

Wildcat

Nº9



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**NEITHER BOTHA
NOR MANDELA**



**ALL POWER
TO THE BLACK
WORKING CLASS**

2 USA

PREPARES FOR WAR

Terrorism is a red herring. Thatcher virtually admitted as much when she went on US TV to counter the anti-terrorist hysteria which she and Rambo Reagan had stirred up. The drop in US tourism has seriously damaged European economies.

Since the 'anti-terrorist' scare which justified the bombing of Libya on 15 April, US imperialism's propaganda war has continued apace. This has the aim of testing 3 important considerations:

- the support of America's allies
- the reaction of the working class
- the resistance of Russia.

Reagan has tested the waters, and found them warm.

Contrary to Reagan's lies, the Russian government has been desperately suing for peace for some time now. Russia is an imperialist country, but you'd hardly notice. It made no attempt to defend Libya, is trying to get out of Afghanistan, has dismantled missiles and slowed down Backfire bomber production, and has a unilateral test ban - which the USA simply takes advantage of to improve its own nukes whilst Russia's stagnates. Lacking the ability to expand, Russia is reduced to making political capital out of Reagan's antics.



This can't go on. Russia has now threatened to pull out of the next summit, and rearm its nuclear capacity. There is a serious danger that US provocation will force the Soviet Union into action to defend its few remaining allies.

The only area where the balance of power is reversed is space. This is a good thing because US war plans depend on colonising the cosmos. The setbacks in the US and European space programs have given us a few years' reprieve. If you are reading this paper, it is true that the threat of an immediate escalation towards world war has subsided. The US decided against bombing Syria; perhaps because Israel wants peace, perhaps because Assad is moving towards the USA.

The Allies - A Yen for Competition

After initial hesitations following the bombing of Libya, the Western powers supported America's escalation of the war drive.

In the long term, if there is one,

the USA will be less able to control its allies. The economic crisis tends to force capitalist powers to fight each other for shrinking markets. There are serious pressures for US autarchy; dozens of pro-trade war bills are queuing up in Congress. Neither bribing countries by means of loans nor forcing them into line by selling their currencies is feasible as US policy now, as it was in the sixties.

But there are three tendencies holding the Western bloc together at present. The first is the military occupation of West Germany and Japan by the USA. It is difficult to see how these two powerful economies could break from the USA.

Secondly, the crisis is not yet deep enough for France, Britain and Italy to consider going it alone. Allied faint-heartedness about Reagan's nuclear express has led none of them to consider getting off. The current British government is totally behind Reagan, despite the fact that in a nuclear war, Russia would blast USS Britain to bits. This is why it is conceivable that at some time in the future, the British ruling class might adopt the policy of the National Front and the Labour left, and pursue an independent imperialist policy. Thatcher's growing unpopularity is due in part to her failure to defend Britain's independent interests.

Thirdly, Russia has little to offer other countries except radioactive fallout. Its economic weakness leads countries to consider defecting to the US bloc. This is the weakest of the three tendencies, since the alternative posed by Iran - independence from both Eastern and Western blocs - is becoming increasingly attractive to countries from Greece to Peru.

Most allies joined the propaganda war against the Libyan bogeyman, expelling diplomats and clamping down on the so-called threat of so-called terrorism. One aim of the anti-terrorist scare is to prepare measures for the repression which will be needed against the working class before and during war. Whilst France refused the USA air space, it took full advantage of the situation to step up police raids and random checks, and the Belgian state rounded up communists on the false allegation that they were connected with terrorists. Only Greece among EEC nations stood out against the whole spectacle. Pro-government unions organised a one-hour protest strike. This hardly amounts to resistance by European workers to the US war drive.

How NOT TO Oppose the War Drive

The major escalation of the war drive demands working class resistance. A war between Russia and America would probably wipe out the working class of Europe, and possibly life on earth.

Thatcher's attempt to rally the working class behind US imperialism has failed. Most British working class people reject the US war drive.

But this is quite compatible with an independent British imperialism for workers to die for. In the book 'Mad Dogs' the CND argues that Britain and Europe should be independent of America. This amounts to supporting the ruling classes of the countries which started world wars one and two.

The Socialist Workers' Party called for Britain out of NATO. This is not a revolutionary slogan. It simply argues for a more independent capitalist Britain. Their response to the Libya issue reinforced patriotism amongst workers. Identification with 'our' nation is the most important idea which leads workers to die in imperialist wars.

Stopping the War

When workers accept the bosses' arguments about the need to moderate their demands to help 'their' country become competitive, they hasten the war preparations. Any intensification of the class struggle can help hold them back. The privations caused by the 1905 Russo-Japanese war produced the first political mass strike by workers. Workers must realise that it's not enough to strike against wage cuts, it's necessary to take up political demands. They should strike against any US military action, and against 'their' governments' support for it. US workers should sabotage the war machine, as they did during the Vietnam war.

The only force which can finally stop the war preparations is the same thing that helped bring an end to world war one - proletarian revolution. It's up to us to prepare for our final solution by striking against every move made by our rulers on the imperialist chessboard on which we are supposed to be the pawns. It's a lead breakfast for them, or a plutonium supper for us.

public meeting:

WAR or REVOLUTION?

Tues 8 July 1986,
7.30 pm, 'The Millstone',
Thomas St, Central Manchester.

If you'd like this meeting given in your local area, contact the Manchester Wildcat address.

In the dark about Silentnight

The strike at Silentnight Beds in Sutton, Yorks and Barnoldswick, Lancs, is one year old on June 11th. The strike was caused by management's refusal to honour the '85 pay deal. In addition to this the bosses announced 52 redundancies, after an earlier promise of none. 500 workers were sacked for refusing to go back to work and call off the strike. They were promptly replaced by "slave labour" scabs on YTS.

Since the beginning of the strike, lorries have repeatedly been stoned and burned, on one occasion outside a scab drivers house. In the first four months of the strike £3,000 worth of damage was caused by strikers to the Sutton factory, using bricks and petrol bombs. Scab busses have been attacked so many times that they have to be escorted by the filth! Scabs themselves have not escaped punishment as those who were stoned by strikers outside Keighley Town Hall, while waiting for the bus, can testify.

Attacks on property, such as busses and lorries etc, are becoming a regular feature of the class struggle. They are often carried out by the most militant strikers and represent positive steps forward in the struggle. Aside from the damage done to the bosses' property, these kind of actions represent a slight break with trade-unionism, and the traditions that go with them. This kind of break is necessary in the case of Silentnight if the strikers are going to gain anything apart from memories.

There is little doubt that the strikers have seen the need for working class solidarity, particularly from other workers on strike. Whilst they have achieved the blacking of goods bound for the Silentnight factories by dockers, their attempts at links with the printers have resulted in little more than inter-union solidarity, ie token recognition for the struggle etc.

The union, FTAT, supports the strike but gives the strikers no ideas for how

to win, except perhaps by holding out until the return of the next Labour government! The local Labour Party has been actively involved in the strike and has won the confidence of the strikers by refusing to condemn the class violence that has been displayed. But this is only tolerated by the national leadership, which as we all know is set on winning votes by being as 'moderate' as possible, because so few people know what's actually going on at Silentnight. At a national level the Labour Party does its best to spread the lie the Silentnight is a "non-violent dispute", as we found out when we spoke to a local Party hack in Stoke. If the violence by the strikers at Silentnight became national news, the Labour Party and the Union would drop them like a hot potato.

(For information and donations contact: Silentnight Womens Support Group, c/o Mrs Pat McCormack, Northstead, North Road, Sutton in Craven, W. Yorks BD20 7PG.)

'Readers Meeting'

LONDON, 30th/31st August

We'd like to meet with some of the people who correspond with us and help distribute Wildcat, to find out what you think of our views and the paper, and discuss the possibilities for common activity. This meeting is open to anyone basically sympathetic with our politics. Write for details and with suggestions for the Agenda to Wildcat at the London address.

RIOTS NOT ROYALS

The last time the Labour Party was in power, its policies caused high inflation, rising unemployment, and failed to defeat the class struggle. Thatcher was brought in in 1979 on an aggressive capitalist platform with 3 aims: defeating the working class, reducing inflation, and ending the crisis in Britain by making the economy more competitive.

The first has only been achieved in a limited sense: the industrial class struggle has been largely defeated for the moment, but at the expense of post-war consensus: we are once again 2 nations. Unemployment and poverty have laid the foundations for future working class battles more bitter than any in post-war history. Inflation is down to 2.8%, but this is solely due to the collapse of raw materials prices, in turn a result of the world crisis in manufacturing. As for pulling out of the crisis, British industry is declining faster than most Western capitals, and the ruling class has abandoned Thatcherism. 'There Is No Alternative' was Thatcher's slogan, and in a sense she was right. Now the hard-line Tory approach has failed as miserably as Labour's. The ruling class has run out of solutions to the crisis.

The ruling class has run out of solutions to the crisis.

In 1981, the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer prepared for their wedding. In the housing estates of England's cities, the other end of the social scale started their own celebrations. Into the royal spectacle of national unity Toxteth burst like a thunderbolt. The police were driven out of Liverpool 8 under a hail of petrol bombs, establishments frequented by the rich were destroyed, and food from supermarkets was freely distributed. This was followed by a month of riots throughout England. Repression followed. On the night of the royal wedding a disabled teenager was killed in Liverpool by a police landrover.

As the economy lurches from crisis to crisis, as layoffs and cuts throw more and more workers into Toxteth conditions, the conditions for a re-run of the glorious summer of '81, but more bitter, more conscious and much more widespread than before, are maturing. It will take more than a royal wedding to tranquilise the steadily increasing class anger of the growing ranks of the poor.

We've done it!

Another issue of Wildcat is out, but we're still as desperately short of money as ever. Rush donations to any (or all) of the Wildcat addresses. Offers of cheap printing especially welcome! Thanks to everyone who has sent us donations since the last issue.

Where to find us

Wildcat has members in London, Manchester, Stoke, Leeds and Nottingham.

p&p Wildcat, July '86



'TYRED' OF THE ROYAL WEDDING?

