

Direct Action

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The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism

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NAZI TERROR ON OUR STREETS

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street, which succeeded in physically stopping a march by Moseley's Blackshirts through London's East End. On October the 4th, 1936, thousands of working class people took to the streets with "they shall not pass!" as their slogan. Despite the back-peddling of Communist Party officials and the massive police protection for the Blackshirts, the anti-fascist mobilisation was a victory. The uniformed fascist march was driven out of the East End by the furious community. The Battle of Cable Street was only one incident in the fight against fascism, which must be continued right now. If we refuse the responsibility of confronting fascism now, then sooner or later we will be facing a large organised fascist movement in Britain.

Several different fascist organisations are now active in Britain - the National Front, the British National Party and the British Movement are the main ones. They all believe in a far-right type of extreme nationalism, supporting Hitler to the point of using the straight arm nazi salute, and are strongly racist and anti-semitic.

In the 1970's they presented themselves as "respectable" patriots calling for the repatriation of Blacks and Asians. They were having considerable success at electioneering until they were confronted and chased off the streets by the Anti-Nazi League.

So what are these nazis up to today? In the '80's they have changed tactics, believing it futile to participate in elections. The National Front is now committed to what it calls "revolutionary nationalism" led by violent "political soldiers" (thugs). Their main activities are beating up or fire-bombing Asians and Blacks. Jewish communities are also at the receiving end of fascist terror.

It must be stressed that groups like the NF are not only racist but also fascist which is reflected in their choice of targets. Besides ethnic minorities they attack Troops Out marches, lesbians and gays, women's centres, anti-nuclear campaigners, etc.

The fascists are now trying to cash in on the frustration of white working class youth in Thatcher's Britain in order to recruit more thugs. They

organise in football grounds - it is well documented that the NF are behind many of the worst incidents of football violence. Throughout the last year they have been leafletting schools and urging the school kids to organise NF cells.

In order to recruit people their ideology needs a certain degree of radicalism. They claim to support the working class (white of course) against the excesses of multinational capitalism - but to them it's okay to be exploited by British bosses (try telling that to the Silentnight strikers and many others). That their ideology is lunacy is confirmed by their claims that the spiritual values of the white race can only be preserved by a return to a medieval rural lifestyle - guess who would be the lords of the manor? However the main thrust of their recruiting propaganda is still based on racist slogans such as "British jobs for British people".

TERRORISM

Fascists in Britain have now adopted the "strategy of tension" like many of their counterparts abroad. This is merely terrorism under another name. It means causing as much terror as possible and whipping up hatred against anyone they don't like to destabilise society and so create the conditions for a fascist takeover.

Thus fascist groups in Britain have links with nazi terror groups abroad like the Armed Revolutionary Nuclei (NAR) in Italy. These armed bully boys



A community defending itself against fascist attacks

were responsible for the Bologna railway station bombing in 1980 which killed 85 innocent people (this was part of a fascist "strategy of tension" in Italy). As reported in "Direct Action" no. 31, members of the NAR escaped to London after the bombing outrage where they live freely, and have made links with British fascists.

The NF has also been trying to get in on the violence in Northern Ireland by supporting loyalist paramilitaries and appearing on loyalist marches and rallies. This has been more so with the current backlash against the Anglo-Irish agreement. They will no doubt use this experience as part of their "strategy of tension" ideas.

A magazine produced by Leeds NF last year sums it all up: "the future belongs to the few of us still willing to get our hands dirty. Political terror - its the only thing they understand".

TIME TO FIGHT BACK

Membership of fascist organisations may still be small, but they have a lot of money behind them with which to produce their vile propaganda. However, their numbers are increasing, reflecting an increase in racist attacks.

Now is the time to put a stop to the fascist threat before it grows larger. But it is no good appealing to the state to do it. There are known links between fascist organisations and elements in the military and police, and the state will fall back on fascism if necessary. Similarly, reporting racist attacks to the police is a waste of time as racism is rife in the police force. The usual response is: "there is no evidence to suggest that there was a racial motive behind this attack".

Fascism must be stopped by the mass action of the working class. It will not be stopped by a few liberal vicars verbally condemning it. It is our responsibility to challenge it by whatever means are necessary - by anti-fascist propaganda and education as well as physical opposition. It must be smashed wherever it raises its ugly head from the gutter. Fascist marches must be stopped by counter-demonstrations, fascist meetings must be disrupted and their paper sellers must not be allowed to peddle their evil filth.

Hitler once said: "only one thing could have stopped our movement, that is if our adversaries had smashed our nucleus from the very beginning". This is what we must achieve.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

Warehouse workers at Yorkshire Imperial Plastics in Leeds walked out in protest at management's back door sexism and attempts to employ new workers at lower rates of pay.

The dispute began when management employed the first of 12 new warehouse workers at a lower pay grade. The pay grading system was long standing, final and binding but management twisted their way around it by employing 2 women at a lower level. They were employed at the so called "E-grade" and would be paid £5-£10 less per week than the male workers on the "G-grade" of pay. Management claimed that this was because they would be doing less work. Workers rejected this, saying that in practice women would be doing the same work as them and pointed out that the new manager, Mr. Lord, was formally the head of the firm's Wrexham warehouse where women workers are often employed at lower pay rates. No doubt Mr. Lord had been sent to Leeds to cut wages by introducing the same system there.

