

# Direct Action

The New  
Technology  
of Death  
Page 5



The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism

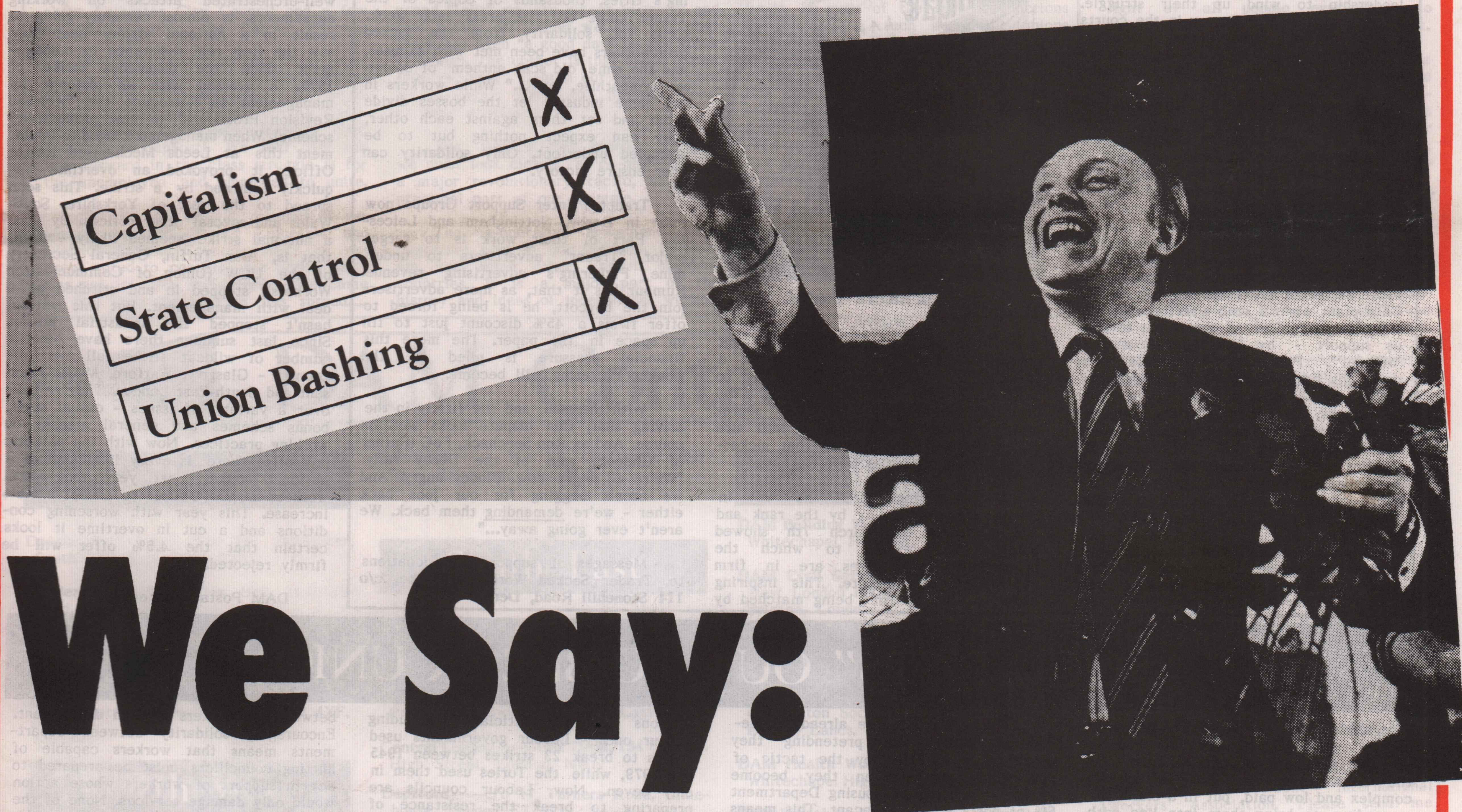
No 39

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25p

## Kinnock Says: Don't Rock The Boat

Comment - Page 3



# We Say: SINK IT!

Paper of the Direct Action Movement - International Workers Association



## Fighting to End Low Pay

Civil service workers from 3 unions have been engaged in a strike campaign since 6th April. The unions involved are the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) which organises clerical and typing workers; the Society of Civil and Public Servants which organises managers and the Northern Ireland Public Services Association, which organises most civil servants in the six counties. The unions are claiming a £20 per week pay rise, a £115 minimum wage, the establishment of one pay rate for each grade, six weeks holiday and a 35 hour week. The government made a 4% pay offer, then raised it to 4.25% (or £5.75 per week if this is worth more - such is the low pay in the civil service that £5.75 is higher than 4.25% for most clerical workers! A further catch is that 16 and 17 year olds would only get a £3.00 per week rise). The response of union members in ballots was to vote for a six week campaign of rolling strikes, area by area, culminating in a ballot in May for an all out strike to start on June 1st.

The first area hit was Wales and the North West. DHSS and Unemployment Benefit Offices struck first, followed by all civil service workers on the Thursday and Friday of the week. About 40,000 were involved and the strike was solid. Scotland and Northern Ireland were next and again the strike was solid. The Scottish strike resulted in



Lord Young:  
Concern(?)  
for the  
unemployed.

most claimants not getting their pre-Easter giros. 300,000 were affected although the government said only 30,000. The resulting queues outside emergency payment centres caused chaos and the distinct possibility of unrest and crime. The big test of support comes in the first week of May in London, always a "hive of moderation". The government is banking on a failure of the unions to make the strike effective in an area where 45% of civil service workers work. The feeling among many civil service workers is of anger. Since 1980 civil service wages have fallen between 20% and 30% behind the wages of other workers; 140,000 jobs have been cut; numbers of claimants have trebled while benefit office staff have been cut; working conditions have got worse and worse and staff turnover has in-

creased - in Bloomsbury (Surrey) DHSS it is estimated that turnover is 110%.

Civil service unions are plagued by disunity, a factor which has led to only 3 unions being involved in the campaign. The Institution of Professional Civil Servants (IPCS) accepted a deal which gives a rise of only 3.9%, but with a promise of rises of up to 18.6 over 28 months. The IPCS represents scientists and the union's national committee is undemocratic and right wing. Elections are still done by block vote and the pay deal was accepted at a conference without giving members the vote. The civil service union representing the lowest paid civil servants accepted the original £5.75 in return for "a review of differentials". The Inland Revenue Staff's Federation accepted the offer after members voted 29,000 to 16,000 against action - a sore loss since hitting the government's income was a prime target for the campaign. The CPSA, SCPS and NIPSA have therefore been isolated by a combination of government cunning, lack of solidarity and down-right duplicity on the part of some trade union leaders. Despite all this, however, union members decided to fight. There exists no rank and file organisation in the civil service although steps are being taken to form one, co-ordinated by members of Civil Service DAM.