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OTHER CONTACTS: P.O. Box 294, NEWCASTLE, STAFFS, ST5 1SS PM WILD, LOND, WC1N 3XX



Dear Wildcat

THE LETTERS PAGE

Dear Wildcat,

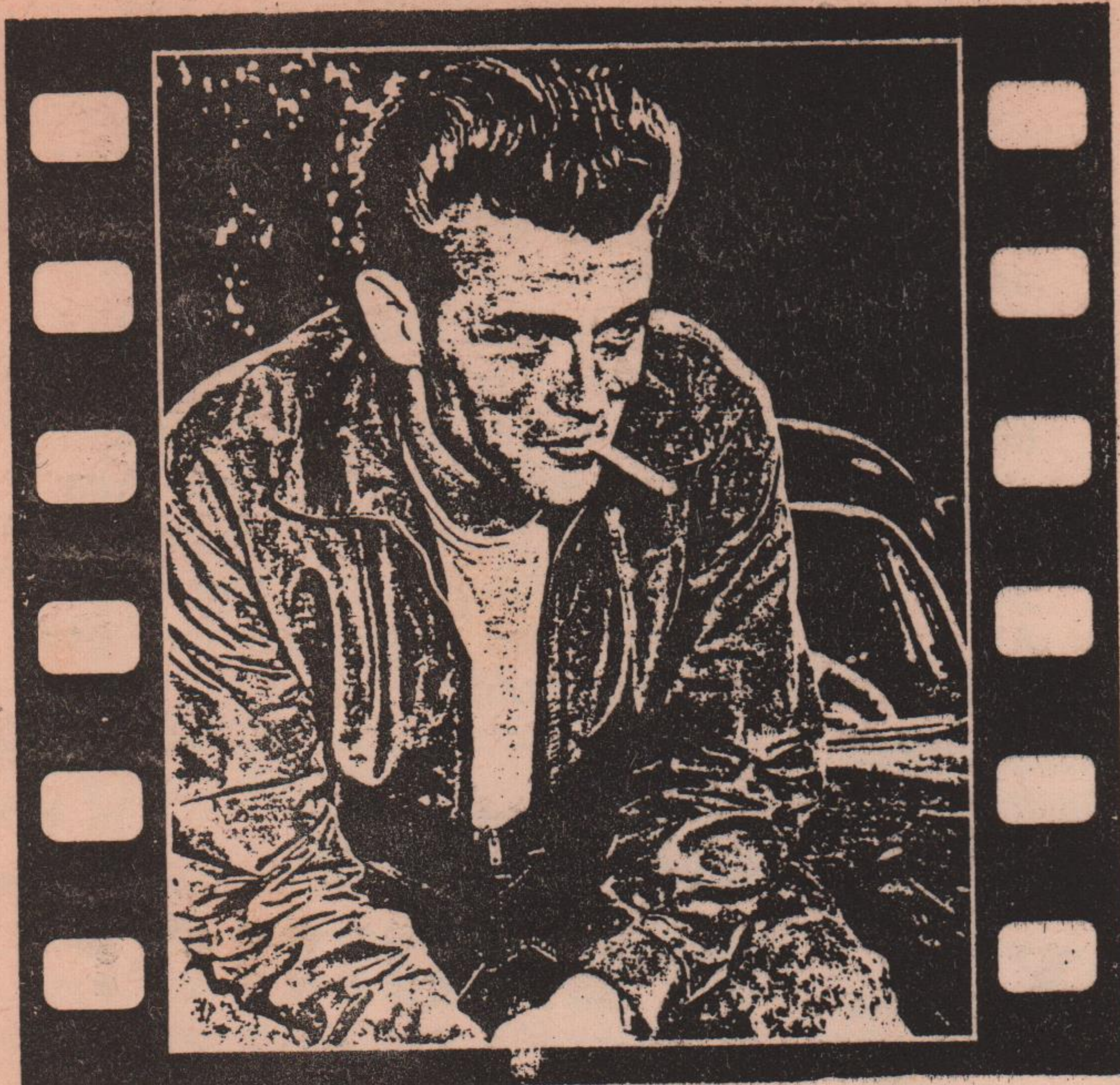
...My Criticism springs from something you spell out in the piece on the print workers, though I felt it was implied by some of the other stuff - that being ground down and having "nothing to lose" leads people to be potential revolutionaries. For a start I think this implies a kind of James Dean image of the revolutionary - "I'm gonna smash the State! Hell, why not? I got nothing to lose!". At best this is unrealistic - an awful lot of house-and-two-kids types are involved in the average revolt - at worst it implies glorifying acts of despair & hopelessness as if they were acts of rebellion (as in the whole anarchist-as-bomber tradition). My main criticism though is that this is not how things happen - people don't "lose everything" and then start a riot/occupy their workplace/start reading Wildcat(!) People are threatened with losing something and organise in their own defence - to prevent themselves winding up with "nothing to lose". Some defences fail, some are sold out, some are co-opted into reformism... but some work, and then (as in Broadwater Farm, but also in the pusherless Divis Flats, in Gdansk in 1980, in the Sorbonne (of all places) in 1968) you've got the start of something big - people working together for themselves and (implicitly) recognising no authority but their own (tho' this part's the most difficult/vulnerable to sellout, obviously). Pace Class War, defensive organisation is the key - lets face it, its easier to get worked up about what you might lose than about what you've never had - and until people start thinking, not that they've got nothing to lose, but that they've got something to defend, being ground down will just have the same effects it always has done - people moonlighting, people thieving, people getting apathetic, cynical and hopeless, people voting Tory.

Tell me I'm wrong, tell me I'm a pseudo anarchistic wet liberal scumbag, by all means - but do it in detail!

Yours ever,

James Anderton (no really!)

WILDCAT REPLY



Dear Chief,

Its a fair cop. We have left ourselves open to being seen as the James Deans of the Revolutionary movement, and not just because of our good looks and 'cool' image. We agree that the 'Nothing to lose' formula is too simplistic and mechanical, but the 'something to defend' formula isn't much better. The problem with any formula about what makes people revolutionary is that it ignores what is in reality a complex process.

A struggle can start off either to regain something lost (Wapping, Silentnight), to protect something under attack (eg the Miners Strike) or to gain something new (eg South Africa). The distinction between these different types of struggles tends to blur.

But whatever the starting point, the important thing is the potential within the struggle - and what it becomes. Revolutionary consciousness is something which evolves out of the sense of community and collective power which emerges in such struggles and an awareness of the new world we can build in the ruins of the old.

Both the letters on this page have been edited. We reply to all the letters we get, and would like to publish more of them in Wildcat. Unfortunately most of them are either one-liners along the lines on "Wildcat is great/awful", or too long for publication in the limited space that we have. We're sorry that the replies to the letters here can't be as detailed as we would like for the same reason. As soon as we can we want to start publication of a discussion bulletin, but we're hampered by lack of resources, ie people, money and time. Any offers?

Comrades,

Many thanks for the belated reply to my enquiries about your views on Ireland. Firstly these are my own views and do not represent strictly the views of the movement. I won't disagree about the republican movement being nationalist but I must clear up a few facts. The republican movement does not want to set up a new Ireland run by "new bosses" who would be "nicer" because they are catholic. The Irish neo-colonial Free State is every bit as repressive and reactionary as the Brits. Republicans suffer just as much in the Free State - remember the Glenholmes affair. The republican movement would replace bosses North and South with: "...the means of production, distribution and exchange controlled by the people ... large ranches and estates will be taken over and leased to groups of families on co-operative lines ... No person should have the means economically to exploit his fellow man." (Extracts from a Sinn Fein Policy Document)

I could go on but I think its obvious that the people would be in control, in short your "new bosses" analysis is bluntly totally wrong.

I agree that the Free State is under Brit rule de facto, but that is because of their economic policies, definitely not the sort that we are proposing. Eg the Free State joined the Common Market leading to the decimation of the small farming industry. It allowed, in the 60s and 70s, the giant US multinationals to set up on their terms and not surprisingly with the so-called depression they all packed and left leaving the workers stranded. The Dublin government is trying to act like a "leading industrial nation", but it has no manufacturing base except farming and fishing which as I have said it prefers to ignore. Agriculture in the New Ireland would be a cornerstone not a millstone in the economy. ... Anyway, onto the revolution.

"There are many strong ideological barriers to revolution (in N Ireland) which do not exist elsewhere." (Your words)

I totally agree, and as such there are parameters placed on Sinn Fein and indeed the whole movement, but the fact remains that the Sinn Fein and the IRA are to all intents and purposes the major movement in the anti-imperialist struggle. You could say we are the anti-imperialist struggle. I and the majority of people in the movement would welcome an international workers' movement against imperialism but as it is we are not practically in a position to spread the revolution. Except maybe by example - Brighton 84. I'm not trying to say that the republican movement is elite but certainly within this island and I dare say Britain it looks like we will be the cause of any workers' attempt to seize power. I realise our history has been a continuous trail of compromise and sell-out, but for what its worth the rest of the movement is the same, and we have learned the lessons.

Yours in struggle,
T.B. (Belfast)

WILDCAT REPLY

We're not impressed by the fine-sounding phrases from the Sinn Fein's policy document. Capitalists have been saying this sort of

thing since the French Revolution. As we explain in the article on the Spanish Collectives in this issue, any attempt to transform society through "co-operatives" will fail unless the fundamental features of capitalism - money, wage labour, the market system, and we should add the nation state are all abolished. If the economic basis of capitalism is not dismantled its social and political features will tend to reassert themselves naturally despite the best intentions of the people involved. In the case of Sinn Fein however not even the intentions are good. Sinn Fein's economic policy is based on a mixture of state-capitalism and agricultural self management, a bit like the policies that were such a disaster in Mao's China.