Things came to a head when works trainers refused to train the women - management then told normal workers to train them - they too refused and were suspended. The whole warehouse staff walked out in protest. It was at this point that the women discovered that they would be employed at lower pay rates. Management it seems did not think it worth telling them this bit of information! The women joined the strike and they too were suspended.

The strike lasted about a week, affecting all the factory's 400 workers. Company drivers showed their solidarity by refusing to handle or deliver goods. Initial negotiations broke down but now workers have gone back awaiting the



Pickets outside the south Leeds factory this week

findings of ACAS arbitration. Strikers showed their determination to get satisfaction - "we'll stay out as long as it takes", one striker said; let's hope that their determination is rewarded.

Workers clearly saw the dispute, as a matter of pay and sexism, as one worker commented "we would be doing the same job as the women, and would be paid more and that's not on". By defending the women's right to be paid equal wages the other workers were also defending their own wages. It is a common tactic throughout the world for the bosses to employ women workers at lower rates of pay. So called sexual equality acts seem to be no defence against their underhand dealings; only our collective strength as the working class can safeguard against the bosses' attacks on our pay and conditions.

Solidarity Not Ballots

At last month's TUC conference, the joint Labour Party - TUC document was passed overwhelmingly. The most significant point in this is that unions, after a Labour government has been elected and has put the document's recommendations into law, will have to include provisions in their rule books for ballots before all industrial action, thus enshrining state interference in unions (see D.A. 32). Norman Willis has told us that "ballots are here to stay".

The Tories have been pushing ballots in order to tramp down workers' resistance to their attacks. They have done this under the guise of protecting ordinary rank and file union members from the unscrupulous "red" union leaders. Of course there are some grains of truth in the "Daily Mail's" claim that union bosses call their unwilling members out on "political" strikes, not bothering to explain reasons why but just taking the members' loyalty for granted. But we know full well that this is far from being the case most of the time. Just take a look at the Wapping dispute - a case of extremist "red" Brenda Dean forcing poor, hard-working printers out on strike?! No, the union bureaucrats have taken up ballots so enthusiastically because it gives them more control over the rank and file, not less.

THE MINERS' STRIKE

Ever since the Miners Strike (during which the Tories and their media used the issue of ballots to attack the miners in struggle) many on the "left" have blamed this defeat on the NUM's refusal to hold a national ballot. Since then the unions, including many on the so-called "left", have been falling over themselves to adapt to the Conservatives' idea of "union democracy".

Needless to say, the ruling class' idea of union democracy has little in common with genuine working class democracy, which is based on solidarity, rather than narrow selfish individualism. Events on the railways since the end of the miners' strike highlight the danger of the ballot mentality to ordinary workers.

No other union has entered into the Tory ballot spirit quite as whole-

heartedly as the National Union of Railworkers, under the "left" leadership of Bro. Jimmy Knapp. Within the space of a year they have conducted 4 major national ballots, the two most important being the guards' ballot over taking industrial action against British Rail's introduction of driver only operations, and the engineering workshop's ballot for opposing further job losses in an already savaged sector of the railway industry.

GUARDS' DISPUTE

When BR insisted that they were going to introduce guardless trains with or without union agreement, the union responded with the announcement that they would ballot all guards on taking industrial action. While the NUR set about organising a 2-month campaign (if it deserves the name "campaign") to show how "democratic" they were, management wasted no time, beginning to sack workers who refused to take part in the implementation of the driver-only program.

Railworkers in many parts of the country took unofficial action - strikes and work-to-rules. In the west of Scotland feeling was running so high (amongst all workers - not just guards), that it was only the union bureaucracy that could and did prevent action spreading. Panicking NUR officials instructed workers to get back to work and wait for the ballot result, which they did. So, while workers were being sacked, we were sitting around putting crosses on bits of paper. If, instead of allowing the dispute to be determined by the ballot, the workers themselves had taken the initiative, taken control of the dispute away from the bureaucrats, taken the argument directly to their fellow workers (as the Cortonwood miners did in March '84, rather than waiting to be voted out of a job) we stood a chance of winning that dispute.

The same is true of the more recent workshops ballot, which effectively prevented those most threatened, like Doncaster, from taking any action in defence of their jobs. Democracy doesn't mean workers in the massive Derby works, who stand to gain from the closure of other workshops, voting away the jobs of others, which is what happened.

STRIKE-BREAKING CO-OP

Since the last issue of Direct Action the Silentnight strikers have received a couple more slaps in the face; from their own union, from Silent night boss, Tom Clarke, and from those "caring socialists", the Co-op.

The striker's union have removed strike pay on the grounds that it interferes with their claims for social security benefit. FTAT's opinion seems to be that if the strikers want to carry on then they'd better look to state hand-outs to support themselves. Apart from a few posters and leaflets that the union grudgingly produce you would hardly know the strikers were in a union at all, what's happened to the old "union making us strong"? The only thing that seems to have stopped the bureaucrats selling out the strikers is that Tom Clarke has consistently refused to negotiate, up to now.

