family credit will count as additional income and therefore families receiving it will lose out.

WIDOWS

The qualifying age for a full widow's pension will be up from 50 to 55, and for a partial pension from 40 to 45. Therefore any married woman whose husband dies when she is 40-55 years old will lose out. The loss will affect existing widows whose youngest child is expected to leave school after 1988. Childless widows under 45 are worst hit.

MATERNITY GRANTS

There will be a statutory maternity pay-scheme to replace existing schemes that will come into force in April '87. To qualify, a woman must have worked for the same employer for 6 months. However, if she has worked there for less than 2 years she will only get £31.60 p.w, although after 2 years this will rise to 90% of her earnings. The pay lasts for 18 weeks.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES

From Autumn '86 disablement benefit will no longer be paid for injuries assessed at less than 14% - e.g the loss of a middle finger which at present gets £2,730.

VOLUNTARY UNEMPLOYMENT

Those who leave work "without good reason" will get no unemployment benefit for 6-13 weeks, and if they then claim supplementary benefit it will be cut by 40% of a single person's rate for the same period.

The new social security reforms hold very little for the working class except more hardship and more sacrifices. Between 1979 and 1985 the number of single payments to claimants went up from 366 to 866 per thousand. The government see this as an example of "abuse of the system". In reality it is obviously a case of more people becoming aware of their right to claim. And the government's answer? Take those rights away! The state is prepared to give us **even less** to make ends meet than the meagre amount we receive at present. And what is the consequence of lower benefits? It means the bosses can cut wages, knowing that people will take jobs that pay a pittance as an alternative to the less-than-a-pittance they will receive from the state. Coupled with the erosion of union rights, it looks like they'll be able to get away with it. We must build links **NOW** between the community and the workplace, between the employed and the unemployed, to resist the growing attacks on our basic human rights by the bosses and their state.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

5. We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the workplace and community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers' organisations must be controlled by 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 worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all States do not exist to protect the workers of those States, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.

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

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

I would like more information about the Direct Action Movement - International Workers Association. Please send me information.
I enclose a S.A.E.
Name .....
Address .....
.....
Send to DAM/IWA, c/o 223, Greenwood Rd, Benchill, Manchester, M22 7HB.

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Direct Action

MARCH TO COMMEMEMORATE THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF

THE BATTLE OF CABLE STREET

SATURDAY 4th OCTOBER
ASSEMBLE AT 12 NOON ALDGATE EAST TUBE, LONDON
FASCISM DEFEATED THEN, FIGHT IT TODAY!

South Africa: Fighting for a Real Change

Only two years ago Thatcher received South African premier P.W. Botha at 10 Downing Street. Now even she claims to want to see apartheid dismantled, surely a sign that western capitalism and the multinational companies that profit from the racism of the "white tribe" no longer have any confidence in the regime. This lack of confidence is not primarily because of the increased levels of the street violence or the guerilla bombings of the Spear of the Nation (the ANC's military wing). After all South Africa isn't a Rhodesia to be won by military force, it is a powerful nuclear-armed state.

A major reason why capitalists have lost confidence in apartheid is that white minority rule can no longer guarantee stability in the industries and communities vital to their profits. This "lack of stability" has come about by South African workers rising up and organising in their workplaces and communities, so much so that before the state of emergency many Black communities became no-go areas where the state and police had no say, no control and no presence. This is not to say that these areas slipped into chaos, the residents through street committees and organisations have on the whole organised a level of social and commercial services which provide for the community better than the repressive government was ever willing to.

CRISIS.

In the workplace the South African working class have pushed the ruling class towards the crisis it is now in by the uncompromising use of their industrial muscle. Before its banning in the early '60's the most influential union organisation amongst the majority community was SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions. This was the industrial wing of the ANC and was inexorably linked to that organisation's political ambitions. The bannings led to the collapse of the union movement in South Africa but much blame was laid at the feet of SACTU for drawing the best union activists away from the industrial struggle and placing them in the Spear of the Nation as "professional revolutionaries". SACTU has virtually no influence in South Africa and most members are in exile. Due to the banning and probably the experience of SACTU also, the South African labour organisations have grown up independent of all control and influence of political parties, and have been the stronger for that.

Throughout the 70's and 80's unions such as SAAWU (South African Allied Workers Union) and the South African NUM have pushed the multinationals and capitalists winning important concessions. Much of this is due to their uncompromising attitudes and their insistence on making links between day to day fights, like pay and conditions, and the overriding problems of racism, capitalism and state repression.

In November 1985 COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) was launched as a broad federation of many of the independent trade unions. It stresses all the militancy of its constituent parts. COSATU also stresses federalism, the forming of one union per industry and the forging of links between workplace and community. To quote Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of COSATU:

> "COSATU is forging close ties with democratic community-based organisations. In particular we have high regard for those communities which are building strong grassroots structures in the form of street committees. We see this as a major step forward and an important principle that is integral to working class organisation on the factory floor."