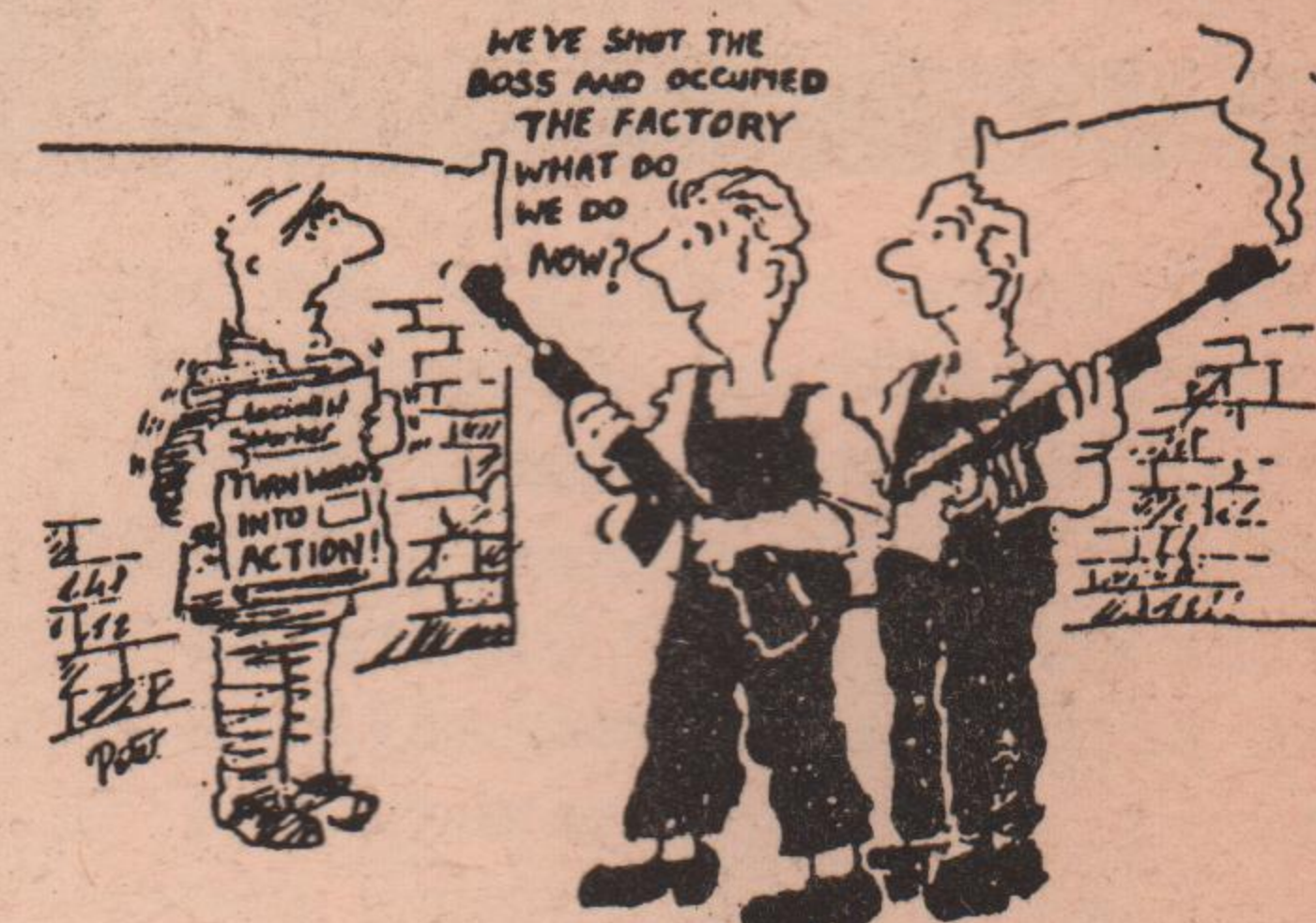
Furthermore it is clear that the abolition of capitalism will be a far-reaching social revolution as well as an economic one. How can one take seriously the claims of an organisation to be socialist that can't even come out in favour of contraception, abortion and an end to the oppression of gays in N Ireland?

It is because the programmes of anti-imperialist "national liberation" movements are not anti-capitalist that they are not a serious threat to the stability of capitalism. This is why the imperialist powers have been quite prepared to grant "independence", under the leadership of movements like Sinn Fein, to ex-colonial countries all over the world. From Delhi to Harare, the new leaders have been happy to play their part as bosses in the world capitalist community. Britain would quickly agree to an independent united Ireland under Sinn Fein leadership, if it would stabilise the situation there and allow a return to capitalist normality. What makes this impossible is not Sinn Fein's programme, but the N Irish protestants. But just because the Irish liberation movement is unlikely to succeed in its aims, doesn't make it any less reactionary than those that have.

As far as the republican movement being the most likely section of the British working class to seize power, this is just a sick joke. The N Irish working class is practically the most defeated politically not only in Britain but in the whole of Europe. Why do you think that N Irish workers' living standards are so low compared with the rest of Britain? Because N Irish workers let them get away with it! Because while the rest of the European working class was trying to defend itself against the effects of the crisis in a series of massive class battles over the past 15 years, the working class in N Ireland has been locked in a sectarian battle and, to put it crudely, has spent its time blowing each other to bits.

Don't get us wrong. We don't support the protestants who are even worse nationalists than the catholics. We support the catholics in defending themselves against attacks from the protestants and the state. We just don't think that there is any potential for anything good to come out of it. This is a hard truth for genuine revolutionaries in N Ireland to face up to: but all the evidence from the recent history of N Ireland suggests that the only possibility of a working class revolution there is one that spreads from the mainland and the rest of Europe.

HOW SOCIALIST IS THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY?



PAMPHLET
Wildcat

30p - includes postage.
Available from the Wildcat addresses.

Class Struggle in the PRISONS

As in most countries, the Prisons in Britain are archaic and over-crowded. 47,000 prisoners are squeezed into 41,000 places. About half of these are in there through being either mentally handicapped, sick or in debt. Another fifth are there on remand - they haven't even been found guilty yet! Also, like the pigs and the screws, the courts are blatantly racist. Blacks are far more likely to get custodial remand and longer sentences than whites even when they have no previous criminal record.

Many people are banged up for taking part in the class struggle... as well as strikes and riots this includes shoplifting and fiddling the dole - ie. trying to rob back some of what the capitalists have stolen from us. Not everyone in prison is an angel. A minority are genuinely anti-social elements such as rapists and those who resort to attacking or ripping off other members of the working class. However, when it comes down to attacks on the working class, the worst offenders in this category are the police, screws, magistrates and judges who are far more organised and effective in their attacks than any twisted individual could possibly hope to be.... short of joining them that is!

Although the present prison system is full of excesses, irrationalities and 'injustice', we don't seek to replace it with a more rational and humane one. We don't join in with the cries for liberal reforms since the police, the legal system and the prisons will have to be destroyed absolutely if we are to win the class war and achieve communism.

THE RIOTS

The prison riots in April this year (almost 10 years after the Hull prison riot) were definitely a step in this direction and a victory for the



working class. At least 22 prisons were involved in a mass outbreak of arson, rioting and destruction which caused £4.5 million worth of damage. 841 Jail places were destroyed which lead to the Home Office circulating a memo telling magistrates not to send people down if they could help it. Encouragingly things have still not calmed down and on June 20th another 50 cell places were destroyed at Glenochil young offenders institution near Stirling.

The prisoners were not slow to take advantage of the screws dispute which started on April 22nd. The following is a list of some of the things they did.

APRIL

- 25th - 5 prisoners escape from Crewe Police Station. They were being kept there because of the dispute. 2 are recaptured.
- 28th - 2 prisoners 'hijack' the coach taking them to Norwich Jail by holding a knife to a screws throat. They escape into East London.
- 29th - 20 prisoners get onto the roof of Gloucester Prison and throw missiles plus burning paper. Also a lock-out of the screws by the Prison Governor who thinks they have been inciting prisoners to riot.
- 30th - Fires and riots at Bristol Jail as well as a sit-in by 240 cons.
 - Four screws injured when prisoners 'rampaged' breaking tables and chairs at Belfasts Crumlin Rd Jail.
 - A bucket of shit is poured over the Governor of Albany Top Security Prison.
 - Northeye virtually destroyed by masked rioters. The dorm and the Chapel (shame!) were the only buildings left unscathed. £4.13 million of the damage was caused here. The papers said it was 'killed as a prison'.
 - 26 prisoners escape and are not recaptured. 10 from Northeye and 16 from a 'short sharp shock' centre in Wilts. (40 originally escaped from it).

MAY

- 2nd - 20 prisoners from Northeye who were re-housed at a detention centre in Surrey barricade themselves in the Gym and threaten to burn it. Fire engines on stand by as they smashed equipment.
- 20 prisoners get on roof at Stafford and throw tiles and burning paper. Inside they smashed up the furniture.

Colin Steel, the POA chairman admitted that 50 or 60 prisons could easily have been destroyed if the POA had not been sufficiently responsible to call off its action. Its a shame the screws couldn't bring themselves to a suitable level of irresponsibility.

THE SCREWS

Obviously we don't support the screws in any of their demands either for pay or better conditions. In fact we would draw an analogy between the industrial action of screws and that of teachers. The screws maintain order in the prisons, the teachers maintain it in the class room. When either goes on strike they give ample opportunity for their charges to riot (see W.C. 8 on school riots and strikes). Some of the screws are supposed to have encouraged the

prisoners to riot in order to gain their demands quicker. However after the destruction of Northeye both the government and the screws realised they'd got more than they bargained for and reached a settlement almost immediately.

FRANCE MAY-JUNE 85

A similar wave of struggles rocked France in May last year, where more than 30 prisons were involved. Of particular interest is the destruction of Montpellier prison by rioting prisoners. In this case a "mob" outside the prison (which included friends and relatives of those inside) helped the rebellion by attacking the cops from behind.

Additional solidarity was given throughout June to the revolts by the sabotaging of train lines, the printing plants of the Parisian Dailies (which had opposed the revolts) and a firm which relied on using the cheap labour of the prisoners. The following demands were put out by both the prisoners and the saboteurs.

REMISSION FOR ALL CONDEMNED PRISONERS
THE LIBERATION OF ALL REMAND PRISONERS
A DEFINITIVE STOP TO ALL DEPORTATION ORDERS
THE LIFTING OF ALL PUNISHMENT FOR ALL MUTINEERS.



POLAND - SUPPORT THESE CLASS WAR PRISONERS

As we mentioned in Wildcat 8 - three months before the declaration of Martial Law in December '81, 150 prisoners were helped to escape from Bydgoszoz jail. After Martial Law many working class people took up arms (eg. Szczecin shipyard workers). A small group in Grodzisk were a part of this movement and they planned actions to free prisoners interned in Biafoieka jail, and also against a police station being used by the militia. A seargeant in the militia was shot when they tried to 'relieve him' of his gun. He died later in hospital

We are running an appeal for money to support Robert and Tomek who are serving sentences of 25 and 12 years respectively for being involved in these actions. We recently recieved a letter from the mother of Robert describing the conditions her son and Tomek are being kept in and thanking us for our support. We are sending the money via the French support group 'Les Amis de Robert et Tomek' Cheques can be made payable to WILDCAT and should be sent to our LONDON ADDRESS. Remember to make it clear what the money is for.

SPAIN '36; THE E

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War, which began in July 1936 when General Franco led a fascist coup to replace the left-wing Republican Government.

It was no coincidence that this happened at a time of intense class struggle in Spain. Limited concessions granted in the face of the struggle by the left-wing of the ruling class - the 'Popular Front' Government elected in February 1936 - had not succeeded in restoring the economic and social stability needed by capitalism. Strikes, demonstrations and political assassinations by the working class continued, as did land seizures and local insurrections in the countryside. The right-wing of the ruling class recognised that strong-arm measures were needed, and acted accordingly.

Initially, across one half of Spain the right-wing coup was stalled by armed resistance from peasants and the working class, and only after three years of civil war was the fascist victory secured. But in one sense the revolt was an immediate success: the working class and peasants sacrificed the struggle for their own needs and demands and united with liberal and radical supporters of capitalism in a fight to defend one form of capitalist domination - democracy - against another - fascism.

We have already written about this aspect of the Spanish Civil War in a previous issue of *Wildcat* (number 7 - copies still available). In this article, we want to focus on another important feature: the influence of Anarchist ideas during the struggle in Spain.