A few weeks ago Tom Clarke offered talks through ACAS, the strikers were sceptical but went along to see what he was offering. His offer was nothing short of an invitation to give up! He suggested that the strikers call off the strike and all associated actions (pickets, boycotts, etc.). There would be a 3 month "cooling off" period after which Silentnight would consider any of the strikers for any new jobs that might

come up. But the strikers wouldn't even have first refusal on those jobs. Obviously the strikers refused this offer which one striker told D.A. was "totally meaningless".

So why did Silentnight even bother to make such a pointless offer which they know the strikers would refuse? The answer lies with the Co-op. Co-op bosses recently had to make a decision on whether or not to continue stocking Silentnight beds. They have been under massive pressure not to, and the fact that talks were going on gave them a perfect opportunity to carry on stocking the beds on the grounds that the strike would soon be over. On another note the Co-op have recently been trying to play down their part in the dispute. They have put out a statement denying that they take 30% of Silentnight's beds, by their calculations they only take 5%, 30% or 5% it doesn't matter. If the Co-op were the "caring" socialists they claim to be they wouldn't take any beds! One quote from the Co-op's statement says it all:

"the suspension of sales would hurt the Co-op considerably more than it would hurt Silentnight."

What price solidarity when there's money at risk?

ACID CLOUD CURFEW

On the night of Wednesday 24th of September a thick white cloud spread menacingly through the centre of Manchester. It blanketed many of the inner city working-class areas. Those that were outside reeled back suffering from the choking, stinging fumes. Symptoms included burning throats, chest pains, watering eyes, sweating and dizziness. The smog cloud was caused by a spillage of concentrated sulphuric acid from the Clayton Aniline works.

The Clayton Aniline company occupies a site of 57 acres in the Clayton area of Manchester. On all four sides it is surrounded by heavily populated working-class areas. It manufactures dye-stuffs, principally for cloth, but also for paper and foodstuffs.

The leak occurred at approximately 9pm. A broken gland in a valve of a nearly empty tank broke, releasing Oleum (super-concentrated sulphuric acid) immediately causing a cloud of fumes. The company claim that only 20 gallons of acid was lost, yet this was enough to blanket over 5 square miles in smog - imagine what the effect of a full tank would be!

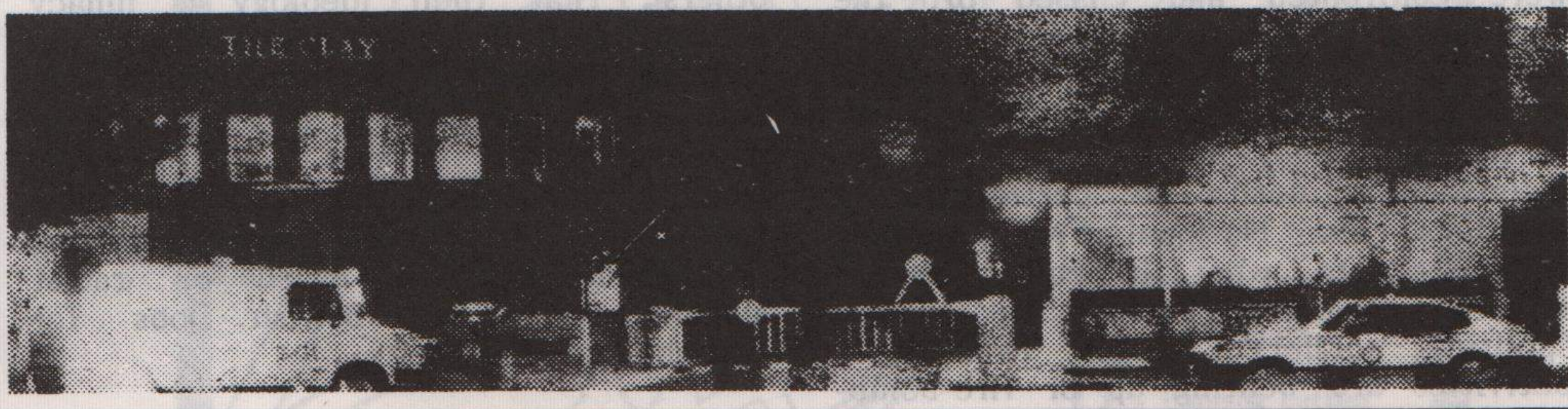
Questions are also being asked about the delay in notifying local residents, a Clayton Aniline worker told D.A.;

"At the time the leak was discovered no alert was given to local residents - presumably so that the incident

could be hushed up if possible"

The emergency services were informed and a fleet of ambulances and police vehicles moved into the area. The cloud drifted westwards over large areas of Manchester. It was detected over 6 miles away. The leak was tackled by the works' own emergency services and was sealed up by 9.45pm, about the same time that the first police vehicles started to tour the affected areas telling people to remain indoors. 19 people were taken to hospital suffering the burning effects of the cloud - 3 police officers, 5 bus drivers, 1 bus inspector and 9 children.