## ARDBRIDE UPDATE

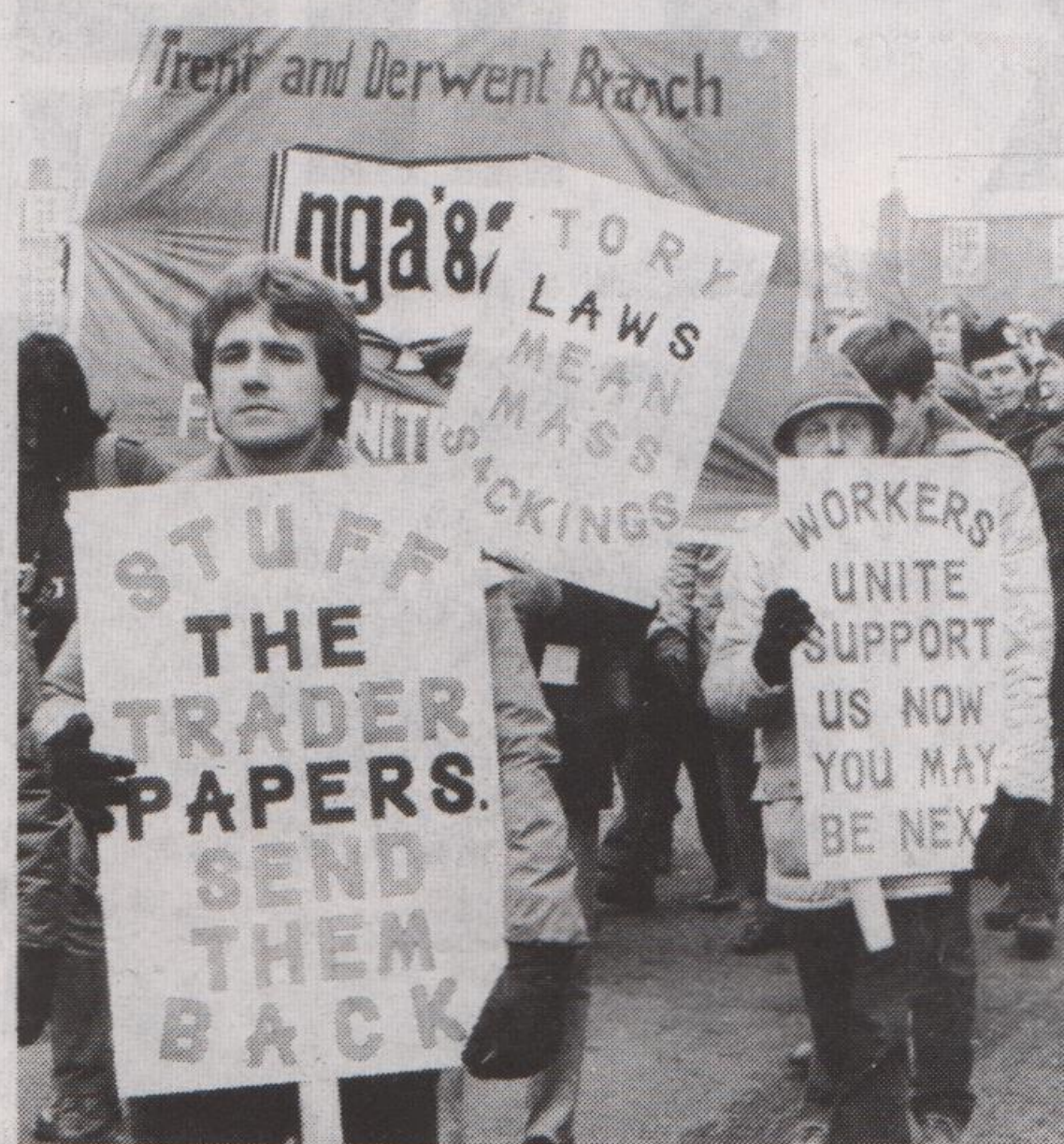
Much has happened over the Laura Ashley-Ardbride strike since the last issue of "Direct Action". The Irish anarchist group the WSM (Workers' Solidarity Movement) have picketed Laura Ashley's in Dublin while our German comrades in the FAU (Free Workers' Union) have continued their excellent support work - the use of sandwich boards outside shops got an excellent response from the public. In this country, besides the towns mentioned in DA 38, additional pickets have taken place in Peterborough and York (involving sacked Yorkshire miners). The DAM's International Secretary has also contacted 2 unions in the South African COSATU federation about the strike. Rumour has it that unless the strike is sorted out soon it can only be a matter of time before Laura Ashley pull out of the contract. Ross offered the strikers a pathetic £700 to give the strike up, which they refused, he then upped it to £1,500 and then to £2,000 the day after. All these offers were refused, the workers will except nothing less than their jobs back and their demands met. Ross has made various attempts to divide the workers one from another but they have failed, the message is united we stand. In general Laura Ashley's shares have been falling so they are planning to expand their markets by opening new shops in Japan and all the major cities in the USA. It doesn't matter where they go we'll be there!

## Sell Out Prevented

The 90 sacked printers involved in the Midlands Trader dispute have successfully resisted attempts by their union leadership to wind up their struggle. They've also won a victory in the courts against former boss, Lionel Pickering, who was trying to sabotage picketing by slapping injunctions on key activists.

It was at a meeting with national NGA reps that the printers saw clearly the kind of support to be expected from union bosses. The NGA reps - only one of whom had ever visited the picket line - had already accepted defeat, and wanted to name a date to end the dispute. "We forced them to change their minds", explained sacked printer, John Allen. "When they saw the strength and determination of the chapel - and learnt that Pickering could be re-opening the Heanor Gate plant with a scab workforce at any time now, they had no choice but to give us support - by keeping the dispute 'official'". Pickering, meanwhile, was doing his best to sabotage the printers' fight. Armed with a pack of lies and half-truths, he tried to lodge injunctions against 8 named printers, to keep them away from all his plants. By singling out individuals as "examples" he hoped to crush the resolve of the rank and file as a whole. But his plan failed.

At a court hearing in London on 18th March, the judge threw out the case against 4 of the accused, awarding costs against Pickering. The remaining 4 did



Sacked printers march in Derby.

have injunctions placed on them, but only forbidding them to picket in a "threatening or abusive manner". To celebrate this partial victory, the printers immediately called a secret picket of Pickering's Langley Mill site on March 24th and pledged that picketing would continue as before.

A 200-strong march and rally in Derby, organised solely by the rank and file printers, on March 7th showed publicly the extent to which the printworkers themselves are in firm control of this dispute. This inspiring example, though, isn't being matched by

fellow NGA printworkers at one plant in South Wales. Here, despite the national call to refuse handling any of Pickering's titles, thousands of copies of the Trader came off the press each week. Calls for solidarity from the sacked printworkers have been met with excuses, and the time old scab anthem "of course we sympathise, but ..." While workers in the same industry let the bosses divide them and set them against each other, they can expect nothing but to be trampled underfoot. Only solidarity can ever ensure victory.

Trader Printer Support Groups now exist in Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. Part of their work is to target major "Trader" advertisers to undermine Pickering's advertising revenue. Rumour has it that, as more advertisers join the boycott, he is being forced to offer firms a 45% discount just to fill up space in the paper. The more this financial pressure is piled on, the weaker Pickering will become.

With the rank and file firmly in the driving seat, this dispute looks well on course. And as Ron Senchack, FoC (Father of Chapel), said at the Derby rally: "We're all angry now. Bloody angry! And we aren't begging for our jobs back either - we're demanding them back. We aren't ever going away..."

Messages of support and donations to: **Trader Sacked Workers Dispute, c/o 114 Stonehill Road, Derby.**

## SORTING OUT THE P.O.

There are now all the signs of a major confrontation in the Post Office. A dismal pay offer, coupled with small but well-orchestrated attacks on working agreements, is almost certainly going to result in a national strike. Last May saw the first real resistance to management since the disastrous strike of 1971. It started with an attempt by management to introduce the "Revised Revision Procedure" (a new productivity scheme). When management tried to implement this at Leeds Mechanised Letter Office, it provoked an overtime ban quickly followed by a strike. This soon spread to the rest of Yorkshire, South Wales and several other offices. By June a national strike seemed likely - until, that is, Alan Tuffin, General Secretary of the UCW (Union of Communication Workers), stepped in and stitched up a deal with management. But this sell-out hasn't stopped the industrial action. Since last summer there have been a number of wildcat strikes all over the country - Glasgow, Watford, Mount Pleasant and South-East London. They've been over a variety of issues - casual staff, bonus schemes and general attacks on working practices. Now with the pathetic pay offer there is every likelihood of a national strike. Last year the postal workers narrowly voted to accept a 5.6% increase. This year with worsening conditions and a cut in overtime it looks certain that the 4.5% offer will be firmly rejected.

DAM Postal Workers.

## "SOCIALISTS" OUT TO BREAK UNION

Islington Council in North London is in dispute with 30 of its 40 housing advisers, members of NALGO. Last year the housing advisers, whose job is complex and low paid, put in a claim for re-grading, to bring them into line with other councils. When this was rejected they started minimum industrial action, withdrawal of goodwill, pending an appeal which was also rejected. This January they began a strict work-to-rule in support of their claim. The Director of Personnel wrote to each worker advising them that they would be suspended without pay if they didn't resume normal working practices, claiming the action broke their contracts. The workers refused and have been suspended from 9th March.

### GOODWILL

NALGO members believe that because the housing advisers are amongst the best organised and most solid sections what is going on is an attempt to break their union. Regarding customary goodwill and flexible working practices as a contractual obligation is a very significant attempt to erode workers' rights. Public Service workers often withdraw goodwill to pressurise councillors without damaging services.

Labour Councils are already implementing cuts while pretending they aren't. This is done by the tactic of not filling posts when they become vacant - in Islington Housing Department 6% of posts are kept vacant. This means council workers are under a great deal of pressure - they can't do their jobs properly and there's no relief staff available. The public suffer and pass their frustration on to workers with snide remarks, verbal abuse and physical assault. Meanwhile management do less and less work for their fat salaries and councillors duck responsibility by blaming Tory cuts in the Rate Support Grant. In fact Labour has always been more concerned with controlling services than providing them. Unable to provide enough adequate housing they use strong arm tactics against those who squat council properties which have been empty for years and which they're unlikely to renovate.

When two strikers were allowed to speak briefly at a council meeting on April 6th, they were shouted down and one had a councillor's fist waved in her face, while colleagues held the aggressor down. All this comes as no surprise to anarcho-syndicalists. We have no

illusions about politicians, including Labour ones - Labour governments used troops to break 23 strikes between 1945 and 1979, while the Tories used them in only seven. Now, Labour councils are preparing to break the resistance of unions to cuts, and to make workers and public suffer so they don't get surcharged.

Another underhand tactic has been to tell GMBATU manual workers that if NALGO members are re-graded there will be no money left for their claim. To their credit the manual workers approached NALGO to discuss a joint campaign against low pay. This, however, was rejected by the NALGO Executive Committee, but nevertheless rank and file workers are making links. Labour Councils have long used this tactic of playing off manual workers against NALGO to keep white collar pay low.

What we need is workers' unity, with rank and file white collar and manual workers uniting against management and the councils. At the moment there are in any council three or four different manual or white collar unions. The rank and file must organise horizontal links

between all workers in each department. Encouraging solidarity between departments means that workers capable of hurting councillors must be prepared to act in support of workers whose action would only damage services. None of the existing unions would tolerate this rejection of sectional barriers, nor would they tolerate the constant militancy and effective action against Labour as well as Tory and Alliance councils necessary to defend services, pay and conditions.