ANARCHISM and the SPANISH 'REVOLUTION'

At the time of the Civil War, a popular idea amongst the Spanish working class and peasants was that each factory, area of land, etc, should be owned collectively by its workers, and that these 'collectives' should be linked with each other on a 'federal' basis - that is, without any superior central authority.

This basic idea had been propagated by Anarchists in Spain for more than 50 years. When the Civil War began, peasants and working class people in those parts of the country which had not immediately fallen under fascist control seized the opportunity to turn the Anarchist ideal into reality.

Ever since then Anarchists have regarded the Spanish 'Revolution' as the finest achievement in the history of the revolutionary movement - as the closest capitalism anywhere has come to being completely overthrown and replaced by a totally different form of society.

'SELF MANAGED' CAPITALISM

The 'revolution' in the countryside has usually been seen as superior to the 'revolution' in the towns and cities. Indeed, in an assessment shared by *Wildcat*, Anarchist historian and eyewitness

of the Collectives Gaston Leval describes the industrial Collectives as simply another form of capitalism, managed by the workers themselves:

"Workers in each undertaking took over the factory, the works, or the workshop, the machines, raw materials, and taking advantage of the continuation of the money system and normal capitalist commercial relations, organised production on their own account, selling for their own benefit the produce of their labour."

We would add that in many cases the workers didn't actually take over production, they simply worked under the direction of their "own" union bureaucrats with old bosses retained as advisors.

The reactionary consequences of the working class taking sides in the fight between democracy and fascism, instead of pursuing the struggle for their own needs, was particularly evident in the way the industrial Collectives operated. For the sake of the 'war effort' workers frequently chose to intensify their own exploitation - usually with the encouragement of their Anarchist leaders.

In 1937, for example, the Anarchist Government Minister in charge of the economy in Catalonia complained that the 'state of tension and over-excitement' produced by the outbreak of the Civil War had 'reduced to a dangerous degree the capacity and productivity of labour, increasing the costs of production so much that if this is not corrected rapidly and energetically we will be facing a dead-end street. For these reasons we must readjust the established work norms and increase the length of the working day.'

However, although some Anarchists are prepared to criticise the 'Government Anarchists' and the industrial Collect-



Barcelona: a collectivized garment-making workshop. At first even barbers and bootblacks were collectivized.

ives, all Anarchists are unanimous that the rural Collectives succeeded in achieving 'genuine socialisation', or, as it was popularly termed, 'libertarian communism'.

ORGANISING THE RURAL COLLECTIVES

What typically happened in the peasant villages was this. Once the fascist rebellion had been quelled locally, the inhabitants of the village got together in a big

meeting. Anarchist militants took the initiative in proposing what to do. Everyone was invited to pool their land, livestock and tools in the Collective: 'The concept "yours and mine" will no longer exist...Everything will belong to everyone. Property belonging to fascist landlords and the Church was also expropriated for the Collective's use. A Committee was elected to supervise the running of the Collective. Work was parcelled out among groups of 10 or 15 people, and co-ordinated by meetings of delegates nominated by each group.

FREE ACCESS

A few Collectives distributed their produce on the communist basis of free access - 'to each according to their needs'. A resident of Magdalena de Pulpis explained the system in his village:

'Everyone works and everyone has the right to what he needs free of charge. He simply goes to the store where provisions and all other necessities are supplied. Everything is distributed freely with only a notation of what he took.'

For the first time in their lives people could help themselves to whatever they needed. And that's exactly what they did. Free access was not abused by 'greed' or 'gluttony'. Another of the Collectives' eyewitnesses, Augustin Souchy, describes the situation in Muniesa:

'The bakery was open. Anyone can come for whatever bread he wants.

"Are there not abuses of this?"

"No," answers the old man who gives out the bread. "Everyone takes as much as they actually need."

Wine is also distributed freely, not rationed.

"Doesn't anyone get drunk?"

"Until now there has not been a single case of drunkenness."

This of course was also partly a reflection of an anarchist puritanism which in other places led them to ban tobacco and even coffee.

THE WAGES SYSTEM

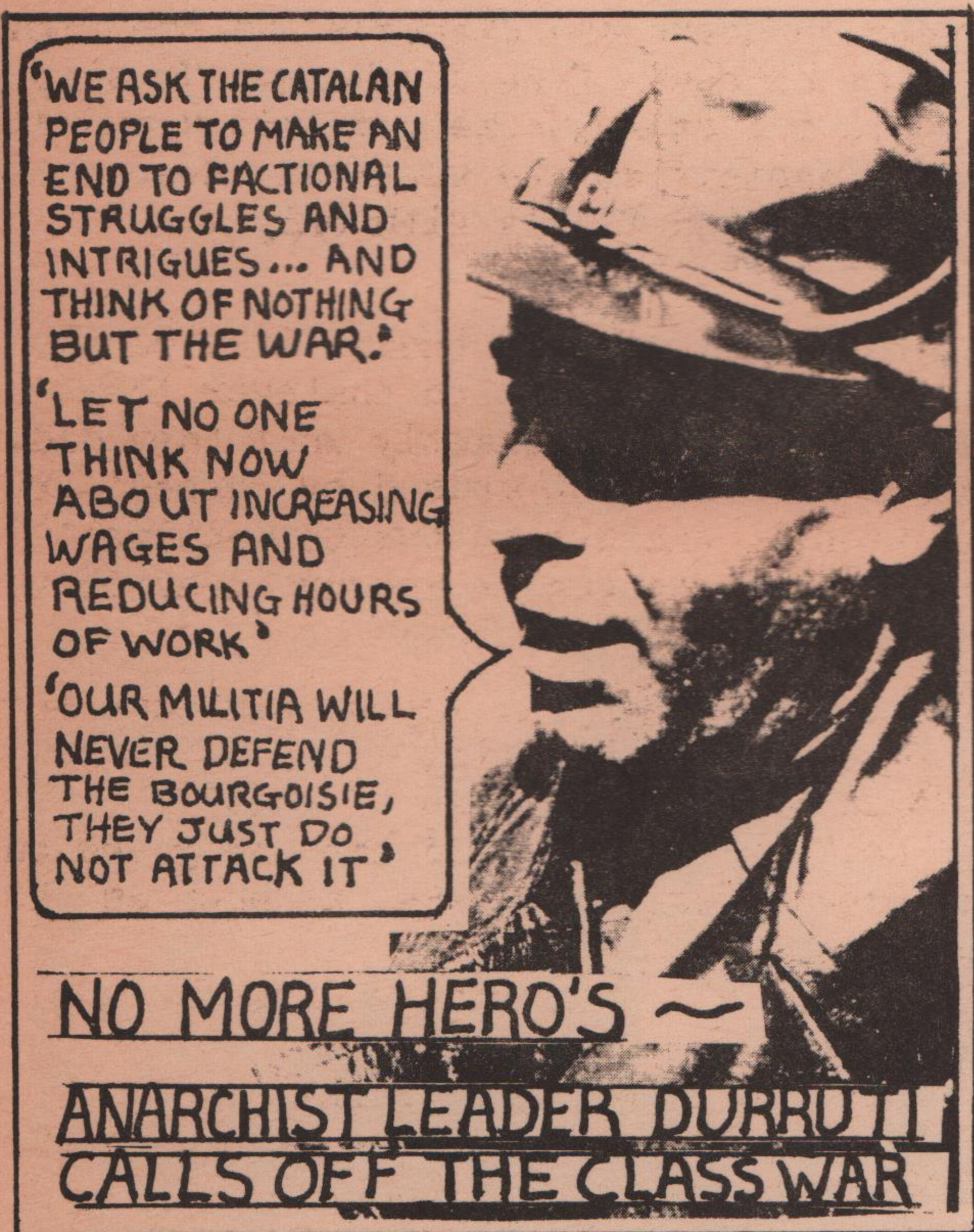
However, distribution of goods on a communist basis (i.e. free access) was not the norm. In the vast majority of Collectives the level of consumption was not governed

END OF ANARCHISM?

by people's freely-chosen needs and desires, but, just as it is under capitalism, by the amount of money people had in their pockets. Only goods in abundant supply could be taken freely. Everything else had to be bought from wages paid by the Collective to its members.

THE FAMILY WAGE and the OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

The 'family wage' - which oppresses women by making them economically dependent on the male head of the household - was adopted by almost all the collectives. Each male collectivist received so much in wages per day for himself, plus a smaller amount for his wife and each child. For women in fact, the Spanish 'Revolution' could hardly have been less revolutionary.



It did not challenge the family as an economic unit of society, nor the sexual division of labour between men and women. 'It is eleven o'clock in the morning. The gong sounds. Mass? It is to remind the women to prepare the midday meal.' Women also remained regarded as inferior social beings, frowned on, for example, if they joined the men in the local cafe for a drink after work.

THE PROLIFERATION OF MONEY

The equal family wage was generally not paid in the national currency, which most Collectives discarded for internal use. In its place the Collectives substituted other means of exchange, issuing their own local currency in the form of vouchers, tokens, rationing booklets, certificates, coupons, etc. Far from being abolished, as money would be in a communist revolution, during the Spanish 'Revolution' money proliferated as never before!

But the creation of literally hundreds of different local currencies soon caused problems. Few Collectives were self-sufficient, but trade among the Collectives was hampered by the lack of a universally acceptable currency. In 1937

the Aragon Federation of Peasant Collectives had to reintroduce a standard currency in the form of a uniform rationing booklet for all the Aragon Collectives. It also established its own bank - run by the Bank Workers' Union of course!

THE EXCHANGE OF GOODS

Not all transactions between Collectives were effected by money. Central warehouses were set up where Collectives exchanged their surplus produce among themselves for the goods they lacked. Under this system 'hard cash' was frequently absent. However, the relative proportions in which goods were bartered was still determined by monetary values. For example how many

sacks of flour a Collective could obtain in exchange for a ton of potatoes was worked out by calculating the value of both in monetary terms. Just as under capitalism, prices were 'based on the cost of raw materials, the work involved, general expenses and the resources of the collectivists.'

This was not a communist system of production for use and distribution according to need, but a capitalist system of rival enterprises trading their products according to their exchange value. No matter how desperately they needed them, Collectives couldn't obtain the goods they required until they had produced enough to exchange for them, since they were not allowed to withdraw a sum of goods worth more than those they had deposited. This frequently led to great hardship among the less wealthy Collectives.

MARKET COMPETITION

As well as trading among themselves, Collectives also had to find markets for their goods in competition with non-collectivised enterprises. A common consequence of this system has always been that goods which cannot be sold profitably end up being stockpiled or destroyed, while elsewhere people have to do without those goods because they don't have the means to buy them. The consequences of the Spanish Collectives' capitalist mode of operation conformed to this pattern; for example:

'The warehouses owned by the SICEP (Syndicate of the Footwear Industry in Elda and Petrel) in Elda, Valencia and Barcelona, as well as the factory warehouses, were full of unsold goods, valued at some 10 million pesetas.'