This, however, is not an isolated incident, residents have been complaining about the odd smells from fumes pumped out by the plant and a local headmaster has commented on the unusually high level of absenteeism due to illness. The fact is that the Clayton plant has been spewing out dangerous chemicals quite regularly for years. Siting chemical firms in the middle of residential areas has a long term damaging effect on the environment and the health of the local population (the once heavily industrialised North West has the country's worst health figures). The local population are of course mostly working-class people who gain little from such firms except dangerous and often low paid jobs, while those that make the most profits from these industries live well outside town in rich and pleasant areas.



SOLIDARITY

It has always been the right of workers in struggle against the bosses to go out and demand support from their fellow workers. What real gains our class has ever made have been brought about through some workers putting the interests of their class before their own individual, short-term interests. THIS IS SOLIDARITY.

It is obvious from what has happened on the railways where the TUC/Labour Party are leading us. Workers are only going to fight (for their jobs, living standards, etc.) when union leaders allow them to, and only then after a

ballot. Unofficial action will be the only course for workers, and that action will be illegal. This is the situation throughout Northern Europe now. The massive general strike in Denmark last year was entirely unofficial, and was declared illegal.

Under Tory, Labour or Alliance the economic recession will continue, as will the ruling class' attacks on jobs and living standards. We will get nowhere in our struggle against these attacks if we throw away working class principles of mutual aid and solidarity.

DAM Railworkers.

Capitalist Workers?

The Gas Board claim that privatisation will give employees more say in the running of the company. Here we show this to be nothing more than a con-trick.

Privatisation is one of the bogeymen of the "kneejerk" left, and with much justification. However we as Anarcho-Syndicalists are concerned not with maintaining a centralised government bureaucracy but rather that people should have real and direct control over their workplaces and communities. Recent privatisation schemes have made a point of encouraging employee share ownership and it is an aspect of privatisation that we should really be examining closely. Indeed such notions as employee share ownership and profit sharing, not to mention the old favourite "industrial democracy" have long been fashionable across quite a wide band of the parliamentary political spectrum.

Such notions throw up a direct challenge to Anarcho-Syndicalism in promising a degree of control and just rewards for workers within the existing capitalist structure. The employees themselves become capitalists, they benefit from company profits and share in the company's failures. Also as shareholders they are entitled to vote and so influence the strategy of the company.

GAS THE GOVERNMENT

The next company to be privatised is British Gas. In anticipation of this event, British Gas has now become British Gas PLC (Public Limited Company). A massive advertising campaign is underway in which Colin Welland (bless him) refused to participate. Instead of "Cuddly Colin" the ad-men hired J.R. the world's most famous cynical capitalist. British Gas have been keeping their employees well up to date on the latest developments and have in particular been stressing the employee share ownership scheme. Employees have been shown promotional videos and given talks on share ownership. What then is this Employee Share Ownership Scheme?

EMPLOYEE SHARE OFFER

1. Free shares to the value of £70, plus an additional £2 worth for every year of service.
2. A matching offer of 2 free shares for each one purchased on the first £150 worth of purchased shares.
3. A 10% discount on shares to the value of £2000.
4. Priority on shares up to a value of £27,000.

However all free and matching offer shares must be kept in a trust for two years and if they are sold within five years income tax must be paid upon the initial value of the shares. Furthermore shareholders of shares held in trust are not entitled to attend shareholders meetings while their shares are in trust, though they may vote through the trustees.

That then is the employee share offer. Of course it hardly needs saying that the vast majority of British Gas employees are not really in any position to do more than take advantage of the free and matching offers.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Of course it sounds very good, free shares, discount shares, priority status, a chance to benefit from the success of the company. And there is the novelty value of the stock exchange. But at the end of the day how much say will the ordinary employee have in the company? What difference will it make?

An employee, with 20 years service will if he or she takes up the free and matching offers, own 0.00001% of British Gas and will only be allowed to use this

0.00001% vote through the trustees. Furthermore it has been stated in the official information that "ownership or non-ownership of B.G. shares will have no effect whatsoever on the individual employee's conditions of service".



Sir Denis Rooke

If all employees took up both the free and matching offers then the total employee share of the industry would be 0.94%. If through some financial miracle they all took up the free, matching and discount shares then the total employee stake would be 4%. Just in case every single employee were to win the pools in the next couple of weeks, British Gas have a clause in the scheme which restricts employee share ownership to 5%. NALGO estimate that the probable employee share will be about 0.5-1.5%.

Clearly then, the employee share ownership scheme will not do anything to give the average employee any extra control over his or her job. Furthermore as they will be investing an amount of money which is a lot to them, but very very small for the Stock Exchange, they will be facing high risks for small returns (when compared to a building society, for example).

WHAT FOR?

If the employee share ownership scheme is not really about giving the employees a say in the company nor a significant share in the profits, what is it for?

Firstly, it is there to sweeten the pill of privatisation. Several years ago the gas unions successfully defeated the government's plans to privatise gas showrooms. The novelty and apparent generosity of the employee share scheme are there to hypnotise and bribe the workforce into accepting the changes. Privatisation is to be perceived as something that all employees are participating in and benefitting from. It's an exercise in employee relations which is costing less than the public relations exercise of advertising. (The employee share scheme will cost around £9 million, as opposed to the £15 million spent on advertising the privatisation. The City's fees for the flotation are around £250 million.)