The alternative is for us ordinary workers to build our own, and not the bureaucrats' union. A union with a federal structure and based on the solidarity of all workers against all bosses. A union that does not declare all strikes unofficial or favour Labour Councils. We cannot give Labour the benefit of the doubt - as long as socialist minded workers give them the chance, Labour will exploit us for electoral purposes. Public services are provided by workers for workers and highly paid managers are idle parasites that we don't need, just as we don't need their masters. In the next election DON'T VOTE FOR LABOUR, VOTE FOR OUR CLASS - ABSTAIN AND ORGANISE!



# COMMENT: Playtime For The Power Mongers

Election fever is here again. The media is having its usual field day, whipping itself up into a frenzy of excitement. Daily we are bombarded by articles and meaningless "opinion" polls. The usual experts from obscure university departments are taken down from the shelf, dusted off and paraded across the TV screen to give their "so-called" informed opinions.

Despite this circus the fact remains that the last 8 years have been a disaster. Behind all the gloss lies the grinding poverty that many ordinary people have to endure daily. We have experienced massive increases in unemployment; our standards of living are plummeting; the health service is being cut to ribbons; housing estates are crumbling around us.

The only organisations our class has to defend itself against these attacks are the trade unions. And what a total mess they've made of it! Hopelessly divided by short-sighted self-interest and firmly in the grip of a bureaucracy divorced from the reality of workplace struggle, they have given up any right to speak on our behalf. The only "solution" offered by the unions at the moment is to work for the election of a Labour government. They seem to have conveniently forgotten the whole shabby history of the Labour Party in power - their repeated use of troops to break

strikes; their wage freezes and social contracts to attack living standards; their retention and development of nuclear weapons; their support for British imperialism in Ireland; the list is endless.

Like the Tories now, the last Labour government could do nothing to stem the tide of economic recession. Many people will still remember the pitiful sight of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Dennis Healey, going cap in hand to the IMF, begging for money in return for massive cuts in public spending and attacks on our living standards. If Labour gets in, how long will it be before we must resort to another "Winter of Discontent" to defend ourselves? There has always been a world of difference between what the Labour Party in opposition offer us, and what, faced with international capitalism, they can deliver when in power.

## BREAKING NEW GROUND

But the Labour Party under Neil Kinnock is breaking new ground - in the run-up to the elections they're not even pretending to offer the working class anything. In his burning desire for media acceptability Kinnock has hastily ditched any policies with a remotely socialist content. The fact that Labour is so dependent on the whims of the capitalist press should come as no great

surprise. Their commitment to parliamentary democracy means that even if it were their intention they could never hope to build support for socialist ideas in working class communities. By playing the parliamentary game, they are tied to a set of rules that leave no room for radical class-based politics.



In any case, what has parliamentary democracy ever had to offer us? What sort of "democracy" is it when our only chance to participate is the ritual placing of a mark on a ballot paper once

every 5 years? What voice does that give us in the running of our own lives and communities? Simple - no voice at all. We're given a choice of the Tories putting our lives into the hands of private enterprise, Labour Party "socialists" putting our lives into the hands of faceless bureaucrats, and the Alliance running willy-nilly between the two. Whatever way capitalism is managed the best we can hope for is a few pathetic crumbs off the table. Even if we could elect a party that genuinely wanted to abolish capitalism (fat chance) they would soon have to bow down to the immense power of the multinational corporations and the international banking system - the real puppet-masters behind the state. And we would be left in the same old situation of having to resist attacks on our class.

There is only one real alternative for working class people - we must turn our backs on all those who would seek to make decisions on our behalf. We must begin to build our own democratically controlled grassroots organisations in our workplaces and communities. These would not only exist to defend our rights and interests as a class from day to day, but would be the means by which we could achieve the revolutionary transformation of society to a world of freedom from poverty, injustice and exploitation for all.

## Fascists - Don't Let Them Divide Us

Evidence has recently come to light showing the involvement of the British state not only in actively helping nazi war criminals escape retribution, but in knowingly safehousing at least 17 in this country. A 1985 Canadian government investigation, the Deschenes Commission, reveals that in 1948 the British Foreign Office sent a secret telegram to Commonwealth countries requesting they drop all legal action against suspected war criminals. This, and similar policies in the US meant safe passage and refuge could be provided for them, on the grounds that they could be useful against the new "enemies" - the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries.

Among those safe-housed here were:

\* Antanas Gecevicius: commander of a platoon responsible for mass murder of Lithuanian and Byelorussian Jews - still living in impunity in Edinburgh.

\* Arne Mere: wanted for 125,000 murders in Estonia. The government turned down an extradition request in 1961. He remained free until his death.

\* Wladyslaw Derlinc: concentration camp "doctor" who performed horrendous sterilisation experiments on teenage Jewish girls. Awarded the OBE by the government and ran a Harley St practice until his death.

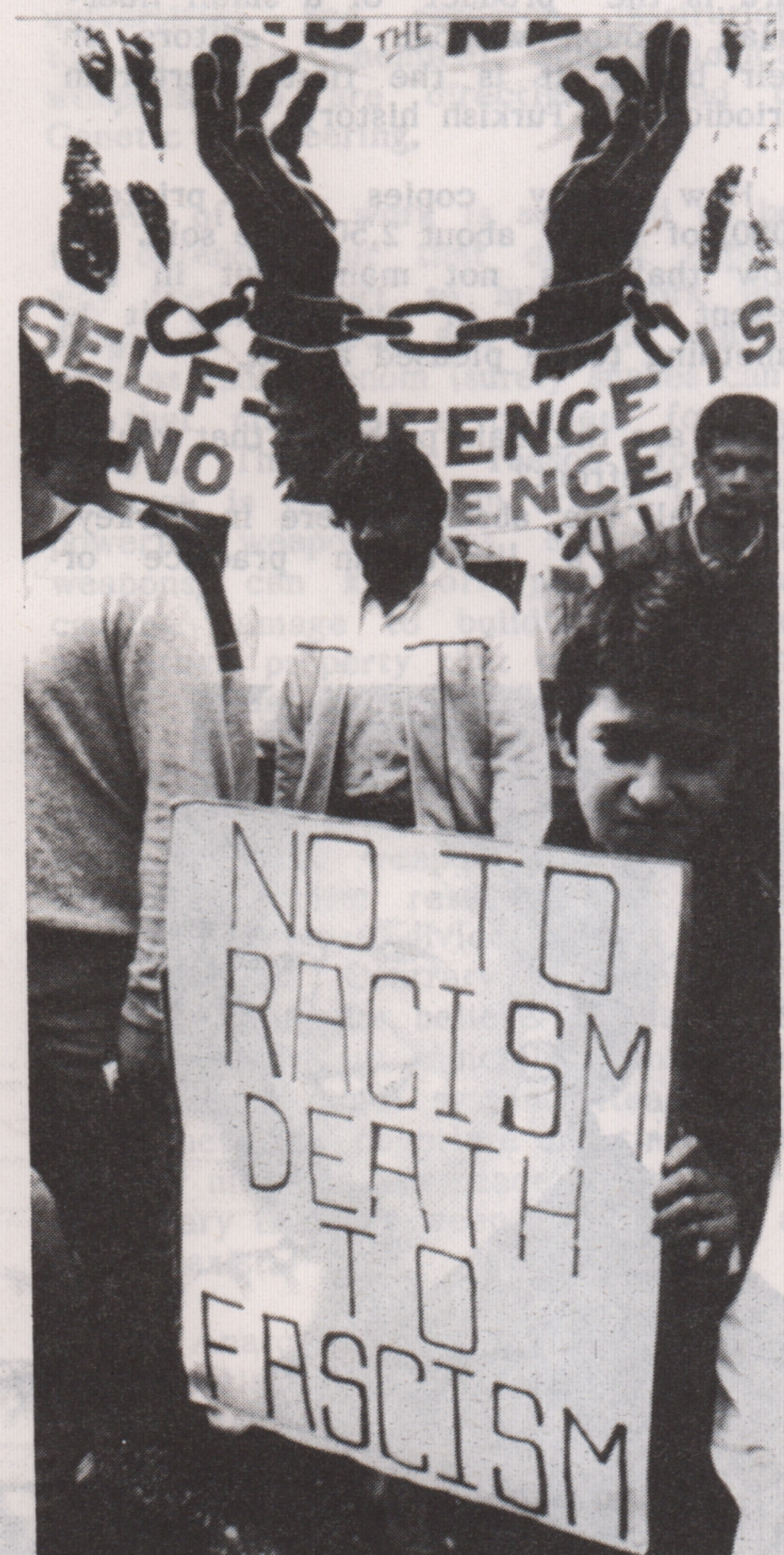
### RACIST STATE

The responsibility for safe-housing these and at least 14 others lies squarely with the Home Office and MI5, who allowed them entry. It's unlikely that anything will be done against these nazis still alive, just as in the past, Britain withheld information regarding dealings with Klaus Barbie, because of its "sensitive nature". The same applies to 2 papers relating to Josef Mengele. The racist British state obviously doesn't take nazism and the feelings of its victims seriously. Also, it comes as no surprise that a blind eye is turned to the activities of present-day nazis in Britain like the NF, who are allowed to openly push their sick propaganda and inspire and take part in vicious attacks on black people. It would be naive to expect anything else, after all leading Tories such as Charles Bond (chair of Barking Conservative Association and former NF parliamentary candidate) and Harvey Procter make no secrets about their extreme right links.