Such spectacles would be eradicated for ever in a communist society, where goods would not be produced to be sold for profit via the market, but to directly satisfy people's needs.

THE END OF THE COLLECTIVES

The Spanish Collectives were eventually destroyed by in-fighting among the anti-fascists and by the fascist victory itself. One can only speculate about how they might have developed had they survived the Civil War. Our guess is that their basically capitalist nature would have become even more obvious.

In the capitalist economy market competition forces every enterprise to try to produce its goods as cheaply as possible so as to undercut its rivals. The Spanish Collectives, trading with each other and competing with non-collectivised enterprises, would inevitably have been subject to the same pressures.

One of the ways in which capitalist enterprises try to cut costs is by increasing the exploitation of the workforce, for example by cutting wages, or increasing the intensity of work, or lengthening working hours.

Where this happens in enterprises owned and run by an individual boss or the state, workers can identify their enemy and fight against their exploitation. This is far less likely to happen where the entire workforce itself is the collective owner and manager of the enterprise, as was the case with the Spanish Collectives. The workforce has a vested interest in the profitability of the capital which it collectively owns; it identifies with and willingly organises its own exploitation. It has to, in fact, to keep itself in business.

THE END OF ANARCHISM

Many present-day Anarchists - such as the Direct Action Movement, Black Flag and Freedom - still stand for the type of self-managed capitalism established by the industrial and agricultural Collectives during the Spanish Civil War. Because of this, we oppose them as resolutely as we oppose supporters of any other pro-capitalist ideology - and we urge any of our sympathisers who think of themselves as Anarchists to follow suit.

From the point of view of working class people's needs self-managed capitalism is a dead-end, just as reactionary as private or state capitalism. The communist society we are fighting for can only be established by the complete destruction of ALL property, money, wages and markets - whatever their form.

The information and quotes in this article come from The Anarchist Collectives by Sam Dolgoff, Collectives in The Spanish Revolution by Gaston Leval, The Spanish Revolution by Stanley Payne, and With The Peasants of Aragon by Augustin Souchy.

At the time of the Spanish Civil War the revolutionaries who published the journals Bilan and International Council Correspondence criticised anti-fascism and Anarchism from a similar point of view to that held by Wildcat today. If you're interested in reading some of the articles they wrote, we can send copies for the price of a £1 donation to cover the cost of photocopying and postage.





The following article is based on a text by members of the French group 'Os Cangaceiros', describing the struggle of Spanish dockers in the port of Gijon during 1983-5. This text is of more than historical interest. The struggle of the Spanish dockers continues today with undiminished intensity. This month hundreds of dockers in Gijon have again been waging pitched battles against the police.

The struggle is against the "socialist" government's plans to reorganise the docks, but the underlying issue is unemployment. The government's aim is to break up the united opposition of the dockers to redundancies by a reorganisation that will divide permanent workers from casual ones, and those in the private sector from those in the state sector.

The whole government strategy depends on smashing the power of the 'Coordinadora', the national co-ordinating body of the autonomous dockers' collectives, which has the allegiance of the vast majority of Spanish dockers. The 'Coordinadora' is the 'official' representative of the dockers. It exists to defend the day-to-day interests of the dockers, but it does so from a political perspective that is totally opposed to the unions and trade unionism.

Against the collaborationist policies of the unions, the careerism and bureaucracy of union organisation, the legalism of trade union methods of 'struggle', the Coordinadora stands for all-out struggle against the bosses, controlled directly by the working class organised in assemblies. The following article graphically illustrates the differences between the two forms of organisation.

Unfortunately we don't have much information yet about the present strike. But we are sure that the Spanish dockers are carrying out their struggle with the same revolutionary enthusiasm as in the past. The dockers are not the only section of the Spanish working class engaged in violent confrontation with the Socialist government. More than 350 agricultural labourers are presently being tried for their part in a campaign of direct action against poverty and unemployment. We hope to have more information about these struggles in the next issue of *Wildcat*, as well as a longer, more critical article about the Spanish dockers' organisation.

The Spanish strike wave of 1983-85 mainly involved workers in the industrial sectors threatened with mass unemployment. The strikes hit practically all sectors: textiles, chemicals, General Motors, construction, mining, transport. But it was the government's 'reorganisation plan' for the docks, involving 20,000 redundancies, which provoked the longest lastin conflict.

The strike extended to all the biggest Spanish shipyards. In all of them there were moments when the struggle went beyond the form of a traditional industrial conflict and acquired a more universal character. For several days in Dec 84 in Cadiz, the struggle spread from the docks to surrounding districts which were fortified with barricades. In Bilbao for three months there was open guerilla warfare between enraged dockers and the police.

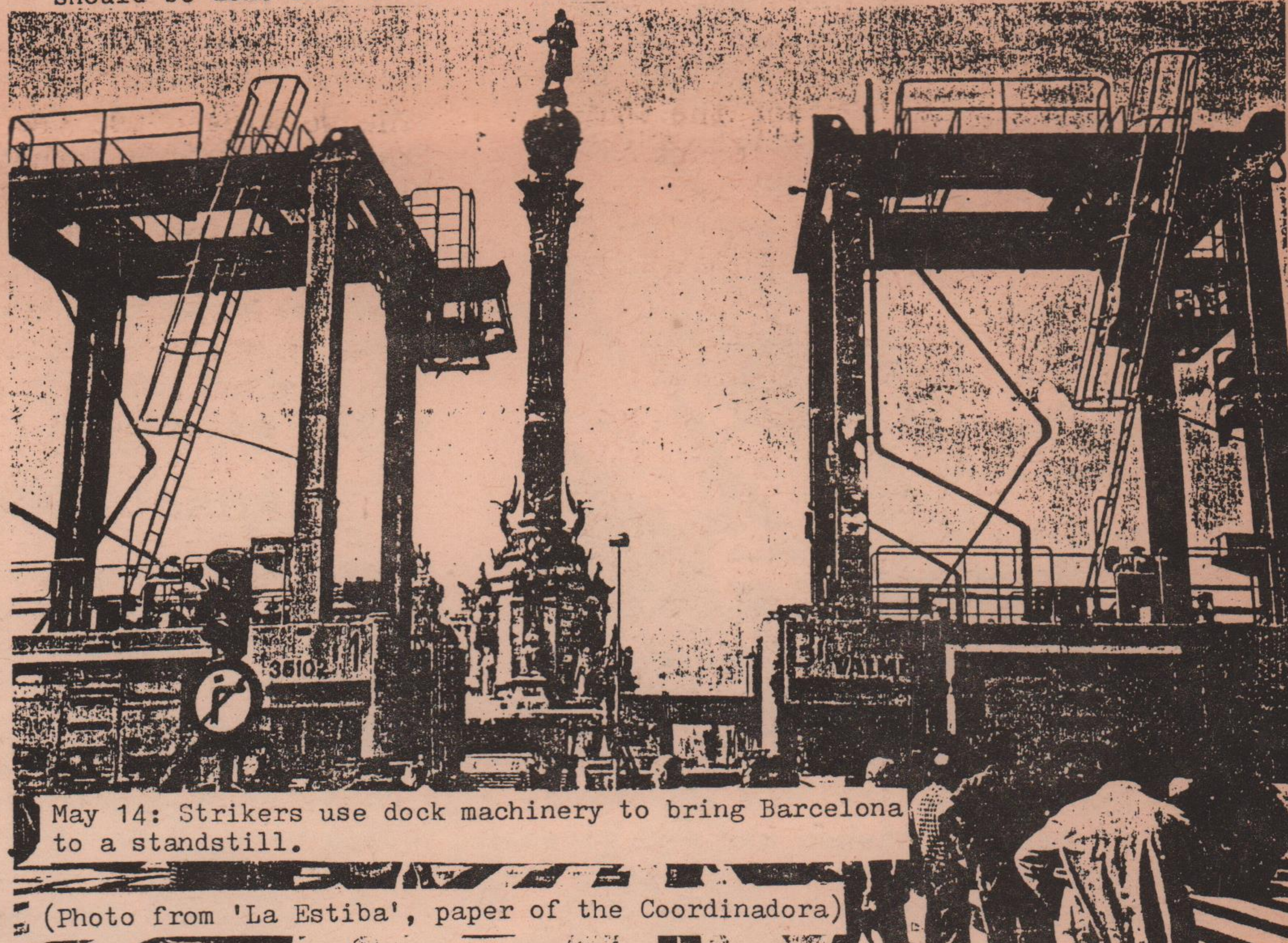
In Gijon, for a year from Spring 84, the struggle was based around the Assembly which was held in the town and was open to all. The Asturias has long been a stronghold of the assembly movement in Spain, which reached its highest point so far in the mass struggles of 1976-78. The workers at Gijon had the great merit of putting this form of organisation back at the centre of their struggle.

By Spring 84 the dockers at Gijon had already been fighting for several months. They had set up barricades outside the shipyards, and regularly found themselves in confrontations with the police. The longer this went on, the more they felt the need of somewhere to meet together, outside of the shipyards, where they always ended up giving way to intense pressure from the cops. They decided to hold a single assembly which would bring them together twice a week. For this purpose they took hold of a disused cinema right in the centre of the town.

Being held once and for all out-

side the shipyards, the assembly broke the workers' dependence on their place of production. It was open to all. Workers from other industries, some miners from nearby, youth from technical schools, and finally any old proletarians: they all participated in it.

In the assembly, everyone could intervene. One spoke in one's own name, and each person present could be challenged and had to reply in public - unlike in union-led struggles where bureaucrats prevent non-delegates from speaking. All votes were by raised hands and not secret ballots, so the balance of forces was always clearly visible throughout the debates. The debates did not drag on. Usually it was a matter of criticising the previous day's actions, and of agreeing what should be done in the next street



actions. The essential principle was: no separation between the assembly and the street, which virtually all the participants (several hundred people) moved into after the debate. At Gijon, like at the height of the movement in the 70s, there was no division between discussion, decision and practical action.

The assembly carried out its own actions in the streets. Its strategy was based on always being on the offensive, of choosing without any orders from above, the best moment, place and methods to do the damage.

The assembly developed a taste for offensive action among those who, not directly affected by redundancies, shared the most determined dockers' longing to fight. This insubordinate frame of mind, strengthened by the assembly, led to some fine solidarity actions outside of the naval sector.

The Gijon fighters developed a strategy based on mobility. In

front of the entrances to each yard, situated along the same avenue, several barricades were set up, in good humour and in a very Spanish, relaxed fashion. They were built from railway sleepers, or most often from hundreds of tyres sprinkled with petrol and set alight. When the police assault became too overbearing, they used to rush to the barricades which had been set up in the meantime in front of the next shipyard, and so on and so forth all the way along the avenue. The

battle zone was within traditional working class quarters and combatants were able to melt away into them without any trouble. Often barricades laid out in the shipyard quarter were supported by actions in other areas of the town. In Feb 85, one of the last times a furiously violent assault was led against combatants sheltering in a shipyard (the two gateways at the entrance had been completely ripped to pieces by the intensity of fire from rubber bullets), other groups intervened in support by burning several carriages in the centre of the town. At the same time, some youth attacked one of the cops' wagons with stones.