Secondly it will cause a division of interest within the employees. As an employee it is in his or her interest to maximise wages and improve conditions, but as a share holder it is not. For the majority of employees their real interests will be best served through higher pay and better conditions, because their share holding will be so small, but any perceived division of interest will give the management an extra psychological edge in their efforts to keep down wages. Share ownership schemes encourage employees to identify their interests with those of the company. That this is not the real state of affairs is testified to by the millions of working people who have suffered illness and death as a result of poor and dangerous working conditions throughout the world.

THE REAL THING

Employee share ownership schemes are merely propaganda exercises - they have about as much to do with giving working people control over their own lives as do nationalisation schemes. Privatised or nationalised, a boss is a boss; and a parasite is a parasite, be it a bureaucrat or a stockbroker. Schemes like this pretend to offer employees a stake and a say in their companies - this is a sham and a lie; only anarcho-syndicalism can deliver the real thing; real direct control over your own lives, communities and workplaces, without the interference of bureaucrats, parasites or bosses.

SAME OLD SELL OUT

Neil Kinnock's speech at the TUC conference last month contained the usual set of promises to be heard from the Labour party in opposition in the run up to a general election. Unemployment would be cut, the economy would recover, services would be improved, blah blah. Of course this wouldn't be easy; we would all have to work together - the government, employers and workers - if things were to be improved. In other words the corporate approach is needed.

Corporatism has a history stretching back to before World War I. It means that the TUC, the CBI and the government work together to achieve a "consensus". This was tried in the '60's and '70's when the Labour government tried to regulate the economy by encouraging wage restraint and low profitability. This led to the "social contract", an attempt to cut the living standards of the working class, eventually smashed by the "winter of discontent".

Under the corporatist approach the working class is asked to make more and more sacrifices to help in the smooth running of capitalism, and what's more they are asked to do this by the people who claim to represent them - the Labour Party and TUC. This happens because contrary to popular belief, the TUC is the weakest section of the corporate triangle. The international nature of capitalism leads to the British working class being forced into competition with workers of other countries for jobs.

Of course the Tories always claim that somehow parliamentary democracy is threatened when trade union leaders are brought into consultation with the government but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact corporatism actually increases the domination of the state and capitalism over the working class. In Britain and other capitalist countries the smooth functioning of the state requires the working class to accept the legitimacy of the social order. This is achieved mainly through parliamentary representation in which competing elites, all committed to some form of that social order, try to win

the consent of the majority of voters, or at least a significant enough minority of them to secure power.

CONTROL

Corporatism compliments this process by extending the consultation between state and capital as well as drawing in representatives of labour and so acts as a control on pressure for change, because as well as being represented politically on the basis of where we live, we are also represented economically on the basis of our employment (or lack of it). Decisions are taken on our behalf, agreements are made above our heads and we are expected to comply because, we are told, it is in our best interests.

The Labour Party has always held the view that we should be thankful to the benevolence of the "welfare state" for protecting us from excesses of capitalism and exploitation. This is due to the ever present influence of "Fabianism" which envisages a society run by "experts" who would decide what was best for us no matter what we thought.



British Leyland workers' picket line

Syndicalists have always stood in direct opposition to this idea. We believe that a free and equal society can only be achieved by the working class themselves, by their own actions, and not through some self-appointed do-gooders. Any notion of using the state's machinery is doomed to failure. Once people are enmeshed in the state's bureaucracy their views change and they start to see things from the state's (and capitalism's) perspective.

The only answer is to organise NOW, free and independently of all political parties, to defend ourselves against attacks from the Tories in the short term, later to oppose any attempts by the Labour Party and TUC leadership to shackle us with wage restraint on the vague promise of something better "just around the corner". There is nothing for the working class in Neil Kinnock's "consensus", capitalism will always hold the upper hand in any agreements. The last Labour Government saw the IMF, the beginning of monetarist policies and wage restraint. The last attempt at a "social contract" was smashed by rank and file action. We must be ready again.

in brief

In the last 12 months the number of gas cut-offs in the U.K. was 36,948, a rise of 8% on the previous year. 583,234 people were in debt to the gas board and needed their "special instalments plan". There was also an increase in the number of people getting their fuel debts stopped from their supplementary benefit under the "fuel direct scheme". The Gas Consumer Council want to extend this scheme to "all low income consumers". On the other hand, the gas board plans to give special low gas rates to those who can afford to take part in its new scheme to sell off shares in British Gas. One rule for us and one rule for them, eh?

Hotel and catering workers are fast becoming a new "servant" class, according to John Edmunds of the GMBATU. Over two thirds of the industry's 1 million plus workers earn less than £116 p.w. The minimum wage set by the wage council is a pitiful £65.79 p.w., yet over 40% of workers in hotels and restaurants visited last year by the wages inspectorate were illegally underpaid.