There is little between the ideology of the present-day fascists and those who committed the Nazi atrocities. "57 Varieties" of fascism abound, all unfit for human consumption. Fascists have always attempted to ride to power on the backs of the working class, despite the fact that their ideology is unashamedly anti-working class. They take genuine

but often inarticulate discontent with this system, distorting it to their own ends, offering scapegoats, not solutions. They almost always gain their influence at times when our class is in a position of weakness, unlike genuine militant working class self-activity activity, which tends to flourish when we feel confident of our own power.

The Strasserites and Hitler claimed to be anti-capitalist but soon dropped these ideas when they realised it was in their interests to collude with the bosses to maintain their position. Their seemingly radical "anti-capitalism" was also rendered totally meaningless by the nationalism that went with it. Likewise today's fascists are extremely patriotic and nationalistic, and seek to co-opt working class people into fighting to build the nation state, not fighting to free our class. Witness their obsessive support for British imperialism in Northern Ireland.



Hand in hand with nationalism goes racism. British fascists try to appeal to working class whites by blaming black people for poverty and unemployment. For a movement claiming to be anti-

capitalist it is ironic that they use the racism of capitalist institutions and the media to gain a foothold with white working class people. Fascism cannot succeed unless it turns one section of our class against a weaker one and blinds us to the real cause of our poverty - capitalism.

### IDEOLOGICAL BOOT

It isn't only black people fascists stick their ideological boot into, but gays and women, too. They have always pushed "traditional family values". A woman's role under fascism is as a reproduction machine for the state - motherhood is glorified and women are confined to the home. On the other hand the man's duty is to work and fight for the state - the sexual division of labour taken to its extreme limits. Fascists uphold the sexual inhibitions of the authoritarian family structure. A structure which makes people fear their own sexuality and to repress all but its most "conventional" expressions. They believe sexual practices that aren't purely reproductive, are unnatural and subversive, undermining the authoritarian family (a microcosm of the fascist state) and threatening fascism itself. So gays and lesbians are singled out as scapegoats to attack. Many thousands were murdered in nazi death camps. This is another way fascists try to turn one section of our class against another for their own ends.

Fascists always seek to crush independent and militant working class movements. When we organise against exploitation, they can't gain a foothold because in struggle we learn who our real enemies are, and how to fight them. In Italy Mussolini created closed shop unions. These were organs of state control run by fascist stooges to keep the working class in line and to destroy any resistance or militancy. Such unions created an illusion that workers had a say in running their lives but in reality took power totally out of their hands. Fascism and militant trade unionism are absolutely incompatible.

Finally, certain fascist tendencies claim to believe in a "minimum state". However, what they mean is a state stripped of all but its security forces retained to protect the "nation" from invasion and more importantly from internal subversion. A free reign would be given to the exploitation of the weak and powerless while any organised militancy would be ruthlessly crushed. Just the same old piss in a new bottle!

Fascists in Britain today put most of their energy into spreading racist filth, trying to turn the working class

against itself. British racism runs much deeper than organised fascism - witness the treatment of black people by the police, the courts, employers, the education system and immigration authorities to name but a few. But there's no doubt fascist ideology inspires the increasing number of racist attacks. Every day we hear of black people being harassed or beaten up; black homes and shops being daubed with racist graffiti, vandalized and burned out; hate mail and shit being shoved through black peoples' letter boxes. In Manchester alone recent months have seen the playground stabbing of an Asian lad, Ahmed Iqbal, by a racist pupil; supporters of Viraj Mendis being savagely attacked for standing up against the immigration laws; whole estates becoming virtual no-go areas for black people. It comes as no surprise that the fascists, spineless cowards that they are, choose the most vulnerable as their main victims - single Asian women with kids.

Anarcho-syndicalists have always argued fascism can only be fought by organised militant working class self-activity. We look to the example set by the CNT-AIT in the Spanish Revolution, who, as a militant workers' organisation, fought a bitter battle against Franco's fascists, who had superior resources and arms, whilst trying to maintain a revolution that was being stabbed in the back by reformists and soviet-backed communists. We look to the working class militants who kicked Moseley's blackshirts out of the East End of London in the Battle of Cable Street in 1936.

### NO CONCESSIONS

Genuine working class movements make no concessions to nationalism or other divisive ideologies. The working class has no country - our exploitation is international, so must be our resistance. We stand under no flag but that of solidarity, committed to defending all sections of the class, be they black people, women, gays and lesbians, from attack. We should make no concessions to those who seek to turn us against our own brothers and sisters. We support any working class initiatives against fascism - be it kicking them off the streets each time they try to march; encouraging support and self-help groups for victims of fascist attacks; constantly spreading anti-fascist propaganda until the message has truly hit home. We must build for a revolutionary alternative to fascism and all anti-working class ideologies, controlled by our class for our class. And we must always remember - AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL! UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL!



# The Revolutionary Alternative to Reformism

While much of what passes for the revolutionary left in Britain is either convulsed in damaging splits or keeping its head well down, the Direct Action Movement, small and young as it is, is growing in size and activity. With the reformist and revolutionary left in retreat in the face of harsh attacks on our class by the State and the bosses, with the trade unions unwilling to fight for their members in any real way, the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism are becoming relevant once again.

union the CNT is growing. The CNT was formed in 1946 as the inheritor of the revolutionary, libertarian unionism of the pre-war CGT-Syndicaliste Revolutionnaire. In the harsh post-war years the CNT had some success, but by the boom years of the 1960's it was virtually insignificant as a union. The present crisis with its attacks on working class living standards has, as in Britain and throughout the world, made the CNT's anarcho-syndicalism relevant again. The February editorial, in

competition, that could be fun, especially if we play in teams: university and school students vs the government; railworkers, dockers, electricians vs the bosses... The CNT is also developing a union for education workers and has been working for some time in the post and telecommunication sector. They have also paid a great deal of attention to the situation of young working class people, many unemployed or on YTS-type schemes. An independent Libertarian Youth organisation was set up last year.

The 22nd Congress of the CNT comes up on the 8-10 May. It will be a vital one for our French comrades. The Congress will discuss particular strategies for action in the present situation, will work towards a whole project of social transformation and will discuss the essential building of the CNT as the union of revolutionary, libertarian workers.

## UNIONE SINDACALE ITALIANA

Workers in Italy are increasingly discontented with bureaucratic unions. The past months have seen the ritual negotiation of national contracts between bosses and union leaders. Many workers have been unhappy with the deal struck by unions on their behalf. DA 37 mentioned the Genoa dockers who went on strike as much against "their" union as against the bosses. USI, originally formed in 1910 and smashed by Mussolini and his fascist movement, was refounded a few years ago. In between it saw a brief resurgence in 1968-69 with that

period's return to class struggle.

USI remains smaller than either the Spanish or French CNT's but is growing nonetheless. Our comrades feel the time is ripe for a revolutionary union controlled by its members. Part of USI's present strategy is the improvement of its paper "Lotta Di Classe" (Class Struggle) making it speak for all its members, and increasing its distribution in workplaces and communities. USI has relentlessly attacked the reformist trade unions for the sell-out negotiations but in two sectors it has also come up with alternative contracts to build around, namely in schools, especially central Italy, and public health, mainly Rome and Trieste. Initiatives have been carried out in other areas, such as post and telecommunications, air travel, and metal/mechanics in northern Italy. At present, USI has a postal section in Florence which publishes its own magazine whilst trying to build a national union in that sector. Much of USI's work has been around the defence of the right to strike, often in collaboration with independent rank and file groups.

With the growth of these unions, along with the Spanish CNT as well as the increasing militancy of workers in Greece and North Africa and therefore the possibility of IWA sections forming there, means that the Mediterranean area will be of great importance to our international.

## LE COMBAT SYNDICALISTE N°68

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For the moment, however, the British section of the International Workers Association remains an anarcho-syndicalist propaganda organisation with no pretensions to being a union. This is not the case with all IWA sections. Most readers will probably know of the Spanish CNT, historically the most important anarcho-syndicalist union and there were the rail strikes in Brazil (see DA 37 and elsewhere in this issue) initiated by our Brazilian section, the COB. We now want to tell you about two other IWA unions, the CNT of France and the USI of Italy. Both unions are still small but they do represent a real alternative to the bureaucratic, sell-out, unions. They should serve as an inspiration to revolutionary workers in Britain, showing that there is an alternative to our reformist unions.

## CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DU TRAVAIL

With the increasing combativity of French workers, France's revolutionary

their paper, "Le Combat Syndicaliste", is entitled "A Turning Point". After the rail strike (see DA 36), run by workers' assemblies and elected committees, bypassing the bureaucratic unions, these unions are suffering a loss of prestige and members. The CNT, on the other hand, has for the first time in many years an active railworkers section. They see the principles on which the strike was run to be a return to the revolutionary syndicalist practice that the CNT has always stood for.