COSATU also recognises the nature of capitalism and the apartheid state. It therefore rejects all reformist and compromising "solutions" offered by the regime, especially the homelands which they see as divisive and racist.

It is obvious that capitalism does not find the formation of this massive militant union very comforting. They have been attempting to quash COSATU by sponsoring other unions in order to split the South African labour movement. Many of these attempts have centred around Chief Buthelezi, head of the "independent" homeland of KwaZulu. This stooge, through his Inkatha organisation, has set up the rival union, the UWUSA. Rumours of CIA funding of this union are reinforced by the visit of Simon Canco, a major power behind the throne of USWUSA, to Washington where he met two notorious CIA frontmen. It would suit the interests of these people if the too blatant capitalism of white minority rule could be replaced by moderate black rule.



Industrial militancy - the key to liberation.

SANCTIONS

The major question in this country, however, is how can the working class here aid the working class of South Africa? Much discussion centres on the call for government sanctions, as Anarchists we believe that calling on governments to act for us is pointless. Governments always act in the interests of the ruling class therefore any such sanctions would be almost useless and full of loop holes. The working class of South Africa however recognise this also but they still call for them. They know that at the very least the call will produce massive amounts of publicity for their cause and thus prevent it becoming "yesterday's news".

Truly effective sanctions in this country would have a major effect on the South African economy, and thus the apartheid regime. In the year ending May '86 the UK imported £917M worth of goods from South Africa, and exported £873M worth. These sanctions won't, however, be imposed by any British government, as capitalists wouldn't let them: they can only be achieved by mass working class action. By refusing to handle goods coming from or going to South Africa and by organising boycotts, shop pickets and sabotage a change will be aided in coming to South Africa; but as Jay Naidoo said:

> "We do not want superficial changes- black faces replacing white - where the repressive machinery of the state and capital remains intact, used in the service of different masters"

At the time of writing, Jay Naidoo is in state detention in South Africa.

Claimants Cut To Ribbons

This is a brief outline of the changes in the Social Security laws that have just been introduced by the Tories. True to form, it is once again those who can least afford it who will have to bear the brunt of the cuts.

INCOME SUPPORT

This will replace supplementary benefit in April 1988, and is intended to top up income to a level determined by the state as sufficient to live on. Although the numbers who will be able to claim it are roughly equivalent to those who can claim supplementary benefit (pensioners, single parents, unemployed, the sick, the disabled, carers etc) it will be even less generous than the current benefit, with those most likely to lose out being young, single householders and those who get weekly additions to their benefit for special needs (eg extra laundry). Changes include:

-An end to the higher benefit rate (the extra £8.10 for a single person or £12.25 for a couple) for the over 60's and those who've been claiming for more than a year.
- An end to special needs additions, including heating allowances (currently £2.20 - £8.80 p.w), laundry allowance, special diet allowance etc.
- Householders will have their benefits cut to the level received by those who are living with friends or relatives. They will also have to pay about 20% of their rates (currently paid for) out of their income supplement
- For the elderly, long term sick, disabled and those with children, these losses will partly be compensated with "premiums". However, the premiums will NOT be made available to the unemployed and short term sick.
-Single householders under 28 will get about £7 p.w LESS than older claimants - approximately what those living at home get.
-Single payments for furniture, bedding, household repairs, fuel costs and so on will CEASE, to be replaced by discretionary grants or loans from the "social fund", on a much smaller scale.
-Whilst those on supplementary benefit at the time of the change to income support will not get their benefit cut, they will NOT get their normal support rate. If their payments are interrupted even for a short time they are likely to lose even this limited protection.

THE SOCIAL FUND

Loans from this fund, for needs which are regarded as covered by income support, will be discretionary, and applications will be judged by a social fund officer based at the local DHSS office. In the event of an application being refused, it can be reviewed by another social fund officer, and in some cases a social fund inspector, but there will be NO review by an independent tribunal. Loans will also be made to those in dire financial straits, replacing the current "urgent needs payments" (which are not repayable). Loans are to be recovered by **deductions** from the already miserable I.S payments or other benefits, and are mainly to be for things that claimants can now get single payments for and don't have to repay. There will also be a cash limit on the number of payments that can be made by each office.

Automatic maternity grants (£25) will be abolished and replaced by a grant of £75 from the social fund for those on I.S. or family credit. Despite this apparent increase, mothers on I.S. will be WORSE OFF, as the present single pay-

(CONTD. PAGE 7)

SILENTNIGHT UPDATE

On Wednesday 27th of August the Silentnight Strikers received a major blow from their own union! FTAT have decided to withdraw their strike pay. The excuse for this trecherous act is that payment of strike pay interferes with strikers' claims for social security benefits despite the fact that a number of strikers are not claiming. The support of FTAT Head Quarters has been luke warm in the past and strikers have fought to prevent sellouts in the past but now the bureaucrats seem to have got their way. The strike will be continuing, to quote a striker: "Money will be tight and a few will fall by the way, but there's a hard core of us who will stick it out."