RUC detective Mervyn Patterson of the Fraud Squad was found dead on the shore of Belfast Lough on July 30th. His hands and feet had been tied together and he had been shot through the head. Despite this the RUC at first said that he had committed suicide! However it is known that Patterson had been compiling a dossier on corruption and irregularities within the RUC, and particularly within the Fraud Squad itself, so it is likely that he was actually shot by his own colleagues in an attempt to cover up any allegations of fraud that could be made against the Fraud Squad.

Two National Front thugs, David Manners and James Speed were ordered to do 100 hours community service and pay £80 compensation and costs for viciously beating a black man with metal tipped banner poles. Speed's father is Metropolitan Police Commander Anthony Speed who is in charge of riot and firearms training at Hendon Police College. This would seem to explain the unusual lenience of the sentence.

NORWAY: Electricians Give Hammond a Shock

When Mrs Thatcher recently went to Norway, she was the dinner guest of "socialist" prime minister Mrs Gro Brundtland in Akershus Castle. Unfortunately for Mrs T the food wasn't the only thing that was hot - the reception was downright fiery. Over a thousand angry protesters (including many anarchists) stormed the castle getting as far as the dining hall. When Thatcher's lapdog, Eric Hammond, leader of the EETPU and infamous Wapping scab, went to Norway, rank and file unionists gave him a similar welcome.

When the congress of the Norwegian Electrical Workers opened on the 19th of September, the only thing present from the British delegation was a lone union jack. The EETPU was invited, but because of angry protests from the rank and file of the Electricians' Union and the Graphical Workers' Federation of Norway (printers), the Electricians' president was forced to tell Hammond that although he could be present, he could not speak at the congress. Trade unionists in Norway (and Britain) consider Hammond a union scab (the only thing worse than a normal scab) and therefore the Electricians' Federation received massive protests for even inviting him in the first place.

Eric Hammond had no answer but to leave Norway in a hurry. Norwegian T.V. journalists asked him if he felt at home, an ironic reference to a comment Thatcher made the week before. Apparently on seeing the mass of demonstrators ranged against her she said that it felt like home. Hammond, however, didn't seem to share her sense of humour as he



refused to reply.

Earlier this year Hammond had attended similar congresses in Denmark and Sweden without protest.

The official relations between the EETPU and the Norwegian Electricians' Federation are now broken. This would not have been possible some years ago but support work for the British miners and printers has created a new consciousness in the Norwegian working class. Strong rank and file groups have been springing up in many industries (the Hammond protests were organised by rank and file electricians and printers in Oslo). Norwegian workers are beginning to see who are their enemies and who are their friends.

NSF-IWA (Oslo)

(The NSF is the Norwegian section of the International Workers' Association)

Italy: No Strikes This Christmas

During July 1986 the Italian state obtained a "no strike" deal from all of the major unions. The triple confederation (C.I.S.L.; C.G.I.L.; U.I.L.)* plus the so-called autonomous unions came together for the first time to agree on over 100 days during the year when they will not strike in certain key sectors. These periods include all holiday periods and also election times. The main sectors concerned are transport, telecommunications and post, and the health service.

The only workers' organisation to immediately and unanimously condemn this sell-out by the union bosses was the Unione Sindacale Italiana, the Italian section of the International Workers' Association. USI/AIT is already organised in the postal, railway and hospital sectors, however, it is necessary to spread the capacity to intervene effectively, with means adapting to resolving the problems of the different sectors and of particular industrial structures.

Within the union there has been discussion about action supplementary to the usual strike action, for example the

"social strike", where workers refuse to collect transport fares or give improved services in circumstances chosen to embarrass administrators. These types of action can gain support from consumer groups and other sections of the public which are often alienated by normal strike action which reduces services.

The policies of the USI are a contrast to those of the reformist unions, which do not have a strategy capable of intervening to guarantee favourable conditions for the defence, development and increase of workplaces in this period of great structural transformation caused by the increase in new technology and the growth in power of the techno-bureaucracy.

* C.I.S.L. - Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori - Catholics.
C.G.I.L. - Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro - Communist majority, and Socialists.
U.I.L. - Unione Italiana del Lavoro - Republicans and Social Democrats.

ANTI-NUCLEAR NOTES

Russia

The Soviet Union is to go ahead with plans to double its nuclear power capacity by 1990 - despite the Chernobyl catastrophe. Nikolai Ryzhkov said recently that Moscow's policy of increasing dependence on nuclear power was correct. Alexei Makukhin, First Deputy Minister for Electricity Power Development said that large nuclear stations will be built in the European part of Russia where energy resources are limited. Makukhin stressed Russia's good nuclear safety record, saying that Chernobyl was the first serious accident!

Yugoslavia

According to a report in the "Guardian" (20/2/86) the Yugoslavian government announced that "it will construct 4 nuclear power stations with a capacity of 1,000 megawatts, by the year 2000. It is unclear whether Yugoslavia will buy Canadian or Soviet plants."

Following the Chernobyl nuclear power station accident these plants will no longer be constructed. According to further reports in the Guardian it was claimed that an opinion poll in Yugoslavia had shown that 75% of those interviewed were opposed to nuclear power.