The election of a right-wing government (after the horrendous, anti-working class "Socialist" Government) doesn't scare our comrades. They say: "What if the liberal ideas are reversible? These fine gentlemen have assailed our ears again with attractive slogans: responsibility, individual initiative, creative imagination, the out and out refusal of statism, the necessity to free oneself from the yoke of institutions....So, it seems that the students and railworkers have taken them at their word. Even

## Lotta di Classe



## SOLIDARITY FORCES GOVERNMENT BACKDOWN



Brazil: workers militancy grows

The Brazilian government has been forced to drop all charges against Brazilian Workers' Confederation (COB) General Secretary, Leonardo Morelli, and other members of the League of Railway Workers (LTO), the COB transport workers' federation. In January, the COB asked for international solidarity via the IWA secretariat. This resulted in many letters of protest being sent to both the Brazilian President and the Director of Transport who felt compelled to send perhaps as many as 300 replies as far as Japan and Australia giving the official version of events - the letter received by the IWA secretariat was numbered 187. In fact the President commented that "the anarchists are the biggest danger for Brazil", and that we have strong international resources. This was also printed in the Brazilian press. These events show that solidarity is the most important resource that the international working class has at its disposal.

Along with the dropping of court actions, the transport syndicates set up by the LTO/COB have now been recognised officially. The COB has since gone on to set up revolutionary syndicates in the textile, construction and education industries.

The importance of these events is that the Brazilian anarcho-syndicalists have broken the myths that revolutionary strikes are impossible and that unions couldn't exist outside the state system. The country's transport system was brought to a virtual standstill by democratically run strikes controlled by workplace assemblies and supported by other sections of the community. Although the court proceedings have now been dropped, our Brazilian comrades still require money to consolidate and extend their gains - donations to Box DA, Raven, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BU.

## TURKEY: ANARCHISTS GET ORGANISED

Kara means "black" in Turkish. It is also the title of a new libertarian publication, of which 3 issues have appeared up to now. The Italian anarchist magazine "Rivista Anarchica" asked the following questions of them:

- First of all what is Kara? Kara is the "product" of a small libertarian group, without any editors on their backs. It is the first libertarian periodical in Turkish history.

- How many copies are printed? 3,000, of which about 2,500 are sold. We know that it's not many, but in the present situation in our country it is something to be pleased about.

- What are the main problems that you've had to confront? Above all the absence, here in Turkey, of either a libertarian practice or

literature. This poses the greatest difficulties for us. There is no archive, no "memory". Our sources are very old: Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Arshinov, Malatesta, etc. Also because of this the preparation of each issue of Kara takes a lot of time and energy. This negatively influences the other activities which we carry out.

- How do you think anarchists outside Turkey can help?

We feel the necessity to receive frequent info on libertarian activities throughout the world. You can write in English, French, German. We need books, magazines, graphics, addresses (particularly in Greece) and naturally, money. In short, we need everything. Without forgetting the possibility of distributing Kara amongst the very many Turks forced to seek work abroad.

Kara's address is: Ahmet Kurt, PK 1053, 34437 Sirkeci/Istanbul, Turkey.



Turkey's Prime Minister with our own petty dictator



# The New Technology Of Death



Nuclear weapons are in the news at the moment, but another sinister arms race is on the horizon. Mr Gorbachev has offered a deal on nuclear weapons, but there is also the biological weapons race, about which little is known. This arms race is not even on the agenda, and only a minority is aware of its very existence.

Chemical weapons killed and injured a million people in the "Great War". This led to the Geneva Protocol in 1925, which banned the first use of chemical and biological weapons. This protocol was signed by 40 countries, but some took their time about signing it - the USA took 50 years!

By the end of the Second World War, the Nazis produced 250,000 tonnes of 3 types of nerve gas, but they were not able to use them and the technology which produced them was captured by the Allies (as were many other Nazi death weapons). The Japanese carried out experiments on P.O.W.'s, infecting them with anthrax, cholera, plague etc. They even tried to spread these diseases in Chinese cities. Of course, the British and Americans were not guiltless, they experimented with many different chemical and biological weapons.

Chemical weapons have seen much use since WW2, the USA's mass spraying of cancer causing "Agent Orange" in the Vietnam war, the use of mustard gas by the Iraqis in the Gulf war and claims that the Ethiopians have used nerve gas against the Eritrean rebels, being a few examples.

In 1972 the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention was drawn up to cover this area. It was seen as a model agreement and many countries agreed to its ban on biological weapons. Today, however, technology has moved on, creating a new breed of weapons not covered by the 1972 convention. With this new technology you only need to know how to use the organisms and have a small amount of bacteria or virus to make a biological weapon in only a short space of time. It is therefore not necessary to have large weapons stockpiles, the 1972 agreement is therefore open to abuse as monitoring and inspecting is so difficult. The '72 convention also permits these weapons to be produced on a small scale for "defensive studies". Governments can therefore justify their work on biological agents with the excuse that the "enemy" is going to use them.

In 1987, the US department of Defence plans to spend \$150 million on chemical and biological weapons, including, most frightening of all, recombination DNA (the so-called "Genetic Engineering").

This "new technology" can be used in the development of chemical and biological weapons in many ways;

The first is the development of existing range of chemical weapons.

The second is to create new poisons. It is now possible to change naturally occurring chemicals to make them more poisonous and longer lasting. It is also possible to produce them in larger quantities.

The third is into diseases. Highly dangerous, quick acting diseases can be made that can kill off the "enemy" population while the attackers would be protected by a vaccine. The more dangerous the virus the better as far as the military is concerned, AIDS is obviously of great interest to them (if they didn't make it in the first place).

A US magazine "Genewatch", has discovered that out of the 130 research projects the US military have given to universities and research institutions to do with chemical and biological weapons, 60 are directly related to Genetic Engineering.

All of this work is supposed to be for defence, but that doesn't explain why they support so much work into dangerous diseases and natural poisons such as snake venom (surely snakes can't be that much of a problem for the Army!). The basic reason for the research is that it can create horribly powerful weapons that, unlike nuclear weapons, can kill off people without causing damage to buildings, factories and other property that capitalists find more valuable than "mere" people.

Whilst States exist there'll be armies, and while armies exist there will be horrific weapons, the product of warped scientific research. War is the product of class divided, state dominated society. Contrary to what many peace campaigners believe war cannot be abolished without radically transforming the present social system. Reagan and Gorbachev may negotiate and tinker with the war machine, but peace can only be a temporary truce between wars so long as States exist.

As Anarcho-Syndicalists, we welcome the scientists that have refused to work on these projects (and that other "defence system"- Star Wars) but individual action alone cannot put an end to wars, only working class mass action can, by a mass refusal to have anything to do with it and ultimately by replacing this whole rotten system with one that puts people before profit and peace before power.

## A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY

The recent slaughter of 6 members of the South African Railways & Harbour Workers' Union and the raiding of COSATU's offices, involving the beating up of union militants by riot police once again highlights the need for international solidarity with the black working class in its struggle against the apartheid state. Over 18,000 railworkers have been on strike since mid-March in support of a sacked comrade. The state-owned railways continue to be a bastion of apartheid. This contrasts with the multinational-owned companies who, having exploited cheap labour for years now feel threatened by the growth of the independent unions, would now like to see some liberal "reforms". The Botha government's attempts to suppress workers' militancy in the run-up to the whites-only election has failed as the unrest on the railway's and in the townships shows.

For the South African working class to carry on resisting this latest onslaught and to hasten the downfall of apartheid, it is essential that working class support is organised worldwide. In Britain, however, apart from isolated examples, support so far has been pathetic. There's no better example of this than the railway unions. ASLEF, for example, voted at last year's conference to disinvest (we wonder why they invested in the first place). They

then called an emergency AGM which was rigged to overturn the decision. Although only a small step, disinvestment could have been used to publicise the South African struggle and begin to build support in the rank and file of the union. Acting like City investment tycoons, the union bureaucrats put their big offices and fancy cars before supporting South African workers who are paying with their lives.

A further initiative was the setting up of the Railway Workers Against Apartheid Group. This sought to build a cross-union campaign which could have provided the means to begin building support among the rank and file. Had it not fallen into the hands of the left of the Labour Party, which instead of contacting railworkers in South Africa directly, went down the path that has plagued the left's approach for years. They turned to SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions, the "industrial" wing of the ANC) and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, both of which oppose direct links with South African workers (see DA 38). The idiocy of this action can be measured by the fact that in all their speaking tours, literature, etc, the South African Railway & Harbour Workers' Union has never been mentioned. Direct links should have been established and used to illustrate to the day-to-day struggle of South African railworkers to their British counterparts.

The urgent task of building support for South African workers has to be undertaken. Valuable time has been lost in the past due to the refusal of SACTU and the AAM to support direct links and the influence of these 2 organisations in the trade union movement. Past examples of direct links have often been built on and led to solidarity. An instance of this occurred in 1981 when British Leyland attempted to sack union militants in their South African factories. The links established in the early '70's with Leyland shop stewards in Britain and Australia paid off due to threats to boycott work which would otherwise have been done in South Africa. Management was forced to back down, the militants were reinstated and MAWU (Metal and Allied Workers Union) gained ground rapidly.

Such rank and file support is more than just charity. The practical experience and knowledge gained by British workers will undoubtedly aid them in their own struggles. It is therefore obvious that union bureaucrats do not view any independent action by workers with favour but such action must be built for the sake of the South African working class and ultimately our own.