This freedom of movement went along with a liveliness of spirit which would always be present in the moments which demanded maximum tactical unity and determination. There were many arrests, but they never lasted long. Thus, one fine evening in Feb 85 when "assailants" joined by several youths attacked banking offices by setting light to their entrances with the aid of tyres and Molotov cocktails, one of them (notoriously well-known in these struggles) got himself arrested. Some hours later, a group of 400 people formed which went off to encircle the heavily guarded prison to demand the liberation of the prisoner. An urgent threat was issued which was not slow

to assume a bright and luminous form: "If he's not freed in the next few hours, two buses will be burned, then 4 tomorrow, 6 the next day, and so on and so forth..." The first part of the threat was put into effect on the field of action. Two busses were burned in different parts of the town. At noon the next day, our man found himself free again.

The workers of Gijon have always tried to make their struggle better known. It was always in a good humour that they went to occupy the regional TV studios at Oveido, which they reproached for their silence on their struggle. On another occasion they sabotaged a top-level football match being shown all over Spain: the frantic run made on the pitch by a young piglet in peak form gave a lot of trouble to the players who were more used to mastering a round ball. After the pig, there followed a series of chickens. The whole thing was rounded off with a shower of nails which made it difficult to carry on with the match, during which small banners in connection with the struggle appeared on the TV screens ...

South Africa

Our Hope, their Fear

Prospects for Revolution and the International Response

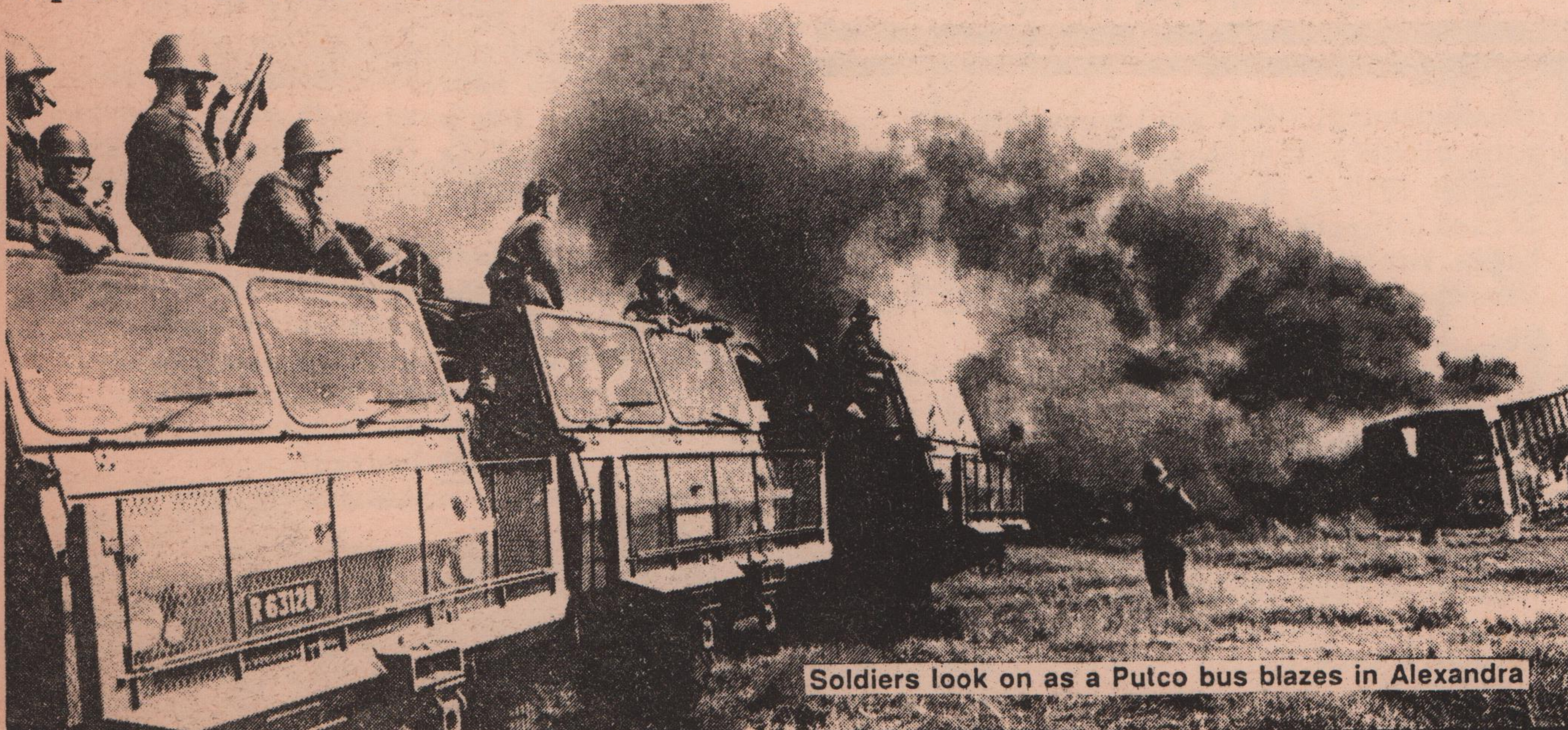
The news from South Africa may be good for tyre manufacturers, But it must be quite disconcerting for the many capitalists in Britain, W Germany and the USA with interests in SA to read the "Financial Times" seriously discussing the prospect of working class revolution.

The state of emergency has kept the lid on the situation, but Botha's package of economic measures which accompanied it will not sufficiently expand the economy to head off the class struggle (see FT 19 6 86). Its obvious that revolution is the only solution. But what kind of revolution, and when?

The African National Congress is abandoning the idea of negotiating its way into power, and increasingly relies on an uprising of black workers to put it into power. But the level of class struggle which would be necessary to bring this about would be dangerous for the ANC, which simply wants to expand the black capitalist class in a democratic multi-racial capitalist society. If the ANC comes to power on the backs of the working class, it will find it impossible to make them pay for the crisis.

The Difficulties of Revolution

Revolution is not an immediate prospect. The black working class is short of guns, whilst the white racist minority is armed to the teeth. The ruling class can keep the struggle in the townships at its current level by simple repression. The blacks in the townships are divided, though the black workers in the mines and factories are less so. All the privileged positions have gone to white workers. Black miners' wages have stagnated, whilst "the level of strikes is running at unprecedented levels" (FT 6 6 86).



Soldiers look on as a Putco bus blazes in Alexandra

Without a mass strike of industrial workers, any mass uprising is doomed. The link between the struggle in the townships and the industrial struggle is not automatic. According to the labour monitoring group at Witwatersrand University, only an estimated 10%

of black miners in the Reef stayed away on Soweto Day 1986. One of the main problems in organising a mass strike is lack of funds. Black workers cannot stay on strike for long whilst their families in the townships need feeding. This problem will have to be solved by mass looting or otherwise; a mass strike is the only way out of the current stalemate. The power of workers to paralyse society was shown on May Day and Soweto Day. The silence in the streets of Johannesburg was more threatening to the ruling class than the noise of rioting in Soweto. The political strikes which have broken out demanding the release of detainees are a step in the direction of a political mass strike.

Whilst we are cautious about the immediate future, the economic crisis, the genuine fears of the most intelligent sections of world capitalism, the high level of strikes, the inability or unwillingness of the Afrikaners to reform the system and the fact that the heroic struggle of the townships has not been defeated by the combined efforts of informers, scabs and armed repression on a massive scale leads us to predict that the overthrow of the South African state by the black working class remains the most likely outcome.

White with Fear

The working class can't go on living in the old way. But the ruling class can go on ruling in the old way for a while yet. But the program of the most powerful white bosses - a gradual transition to a multi-racial capitalism - has been irreparably damaged. Even Botha was beginning to listen to powerful white liberals like Oppenheimer and Bloom. But it's difficult to liberalise society when your powerbase consists of a load of fascist morons. If the leaders of the National Party even talk about reforms, the growing ranks of the right smash up their meetings, with the sympathy of the police. If Botha had conceded liberal demands, white society would have fallen apart. His only option was to redouble repression.

In a sense the white workers have contributed to the revolution by forcing the National Party to the right. Determined to defend their privileges, they have constantly sabotaged capitalism's plans for more equal exploitation. They have destroyed the prospects of



President PW Botha

reform, and thus signed apartheid's death warrant. No doubt a lot of white workers would be killed by a revolution in SA. It serves them right.

The Consequences

South African businessmen and black moderates are terrified of revolution. Bishop Desmond Tutu and Tony Bloom, head of the Premier group, attacked the detention of trade union leaders and spoke of their fear of the consequences:

"I am worried because they have taken away the leadership of a community, and it could turn into a mob." Desmond Tutu, BBC Radio, 16 6 86.

"We are now faced with attempting to run our factories and enterprises by dealing with the mob as the leaders are in custody. We urge you to reconsider your policy." Tony Bloom, Financial Times 19 6 86.

Kenneth Kaunda has also spoken of his fear of the mob. A revolution in SA would immediately spread to its neighbours. Angolan dockers would take their revenge on their 'Marxist' rulers and show the world that being ruled by blacks is not what they want. A revolutionary SA would still use its economic power to terrorise neighbouring governments - and quite right!

Bosses against Apartheid

The USA can seriously discuss pulling out altogether (divestment) because its stake is a small proportion of its total foreign investments. This is also true of the EEC countries - except one.

Britain has £12 bn. invested in SA. Last year it imported £1 bn. and exported nearly £1 bn. in trade with SA. Britain accounts for 45% of all foreign investment and 46% of SA's debts are to British banks. Those who call for sanctions have tried to understate the job losses which would ensue. Even effective sanctions would cause 130 000 job losses according to the most serious capitalist estimates. Kinnock and co. argue for wide ranging sanctions now. This is because:

"Having the largest foreign stake, we will suffer most mightily from the conflagration ... we need to show whose side we are on in a struggle from which neutrality offers no retreat."

(Hugo Young, Guardian 17 6 86)

'76

UPRISING..

The so-called 'Soweto students' Revolt of 1976' refers to events which were not confined to Soweto, to school students or even to 1976. Nor was it simply a revolt but the beginning of a whole series of struggles against almost every aspect of a form of capitalist class domination which relies on racial domination. In particular, the struggle against the education system became so determined that at no point since then has "order" been restored in the schools and youth came to be accepted by adults as equal participants, even leaders, in the struggle.