INTERVIEW WITH THE EDITOR OF SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA

The following is part of an interview with the editor of Solidaridad Obrera, Luis Andres Edo, July 17th 1986. "Soli" is the paper of the Catalan regional CNT/AIT the Spanish section of the International Workers' Association. The interview covers working class struggles in Spain today and the CNT/AIT's role in them:

Q: What has changed for the Spanish working class since Franco?

A: We think nothing has changed; in fact we're going backwards. Here the workers have been forced to accept wage deals every year at a percentage below the cost of living increase because of their adherence to the socialist and communist reformists. This has sometimes been to better themselves in other respects but it has usually been for the worse.

There's a great deal more control by the bosses - much more use of the sack or redundancies; use of these weapons is open and goes unchallenged because compensation is paid. If the judge says that a certain sacking is wrong, then money is used to smooth the workers' departure on to the street.

Thus the workers' interests have been bought off. We naturally oppose this though at present we are alone. The politicians don't take a stand and the workers themselves don't resort to other direct methods of struggle. Things are as bad as they were.

Q: Could you tell us something about the trade union pacts?

A: The intended effect of the Moncloa Pact and the four others signed later and now in force was to reduce the freedoms of workers to those levels suffered under Franco when only state-approved unions were allowed to function. In the same way as Franco, the Socialists have managed to establish a base of reformist control based on a 15% cut-off figure of unionised workers. If the agreement gives (as they often do) the 15% of workers in a factory negotiating rights through their union leaders regardless of what the other 85% want, then naturally that 15% will dominate to the detriment of the rest.

Since then other pacts have extended beyond simple money questions to include the methods and structures the unions

should follow in factories. As a result, official factory committees have been set up as the sole means of applying pressure on management - a blank wall of course for the workers but very lucrative for the politicians, for their collaboration in the committees is rewarded by generous annual subsidies from the state. The first year of the pact netted £6 million each for the Socialist U.G.T and the Communist C.C.O.O, the second year £4 million and this year the same. Included in this deal were the Basque regional union, the L.S.E.T.V and the A.E.R.A in Galicia. The C.N.T.-A.I.T has taken no part in this payout for the state seeks to lead us into a paralysis of workers' self-activity which will always be to their detriment.

Q: What's been happening in Catalonia recently?

A: Well, things have been rather quiet for us. The situation at present is one of impasse. People are waiting. We've had some success when we fought against Spain being included in N.A.T.O when others joined in. When we campaigned against the military and conscription again we won a lot of support. The same went for our general election boycott. We have done what we could with what we have.

On the housing scene we've been involved with the squatting movement in Barcelona. We helped them in their fight. However the young don't have much interest in the C.N.T. The squatters, the punks and the anti-militarists are pre-occupied with single issues and nothing more. Nevertheless we'll continue to work with them wherever we can. After all we are here to fight all injustice wherever it happens - the pacts, the stitch-ups, the violence, the continual sackings. We don't stop.

Q: Have you been working with the unemployed at all?

A: Yes. We organised unemployed assemblies in Barcelona but not a great deal came out of it. Groups of (unemployed) workers organised themselves to picket factories demanding work, with little result however. The assemblies didn't work either - they were often heavily manipulated by left politicians in the P.S.U.C. (Socialist Party) though almost

as much by the Communists as well. So the unemployed stopped coming and have reconciled themselves to living off state allowances, little though they are. They've effectively swapped protest and struggle for wine, beer and blissful ignorance. Though we in the C.N.T. did a fair amount through our own unemployed members to create the assemblies, there was never any real strength in them.

Q: Could you say something about the recent struggles of the farmworkers?

A: Their battle against the large landowners has been focussed above all in Andalusia where the C.N.T. has helped to organise protests, strikes and occupations of estates. The main fighting union (the S.O.C.) was formed from different political tendencies, mainly anarcho-sindicalist and communist. Nevertheless the C.N.T. - particularly in the olive growing town of Arral where we had quite a few militants - were able to develop the struggle for land successfully, albeit with heavy repression by the Guardia Civil - many beatings, arrests, heavy fines and three comrades in jail. One comrade in another town got fined nearly a million pesetas for taking part in a strike of jornaleros (the daily paid workers).