Direct links gained results for black workers at Leylands.

### DEPORTATION THREAT, AGAIN

In March, George Roucou, a UCATT shop steward at Manchester Council's Direct Works Department won his appeal against deportation to the Seychelles and separation from his common-law wife, Kim, and 3 children. This usually means victory, but now the Home Office is to carry out their own appeal.

In 1979 George's British passport failed to return from the Home Office where he'd sent it for renewal of his work permit. It took 4 frustrating years to get a new one from the Seychelles consulate. Along with the break-down of his first marriage, this put George in technical breach of the immigration laws. On this basis the Home Office declared George an illegal immigrant, issuing a deportation order in September 1986.

Support for George has been tremendous. A march in February attracted over 1500 people, well over half of them workers from various council departments while at the appeal itself once again hundreds of trade unionists showed their solidarity. The Home Office's case was basically one of: "you are black and we don't want you here". Their appeal

together with their past treatment of George suggests they are especially determined. The working class solidarity shown up to now must be built on to prevent this state racism and victimisation. The campaign can be contacted at: Room 3005, Town Hall Extension, Manchester.

### F.G.F. DISPUTE

Six workers at FGF Northern Ltd, near Bolton have been on strike since Thursday 18th February, shortly after they had joined the TGWU and one person sacked.

Picketing of the depot has been fairly effective despite initial harassment by the cops. Some wagons have been turned away while BT workers have refused to cross picket lines to repair the phone system out of order since early on in the dispute. The union has shown less support than local workers who have effectively been the sole source of support. Blackwell, regional official, has earned himself the title, "Invisible Man" since he went ex-directory and his disappearance from the picket line. Despite this, the strikers are confident.

Send donations and messages of support to: Dave Cracknell, 110 Mossfield Road, Pendlebury, Swinton, Manchester M27 2EG.



# Is your boss crippling you?

When someone uses the term "RSI" in Britain it draws blank stares, yet it is not an uncommon affliction for workers in this country. It is estimated that it is the second most common cause of work-related sick days off! - but few of us know about it



## WHAT IS IT?

RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) is a catch-all term for a number of conditions. What it really means for the sufferer is inflammation of the tendons and tendon sheaths causing pain, burning and tingling sensations, swelling, discolouring, loss of movement and discomfort in hands, arms, shoulders and sometimes legs. There are many theories about causes and contributory factors - but what sufferers have in common is being in work requiring long periods with rapid, repetitive actions and/or constant muscle tension. So far RSI's can't be effectively treated - the damage is mostly irreversible.

RSI's, however, aren't new. Years ago laundresses (washing the dresses of the rich) suffered "washer woman's elbow"; last century there was "telegraphist's wrist" and "writer's cramp" has a long history. Factory workers have suffered for many years - many car workers in Japan in the '60's and '70's were crippled by them, only to be sacked, and sometimes beaten up by

company guards if they protested. Now that it's known to afflict those in "safe, clean jobs" (office, administrative, and technical occupations) it is gaining more attention. In Australia RSI has been the industrial health and safety issue since the beginning of the 1980's and there has been much research and education around it.

## LACK OF INFORMATION

Despite this there is little done by British unions until recently. Unions such as NUPE, GMBATU, and NGA have published material in journals and bulletins. The TUC has produced guidelines and other educational materials. But ignorance of RSI's continues - British workers are still likely to be told by doctors that they are getting old or have arthritis rather than being diagnosed as having a preventable industrial injury.



## INCREASE

Many factors may be contributing to increasing numbers of workers with RSI's:

1. Introduction of new technology (eg word processors needing more rapid, constant movements) and lack of training in this equipment (eg many more people using keyboards who haven't been taught typing skills, posture, etc).
2. Speed-ups in many industries demanded by the push for "productivity"

and profits, aggravated by chronic understaffing in both the public and private sectors.

3. Direct pressure from the bosses to work faster "either by looking over the worker's shoulder or by the monitoring of such workers as data processors and telephonists, made possible by computerised work processes.

4. The double workload of women who work for a living and then have to do the domestic work as well.

5. Increases in piece-work (in factories or "outwork"), bonus systems, and compulsory overtime.

6. General increase in stress at work and in society from pressure to increase productivity, from poverty, from fear of unemployment, etc.

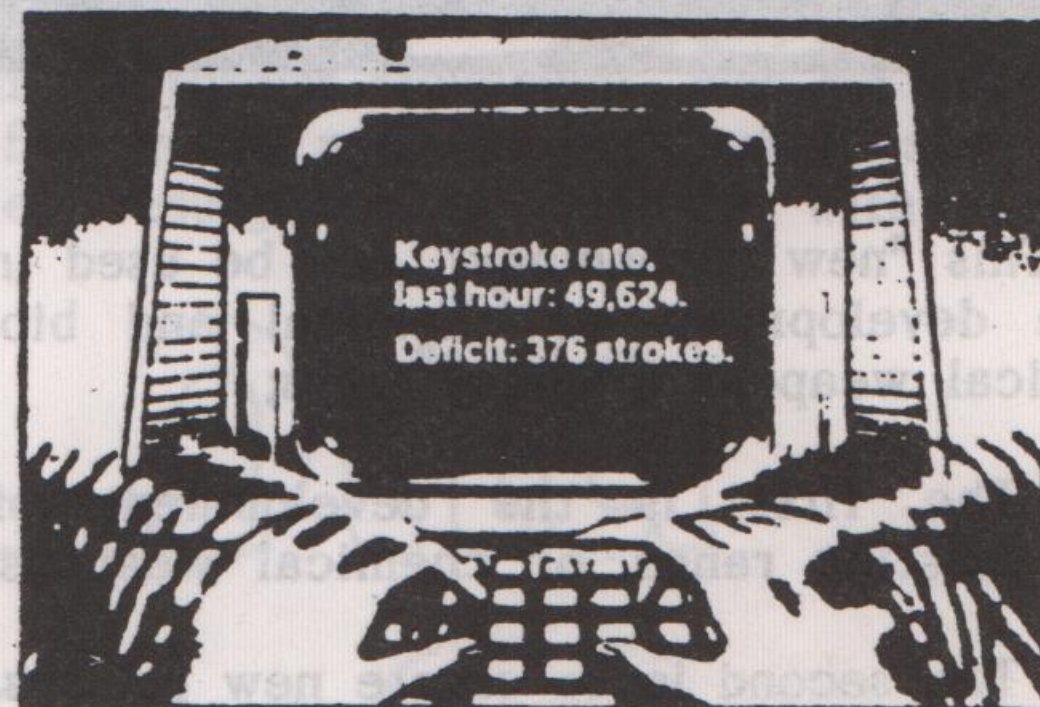
7. Greater awareness of RSI's by some medical personnel and workers themselves leading to better diagnoses.

## AT RISK

Almost anyone who does this kind of repetitive work is at risk, especially process work, clothing and textiles, food production, cleaning, clerical and data processing and some technical areas. Many of these workers are women, immigrants and many are non-unionised.

## COMPENSATION?

RSI's are covered by the DHSS Proscribed Industrial Diseases Schedule



you must have been in an industry for 10 years and prove at least 50% disability! This excludes a large number of affected workers. In addition, many RSI's aren't covered on this schedule and it seems the tripartite (bosses, union bureaucracy and state) Industrial Injuries Advisory Council doesn't intend to extend the list. So many workers are turning to common law claims for compensation. In January 33 (out of 36) GMBATU members employed at Sandwich and Doraplug Ltd in Kent, won an out-of-court settlement for £72,000. Yet the amount per worker in such claims is low given they are permanently injured, and the costs of going to the bosses' courts are high - with no guarantee of success.

## WHAT TO DO?

Workers must find ways to ensure there is proper training in use of equipment; screening and early diagnosis facilities (paid for by the bosses, but answerable to the workers); adequate on-the-job education about RSI's; properly designed and adjusted workstations; adequate breaks and real job rotation; an end to piece work, incentive schemes, and regular overtime; adequate staffing; no more pressure for speed-ups and increased productivity. We must educate ourselves about the dangers of RSI's and pass on the information to our workmates. Health and safety reps must anticipate hazards and spread information - if not they should be replaced by workers who will do so and who are answerable to an assembly of workers in their section. Workers with RSI's need mutual aid to carry on their lives and fight for compensation through industrial action, financial support, practical help and emotional support. It's not easy dealing with the effects of a painful, crippling yet largely invisible injury.

## ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM: BUILDING FOR CHANGE.

DAM-IWA annual conference, April 17th -19th.

The months preceding the recently held Annual Conference of the Direct Action Movement had seen an encouraging increase in the number of militants active in our organisation, and it was hoped that this year's conference would mark an important stage in the development of an active anarcho-syndicalist movement in Britain.

We weren't disappointed. Delegates attended from London, Cambridge, Kent, Bristol, Leamington, Mansfield, Leicester, Manchester, Burnley, Bolton, Crewe, Liverpool, Leeds, Huddersfield, Doncaster, Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as an observer from Northern Ireland. The conference lasted three full days, and showed a high level of debate, open discussion and an increasingly clear idea of the tasks ahead of us.