The whole thing began in an unremarkable enough way. On 13 June in Soweto a branch of the S. African Students Movement called a meeting to discuss the recent introduction of Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of instruction. The SASM was a semi-clandestine "school students union"



whose leaders aspired to play a mediating role between the angry masses and the State— a role which in SA in 1976 was almost impossible.

An action committee was set up of delegates from most Soweto schools to organise a demo for June 16. There had been school strikes in Soweto from the beginning of the year and the first overt violence had taken place on 27 May when a teacher of Afrikaans was stabbed with a screw-

driver. When the police came to arrest him they were stoned.

The organisers wanted a peaceful demo and one school had been excluded because they would give 'too much trouble'.

Inevitably the march of 30,000 students met the full force of State repression. The police fired into the crowd without warning, but the students launched a desperate counter-attack and the police were forced to retreat. Barricades were built and students ran threw Soweto destroying all the State property they could find, in particular the offices of the township administration. It was the beginning of a bloody battle which was to rage initially for 3 days and then flair up again and again over the next few months. The students were joined by their parents returning from work.

By the second day virtually all administration buildings had been

burnt down or looted, two white administration officials had been killed and schools, shops and a magistrates court had been fired in a pattern that was to be repeated across S. Africa. In addition, beer halls and bottle stores were systematically destroyed— this was not puritanical zeal but a recognition of the importance of alcohol as a means of pacifying the working class in S. Africa.

By the third day the struggle was

beginning to spread to the other Rand (Johannesburg area) townships, particularly Alexandra. Throughout June, July and August it spread throughout SA including the so-called Homelands — on 8 August the BophuthaTswana Legislative Assembly was burnt to the ground. In mid-August it spread to the Cape, uniting 'blacks', 'Coloureds' and 'Asians', overcoming divisions going back generations.

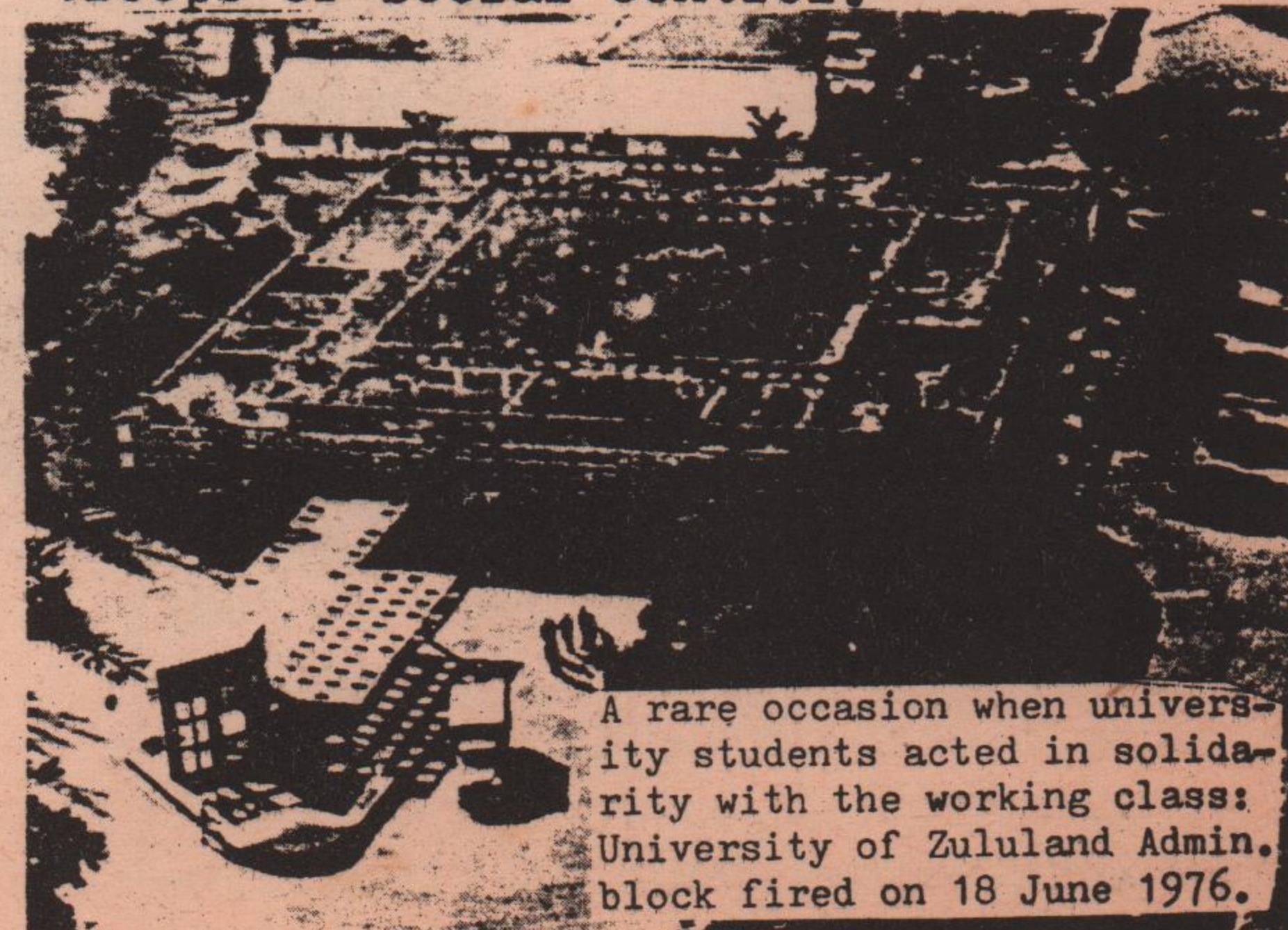
The four large-scale stay-away strikes in August, organised by students with the backing of most workers, represented an attempt to draw workers into the struggle as workers as well as township residents. August 15, when a 3-day stay-away in the Transvaal overlapped with a 2-day stay-away in the W. Cape, was the largest strike black S. African workers had ever launched.

By early '77 the rioting was temporarily subsiding but the struggle in the schools continued. At the end of '76 there was a massive boycott of the end-of-year exams and school strikes continued solidly into '77 leading to widespread clashes in the W. Cape in June and another, but less strong, exam boycott at the end of '77. Hundreds of teachers had resigned and hundreds of schools had been burnt down across the country.

Every 'education' system in the world serves the needs of class domination but the SA govt. has never made any bones about their view that most people (the blacks) have no need of learning beyond the minimal level required to be unskilled labourers. In addition they should be taught to be subservient to whites.

Ironically what brought the simmering discontent over "Bantu Education" out into the open was the fact in the '60's and early '70's the expansion of the economy required a massive increase in recruitment of blacks into skilled and white-collar jobs. This led to massive overcrowding in schools as far more kids were encouraged to complete their schooling but nowhere near enough new schools were provided.

The government's response to the rebellion in the schools was to drastically increase education spending but most of this went on increasing teachers' salaries. That is, improving the morale of the front-line troops of social control.



A rare occasion when university students acted in solidarity with the working class: University of Zululand Administration block fired on 18 June 1976.

Our Hope

contd.

Even Kinnock is not dishonest enough to call for divestment. The economy couldn't stand it. Neither could it stand being forcibly divested of its bloody stake in apartheid by revolution. It's in Britain's interests to impose sanctions now to avoid catastrophe. That's why we don't call for sanctions. We want Britain to go down with Botha. We want to see the chickens come home to roost.

On 2 June, the Financial Times published the following:

"If the townships want a Leninist Azania, and do a Lenin with the country's pre-revolutionary debt, the banks will only havethemselves and their shareholders, from churches to American tax-exempt funds, to blame."

The spectre of 1917 still haunts the ruling class, but they underestimate the consequences of a St. Petersburg in

Johannesburg. The world economy is more closely tied together now than it was in 1917. If a working class South Africa dropped out of not just the US bloc, but the world economy, the consequences would be disastrous.

Soon they may be wishing they did have a 'Leninist Azania'. The possibility of world revolution developing from an uprising in S Africa has more secure foundations than the revolutionary wave of 1917-21 which shook world capitalism but failed to destroy it.

We don't know of any group in S Africa calling for preparations for a working class uprising as a first step to world communist revolution. The emergence of organizations of communist militants is one of the key material factors which is needed for the revolution to overthrow, not just apartheid, but any form of capitalist rule which replaces it.



Students and children run riot after a student funeral

'86

position of "leaders" and are seen as such by the townships' residents, but they are continually exhorting other people to join them. One of their songs goes:

"When are you going to join our struggle?
Aren't you ashamed you haven't joined us?"

Most of them are unemployed or (nominally) still at school, but this does not mean they are isolated from the workers. They have been at the forefront of organising and enforcing "stay-away" strikes, building barricades to prevent bus-loads of workers leaving the townships.

In many townships unemployment reaches 50%. The black national average is around 30% and there is no dole to speak of. (There is an unemployment insurance fund but many categories of workers are excluded, and there are no benefits for people who've never contributed to the fund.) Inflation is 20% and many black workers haven't had a pay rise for two years.

There is no doubt that in the absence of any widespread class struggle the youth would have been forced into crime against their own class. Instead they have looted shops and delivery vehicles, and succeeded in disarming many of the criminal-capitalist gangs that preyed on the poor. They have also established Peoples' Courts to deal with those who take out their frustration against other working class people instead of against the system. In Munzierville Township for example the penalty for common assault is 5 lashes.

Politically many of the Comrades are affiliated to the UDF, and have enforced its boycott campaigns against white-owned shops. These campaigns are simply a diversion from the class struggle. They are an attack on the black working class. Black shopkeepers charge higher prices and pay their workers less than white shopkeepers. In many townships shopkeepers themselves are activists in the boycott committees.

At the same time, though, the Comrades are not controlled by the UDF and in practice frequently reject its cross-class attitude. UDF leaders are scared by their success. Referring to the terroring of rich blacks, Mike Beea, the chair of the Alexandra Civic Association, told youth at a funeral: "some of our comrades are out in the bush fighting tooth and nail to liberate us all. But what would happen if our comrades came back from exile only to find we were harassing our own parents and the community?" In other words, "don't fight along class lines, the ANC doesn't like it." The black working class in S Africa is still a long way from being united behind the "progressive" black and white middle class in a movement which sees only apartheid as its enemy and not the capitalist system.

POWER

Recent months have seen the first attempts by the black working class in S Africa to take power. Many of the townships have been taken over by the Comrades - groups of militant youth who've done most of the fighting and taken the most radical initiatives. Even in the townships which haven't been taken over, there has been an almost complete breakdown of the traditional methods of maintaining capitalist order, methods which rely just as much on reactionary blacks as on the white state.

Police informers have been killed or driven out. Black police have been killed or had their homes burnt. Hundreds of black councillors have been forced to resign. The "education" system has virtually ceased to function.