The first part of the conference dealt with improving the DAM's internal organisation, to make it more effective as well as directly democratic. Commissions were established to deal with publications, Ireland, women, and the production of a concise rule book. It was also agreed to start publication of an anarcho-syndicalist magazine, to complement the ever improving "Direct Action". We then went on to discuss our relations with other British anarchist federations, finally agreeing to encourage local co-operation wherever possible and practical.

In the coming year it was agreed to launch a campaign around the General Election, stressing the class struggle alternative to electoralism. We will also be actively campaigning against the government's Poll Tax, soon to be launched in Scotland and aimed to hit the low-waged and the unemployed.

The longest and most stimulating debate of the conference was on the present and future industrial strategy of the DAM. Comrades were united on our present policy of helping to develop

independent trade union rank and file organisations, and it was agreed to hold a special national conference this summer to hammer out how to go beyond the limitations of fighting the class struggle within the capitalist trade unions.

Finally, there was a discussion on how best to support (and help win) the Ardbride/Laura Ashley strike. The solidarity of other sections of our International Workers' Association has been very effective (notably that of our West German comrades in the Frei Arbeiter Union), and is a sign of the development of our movement on an international level.

Aside from the business of the conference, videos were shown, football and volleyball were played, vast amounts of alcohol was consumed, and all-round closer contacts were established between anarcho-syndicalist comrades from all parts of the country. Comrades returned to their communities and workplaces confident in the power and relevance of our anarcho-syndicalist ideas and determined to help build the international working class fightback against the bosses and the state.



## More Work, Less £'s

Last September the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) was introduced to replace the old O-level and CSE exams. However, it was not introduced to provide a better system of education but for the benefit of employers. Due to the pathetically low levels of financing and consultation, education workers as well as pupils have been suffering with extra work for no extra pay. Teachers have been most vocal in pointing this out but the often forgotten ancillary staff have suffered just as much.

## INCREASED WORKLOAD

Technicians are an essential part of the teaching of subjects such as science and technology yet GCSE seems to be attacking them. The requirement for "continuous assessment" of pupils' performance means an extra workload preparing equipment for assessed practical tests. Also, due to chronic underfunding, many schools do not have the equipment to assess whole classes at a time. The education boards' answer to this is for the teacher to assess half the class while the others are supervised by the technicians of course. Besides the increased workload and the fact that they are untrained for this work, it means that technicians will be working without insurance and may be personally liable should a child be injured while under their supervision.

## UNION INACTIVITY

The technician's lot is made worse by the fact that increasingly they are only part-time workers paid during term and having to claim dole during holidays - the government's strict new rules make even this more difficult. Technicians are often isolated from other workers because they are in local government unions such as NALGO and NUPE while the majority of school workers are in the teaching unions. Trying to get concerted action between

the teaching unions has proved difficult enough (the bureaucrats are too busy posturing and trying to appear radical) - but to get it between teaching and local government unions is almost unthinkable.



## After GCSE will the future be so bright?

The only answer is to build cross-trade rank and file groups in the schools to co-ordinate joint activities. But before that can happen teachers must get out of the dream world that they are "professional" staff who shouldn't be seen associating with mere weekly paid workers never mind go on strike with them. This snobbery is still rife. In some schools technicians and secretarial staff aren't even allowed into the staff room to drink coffee with the teachers! Radicalism is growing in the education industry but we are still a long way from the level needed to challenge both the union bureaucrats and the Department of Education and Science.



# Letters

## UNEMPLOYED CENTRE CAMPAIGN

Dear Direct Action,

On March 4th 1987 the Recreation and Arts department of Leicester (supposedly socialist) City Council passed proposals to cut off resources from the unemployed in a centre which was set up for us in the first place.

After trying to negotiate through the conventional channels with no response from the council we...decided to take control of the centre as it was the only option left to us. Within two days we had set up a timetable of workshops ....and had more people using the centre than ever before. We also set up a free food kitchen.... welcoming contributions from those people who could afford it.

Initially the occupation was unemployed only, as we felt that we had to show we could organise ourselves autonomously....we saw it as important to build up the confidence we lacked as unemployed....certain trade unions took exception to this as we refused them access to their offices in the centre ....some trade union bureaucrats then drew the conclusion that we were anti-trade union and anti-labour movement, helped along by a smear campaign put about Leicester City Council and a few individuals within the Labour Party....

We have never been anti-trade union or anti-labour movement, and we welcome the support of both outside the occupation (eg picketing, lobbying the Council, passing resolutions through their branches in support). We feel that the way forward in the class struggle is for the unemployed and employed to unite.

To succeed in our occupation we needed the support of Leicester and District Trades Council, which in the event voted to condemn our action as it was not in their self-interest. We came to feel very isolated as lies spread....

After much debate, we decided to open our doors to employed trade unionists....This had little effect as the lies, rumours and smears had stuck and could not be removed.

Meanwhile we were still trying to negotiate with the council, but after 2 meetings it was clear that....Talks were getting nowhere, but rather disintegrating into petty differences between individuals.

Due to a lack of support from trade union bureaucrats and the mainstream Labour Party, we finished the occupation on 7th April after constant intimidation and threats of violent eviction from the premises.

Although the occupation has been abandoned, the campaign has not, and the fight to give unemployed people the facilities and rights that employed people take for granted will continue.

UWROC Campaign,  
c/o 70 High St,  
Leicester.

(edited due to space)

## CO-OPS

Dear Direct Action,

I agree with the critique of workers co-ops (DA 37). Most of the time co-ops in the capitalist system serve to integrate the workers into that system. The fact that the Tories are now supporting the development of co-ops indicates they do not see them as a threat. Rather this seems to be another development in the process, promoted through the media by the state and capitalists, that we should identify with their economic interests. When the pound "falls" we are meant to worry and feel better off when we are told that there has been "a good day" on the stock exchange. The upshot is that many accept that we must "tighten our belts", accept wage cuts, etc., to protect "our" national economy.

Yet, despite this overall critique, we must look closely at co-ops - not as a major revolutionary tactic, but as a practical part of our struggle.

The co-operative movement is an important part of our heritage. In Britain and some other English speaking countries, it is a major part of the history and ideas of independent working

class self-organisation - along with the early unions, workers' education (mechanics institutes, libraries, clubs etc).

Co-ops offer both historical and current examples that co-operative, non-hierarchical ways of working are possible. Many people are thoroughly convinced that bosses are essential and that technical, administrative, skilled and unskilled workers cannot run things together. Co-ops show that this is not true - even under capitalism.

Militant workers sooner or later attract the attention of bosses, as is clear from the recent "World in Action" report detailing the blacklist of militants compiled by the Economic League (see Black Flag 168). It appears that members of groups like the Direct Action Movement are included. In this situation co-ops can provide a source of productive work and income for militants denied work because of their activities. Of course, the best tactic is the use of strikes when workers are sacked. However, at times when there is less solidarity and militancy, co-ops may be a good fall-back. It may be no coincidence that several of the "locals" of the IWW in the USA are based in workers' co-ops.

The problem with co-ops of militant workers is that they have no heart for competition or for charging other militants for their services. This is the story of many printing co-ops, for example. It is necessary for these sorts of co-ops to be seen as very much a part of our struggle, deserving support and drawing on resources greater than can be found in one isolated co-op workshop. This leads to my final point.

One of the (many) reasons for the lack of militancy in existing unions is the fear of the confiscation of union funds. If some of the current functions of the unions, such as credit unions insurance, legal advice, or research into industrial changes, health and safety etc, were taken over by co-ops, this could contribute to the freeing of unions to be fighting bodies instead of frightened bureaucracies.

Co-ops can be ways of getting workers to compete, to become like bosses and reinforce capitalism. They can also make a practical contribution to our fight. What they need is a context - class struggle and independent working class organisation.

Paul (South London)

## DAM - IWA

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.

The DAM was formed in 1979 from the SWF (Syndicalist Workers' Federation) and other groups and individuals believing in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism. It is the British section of the International Workers' Association. This was formed in 1922 and has national sections in more than dozen countries.

# DAM Contacts

## North East

Doncaster-----P.O Box 96, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 0QU.

Huddersfield-----P.O Box B20, Huddersfield, HD1 1RL.

Leeds-----Box DAM, 46 The Calls, Leeds, LS2 7EY.

Newcastle-----c/o Tyneside Free Press, 5, Charlotte Square, Newcastle, NE1 4XF.

## North West

Bolton-----c/o Bolton Socialist Club, Wood St., Bolton, Lancs.

Burnley-----5, Hollin Hill, Burnley, Lancs.

Liverpool-----Box DAM, 82 Lark Lane, Aigburth, Liverpool 17.

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

Crewe & Stoke-----c/o National Secretary, c/o Camridge DAM.

Tameside-----c/o 3, Stanhope Street, Ashton-u-Lyne, Tameside, OL6 9QY.

## Scotland

Bellshill, Lanarks-----c/o National Secretary, c/o Cambridge DAM.

Edinburgh-----Box 83, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh, EH1 2QB.

## South East

Brixton-----121 Railton Road, Brixton, London SE24.

Cambridge-----Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge.

Central London-----Box DAM, 234 Camden High Street, London, NW1.

Deptford-----c/o 17 Turners Road, Limehouse, London E3.

East London-----c/o 84b Whitechapel High St., London, E1 7QX.

S.W London-----c/o 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London, SE24.

Tower Hamlets-----17 Turners Rd., Limehouse, London E3.

## Others

Bristol-----Box DAM, 37 Stokescroft, Bristol 2.

Mansfield & Ashfield-----28 Lucknow Drive, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.

For contacts in S. Wales, the Midlands, East Anglia, Kent, etc, write to the National Secretary, c/o Cambridge DAM.

## Industrial

DAM Building Workers - c/o ELDAM, 84b Whitechapel High St, London, E1 7QX.

DAM Civil Service Workers - c/o South West London DAM, c/o 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London.

DAM Council Workers - c/o Box DAM, 234 Camden High Street, London NW1.

DAM Education Workers - c/o Bolton DAM, c/o Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St, Bolton, Lancs.

DAM Health Workers - c/o ELDAM, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX.

DAM Postal Workers - c/o SW London DAM, c/o 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London.

DAM Railworkers - c/o Manchester DAM, c/o Box DA, Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester.

## OUR HISTORY

A number of DAM members are setting up a history study group "Looking at Anarcho-syndicalism". If you are interested please contact: Barry, c/o DAM National Secretary, c/o Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge.

## IWA T-SHIRTS

International Workers' Association T-Shirts - IWA logo in red and black on white - 1 size fits all - £3.50 including p&p from East London DAM-IWA (c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1) - cheques/PO's payable to Direct Action Movement. Limited edition - get yours while stocks last.

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## WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

I would like more information about the Direct Action Movement - International Workers' Association. Please send me information.

Name .....

Address.....

Send to DAM/IWA, c/o Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir St., Cambridge.

DEADLINE FOR DA 40 -  
SATURDAY MAY 23RD

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# Direct Action

**Stop Strip Searches In  
Maghaberry & Durham**  
NATIONAL DEMO SAT.  
JUNE 13TH - COACHES MEET:  
STUDENT UNION, DUNELM HOUSE, NEW ELVET

# ONE IN SIX STARVE!

Seven hundred million people (1 in 6 of the world population) do not get enough to eat. They suffer not because there is no food or enough fertile land but because they are utterly poor. They are people deprived of land and work, with no money and little or no economic significance. And as western governments continue to exploit their recession the numbers of utterly poor are increasing. A recent World Bank report stated... "The world has ample food, we now need to realise....an adequate food supply is no longer the problem....From among the many factors that conspire to leave almost one person in five in today's world underfed, one stands out above all others: poverty."

## THE PROBLEMS

It is often said that capitalism creates wealth (though not in this paper). This is not true - it merely creates the wealthy. The wealth is simply relocated into the capitalists' bank accounts. Nowhere is this more clear than in so-called developing countries where western-style capitalism has only recently begun. Ancient communities and cultures are being destroyed and replaced by an elite of rich farmers who will have turned the land barren before this century is over. The poor are in the shadow of the wealthy, a poisoned shadow that has been cast over many generations to come.

## DEBT

**THE HAND THAT GIVES....** In 1985 3.5 billion dollars was given in aid to help ease the African famine **....IS THE HAND THAT TAKES AWAY....** also in 1985 the poorest 29 African countries paid back twice this amount in debt repayments. Money coming out of the 3rd world dwarfs voluntary aid that goes in - in 1985 \$25 billion came out and \$2.8bn of voluntary aid went in. The origins of this lie in the sharp oil price rises of 1973, leading to vastly increased profits for oil producers which they put into various banks. The banks had more money to lend and adopted liberal lending policies, particularly to governments. Third world governments looked to the banks who were more than happy to help. Due to the increased oil prices as much as 70% of the money was used to buy oil and so went straight back to the bank accounts of the oil producers.

But a recession began to bite at the end of the '70's. One consequence of this, and of the economic policies produced to cope with it, was a dramatic rise in interest rates. And so more and more 3rd world money was used to keep up with debt repayments. This is made even worse by the way the borrowed money was squandered on prestige projects, or imports, or, worse still, on armaments. Much of it was simply stolen by the ruling elite - Marcos managed to rob an estimated \$6-10 billion of the \$26 billion that the Philippines borrowed.

## THE POOR BEAR THE BRUNT

Third world debt is seen as a problem shared by western banks and 3rd world governments. They, however, won't go hungry or homeless - as always it is the poor who suffer. Many debts have now been re-negotiated and the banks have forced a stupid and austere economic policy. The details may vary but three common points emerge - 1. expand production of export crops; 2. cut back on imports; 3. reduce public spending. This



Sarvation, poverty and war, what else can this child expect?

is stupid as money must be spent on imports (agricultural machinery) to produce more export crops. Furthermore, there are already gluts of many of these commodities (see later). This programme ensures that such a country doesn't damage the world financial and economic system, which is its true purpose.

## WHY ARE THE BANKS WORRIED?

On the face of it the banks have nothing to worry about. After all Citicorp, an American bank and a major lender to Brazil, had its best ever year in 1984. But they do have a very real problem - they have lent more money to the 3rd world than they actually have, so the losses incurred should a major 3rd world debtor default would outstrip the entire assets of the banks concerned. The Midland has lent more than twice the amount of capital it actually possesses to South American countries - should the Midlands' debtors default it will be bankrupt and everyone with money in it will lose out to some extent. This is why the banks are worried and when banks worry the poor starve.

## TRADE

One thing the banks want from developing countries is more exports to make more money to pay off their debts. But this doesn't work. The developing countries export commodities, i.e. raw materials. They can't export manufactured goods due to agreements between the industrialised countries protecting their industries by preventing newcomers exporting to the developed world. Thus developing countries compete with each other causing gluts of commodities leading to a fall in prices. During the African famine in 1985, Sudan had a vast amount of unsold cotton due to a world glut. Mali produced its highest ever cotton harvest just in time for a huge slump in prices losing about \$30 million.

Speculators and multinationals make these problems much worse. It is estimated that only 5% of commodity

deals relate to the actual delivery. The rest is speculation - buying low and selling high - without ever seeing or caring about the commodity concerned. This has the effect of magnifying market forces making prices very unstable. Multinationals control 40% of world trade and 90% of commodity trade. The world's top 30 companies each have more trade than the combined exports of the 50 poorest countries. A Nestle report states: "The volume of our purchases of coffee and cocoa is so vast that it influences the market for these commodities". Multinationals have considerable influence over market prices and to a certain extent control the price they will pay.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The UN suggests giving 0.7% of gross national product to poor countries as aid - the UK gives 0.34% and would have to give 70% more to come into line with the EEC average. Many people are very critical of aid programmes, arguing for economic changes to directly ease the burden of debt and open up new areas of trade to developing countries. This is also problematic and would be unacceptable to the west. Government aid refers to many things - emergency relief to Africa is aid, so is a new shipyard in Gibraltar. Much aid goes to prestige schemes in the theory that benefits will "filter down". In reality the poor are often worse off. The Geelra irrigation project in Sudan opened up large areas of land for modern farming techniques, benefitting only the rich farmers. The original occupants were cleared off and traditional nomadic routes were blocked.

Commercial interests have a great influence - much aid is given with an eye on helping home companies. India received £65 million worth of Westland helicopters it didn't really want. Also, under the Aid Trade Provision scheme, the Overseas Development Agency subsidises UK companies to help win contracts in developing countries. Much UK aid is bilateral, mutually agreed between the 2 governments, frequently tied to UK goods, and reduces the value of the aid by an estimated 20-40%

Political concerns also have a huge influence. Thus the Falklands received £5,500 per person in 1985, while India received only 15 pence per person. Aid is also a convenient way to dump EEC food surpluses, with the additional bad effect of creating artificially low prices inhibiting food production in 3rd world countries.

Aid can do good if placed in the right hands. A recent Oxfam report ("For Richer For Poorer") states: "...the key to effective aid....is devising schemes that the poor themselves see as the answer....consulting poor people in the design and execution of projects, and working with local structures that genuinely represent them....heeding only the advice of existing leaders may do no more than to reinforce the power of a local elite". In a world dominated by cynical governments and even more cynical corporations, it is with grassroots organisation that the future lies.

## FAIR TRADE?

Unfair trade barriers protect the developed economies, but undoing them wouldn't result in a fairer distribution of wealth, merely an internationalising of the wealthy. The truly wealthy and powerful would be joined by the wealthy of the 3rd world, as the multinationals consolidate their power. The most likely effect would be a sharp decline in the living standards of the western working class. Such opening up of world trade would more likely result from multinational pressure than any idealistic notions about the 3rd world. Governments cannot stand up to multinational power but multinationals need workers and consumers. Thus effective international organisation by the poor, the dispossessed, workers, unemployed and all those who, on their own, stand powerless and voiceless, is needed to reclaim what has been taken from us. We must recognise that ultimately freedom can only be taken, not given, - as the hand that gives is also the hand that takes away. Consequently we should try to direct our support towards grassroots organisations within developing countries - by establishing contact with genuinely representative unions (the Bolivian COB, the Brazilian COB, the Filipino KMU, for example), community groups, self-help groups, and other such grass roots organisations.



## Filipino KMU: Fighting back!

I would hope that this brief overview of 3rd world problems demonstrates just how inadequate the present world economic and political management is. The world economy is unable even to feed the whole population; it is financially unstable; and perhaps most frightening of all today's stop-gap measures sow the seeds of tomorrow's ecological nightmares.