The prospect of the townships becoming no-go areas horrifies the white state and white capitalists alike. The black capitalists know that many of them will be immediately wiped out. The whites know that the establishment of no-go areas would provide a power base for an all-out assault on the state. Their response has been to mount a campaign of terror against the radicals through gangs of "vigilantes".

VIGILANTES

For several years, the black chiefs in the Homelands have openly used gangs of bully-boys to stamp out radical opposition. Now this practice has spread to the townships. Not surprisingly, the core of the vigilante squads consists of blacks with a material stake in the status quo. These are small capitalists (shop- and taxi-owners), police, councillors, teachers and church elders.

Despite official denials of involvement, there is nothing very secretive about the way the vigilantes are aided by the security forces. In May, in Alexandra Township near Johannesburg, vigilantes

who burned down the houses of activists were joined by black policemen wearing balaclavas. In Queenstown in the E. Cape, 400 coloured vigilantes were incorporated into the security forces as the "E Company of the Queenstown Commando". They were led by the deputy head of a primary school who was also the chairman of the local Labour Party (an organisation which participates in the Tricameral Parliament). The vigilantes have almost total immunity from prosecution.

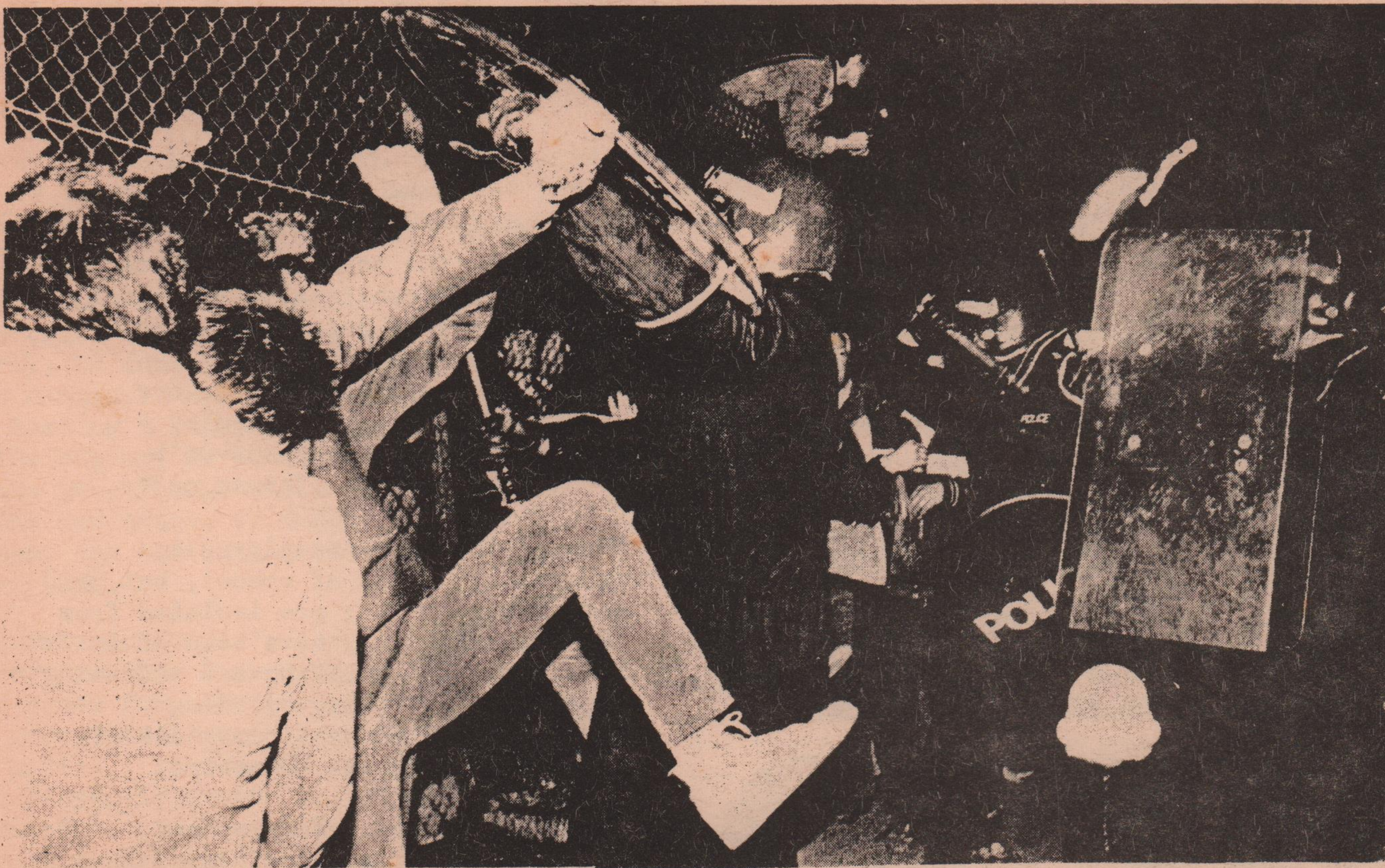
At the Crossroads squatter camp the vigilantes were known as the "Fathers". They were the goon squad for a gangster capitalist who extorted money from the squatters - a common practice throughout S Africa. Recently the mayor of Soweto, already a millionaire, allowed several hundred people to squat the council golf course in return for "rent" paid to him. Recently the government has used the Fathers to help them demolish the squatter camp, something they had been trying to do for years. When fighting broke out between the Fathers and the Comrades, police joined in, using tear gas to disperse the Comrades and their supporters. White plain-clothes police were seen organising road blocks with the vigilantes. When the fighting was at its height, whites were seen moving in with flame throwers to destroy the shacks. At first the TV news called this "tribal fighting". Now they can't hide the fact that it's class struggle.

THE COMRADES

The Comrades themselves are not a homogenous political movement. What they have in common is that together they form the most serious and organized attempt by the black working class to seize power so far. We may not agree with everything they say or do, but they represent the potential for revolution in S Africa.

The Comrades are at present in the

WAPPING THE FILTH!



Despite the deeply ingrained respect for trade union organisation and tradition which most printers have and their isolation from other sections of the class, the struggle at Wapping has shown several very positive features :

- i. Effective and often violent picketing of News International and TNT depots and plants around the country,
- ii. The consistent solidarity shown by newspaper distribution workers, particularly in London, in blacking NI, after SOGAT 'purged its contempt' by withdrawing blacking instructions.
- iii. Widespread attacks on TNT lorries and NI-related premises. Much of this hasn't been reported in the media (surprise, surprise) apart from the spectacular multimillion £ newsprint fire in Deptford, which was totally condemned by union leaders; Dean said those responsible should be caught.
- iv. Eruptions of class-conscious violence on the union stage-managed pickets at Wapping.
- v. Some printworkers on Fleet St. have organised hit squads to go out and do the business. These have been organised outside and across union divisions.

The Battle of Wapping

Picketing at Wapping is not an easy business, even with 1000s of people. The scab lorries can take over a dozen exits from the Wapping plant.

Most of the time the picket has been small and ineffective, just 50 or so printers standing around on the opposite side of the road from the gate. Under the watchful eye of the filth they frustratedly hurl abuse at the scabby workers in their armoured buses and the sneaky journalists in their flash cars as they cruise in and out unmolested.

Its only become a 'mass' picket on Saturday and some Wednesday nights and special occasions like May 1. These draw in friends and relatives of the printworkers, local residents showing support, delegations of workers, and numerous people looking for trouble along with kids from the estates looking for aggro. There are

also the usual hordes of lefty paper sellers who carry on flogging their noxious wares in the middle of full-scale battles with the cops.

Like the miners' strike its violent confrontations with the filth that have provided the best opportunity for other sections of the working class to get involved. But its difficult to have a riot when the filth are ready and waiting and the action is confined to a small area. Wapping is like a siege with road blocks all over the place and 'residents' expected to wear ID tags. Sometimes though the filth get caught off guard. There have been pitched battles in which crowd control barriers were used to block police horse charges. Scab lorries and vans get bricked and barricades thrown across the road both East and West of the main picket. These small scale victories are the result of 'roving pickets' which look out for gaps in Murdoch's defences. It is this sort of thing that union stewards look out for, telling everyone to 'do as you're told' as soon as groups break from the union policed static pickets.

On Saturday May 3 there was a battle in which pickets threw everything they could at the blue scum after they'd mounted a cavalry charge. To make up for their initial defeat the snatch squads then launched largely indiscriminate attacks on the crowd - a lot of people who hadn't been much involved were truncheoned or nicked but this didn't stop the rain of bricks which hospitalised dozens of cops during the night.

While all this was going on we were treated to a series of mind-numbing speeches from a platform about how we should be supporting the Labour Party. Chief steward Hicks claimed that all the stone-throwers were agents provocateurs. Tony Benn claimed it was a police riot and said he'd raise the matter in parliament (yawn). Another union official shouted: 'I appeal to the police to withdraw - we can keep

order amongst our own people.'. For the time being this is partly true. Despite their open collaboration with the pigs people like Hicks still command a lot of respect although a growing minority of printworkers (and even more outsiders) hate their guts.

There are still printworkers who say 'We don't want your sort on our picket line' to 'hooligans' chucking bricks but often they have to argue with their mates who say 'O' yes we do! If it wasn't for this lot we'd have lost ages ago'.

But non-printworkers don't just turn up to 'support the printers'. Outsiders have their own needs to assert. When an ITN van was smashed up on May 3 it was mostly non-printers involved. If other sections of the working class are less tolerant of the media than the printers fine, its not just a print dispute anymore.

Wildcat's BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. We are for the abolition of capitalism by armed revolution on a world scale. We are for the destruction of the money/market/wages system which exists in every country in the world, and its replacement by a classless society, in which goods are distributed according to needs and desires. Our lives will become continuous adventures of unrestrained enjoyment. We exist to actively participate in escalating the class war toward this end.
2. We are against all forms of capitalism; private, state and self-managed.
3. We are actively opposed to all ideologies which divide the working class, such as religion.
4. We are actively opposed to all divisions in the working class whereby one section oppresses another, such as sexism and racism.
5. We are against all expressions of nationalism, including national liberation movements such as the IRA.
6. The working class (wage labourers, the unemployed, housewives, etc.), is the revolutionary class; only its struggle can liberate humanity from scarcity, war and economic crisis. We support independent working class struggle, in all areas of life under capitalism, outside the control of the trade unions and all political parties.
7. We are against trade unions because they are part of the capitalist system, selling our labour power to the bosses, and sabotaging our struggles.
8. We totally oppose all capitalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. We are against participation in fronts with these organisations.
9. We are against participation in parliamentary elections; we are for the smashing of the capitalist state by the working class and the establishment of organisations of working class power.
10. We are against sectarianism, and support principled cooperation among revolutionaries.