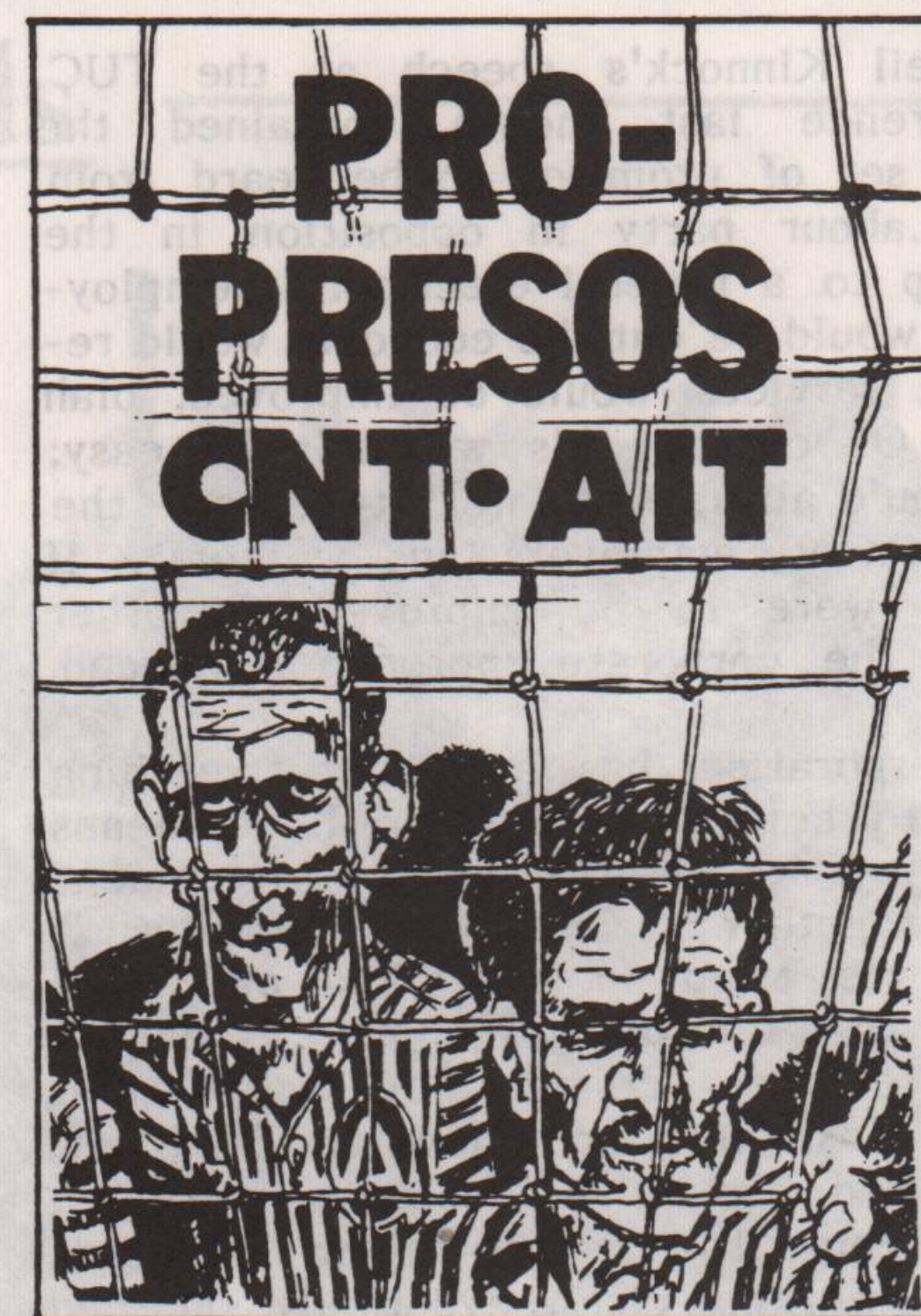
Another thing: the government has since established a workscheme there whereby everyone works for three months and then takes three months dole. With this offer they were able to divide the strikers and the fight was abandoned for no gain. There was no revolutionary spirit. The struggle for agrarian reform, the occupations of the large estates and the S.O.C. itself were manipulated by the political parties, as ever. S.O.C. lacked fighting conviction and was thus a prey for the reformists.

Q: What's the situation in the jails like for anarchist prisoners?

A: Pretty bad: there are 30 anarchists - 6 in the C.N.T. - in prison throughout Spain. Organising them is not possible because they are divided up, though there has been one group formed in Segovia which prints its own paper.

The repression is heavy in prison. You have to remember that there are in total 23,000 inmates, nearly all of whom have some nasty tale to tell about what

goes on inside. In Barcelona the capacity at Modelo prison is 800, yet the numbers there are 2,500. Where there



should be one or two, there are 4 or 5. The Mafia is fairly powerful in prison - usually with the encouragement of the administration. Drugs are another weapon used to beat down resistance. Heavy punishment and torture are not uncommon, for that matter, in police cells. Yes, the situation is bad.

LAND STRUGGLE UPDATE

Four weeks ago, landless farmworkers and their families in south west Spain occupied town halls throughout Andalusia province in protest at the 600+ charges still outstanding against members of the SOC agricultural union. These people are still fighting the Guardia Civil and the landowners for land rights. The Spanish state has attempted to buy off the union's campaign by setting up a 6 months on, 6 months off work program for the 350,000 farmworkers in the region but has failed dismally. Since May, the repression has been stepped up with mass arrests, heavy fines and jailings. The union, like the dockworkers' Coordinadora groups, has no political affiliations and is run without permanent paid officials. It is committed to taking the large estates under workers' control.

Racist Murder

On Wednesday, 17th September 1986, Ahmed Iqbal Ullah was brutally murdered by a racist white youth in Burnage High School, Manchester. This school has a history of racist violence spanning many years, being in a predominantly white area and having a large number of black children.

In fact the school is an example of British Apartheid - black kids in one part of the yard, white in another; one chip shop for the blacks, one for the whites, etc, etc. Since the beginning of this term the black children have been let out of school 15 minutes early to allow them to get home safely.

At Burnage the black kids get stick from some teachers, and are constantly threatened and attacked by groups of racists both in the school and in the surrounding area. For all black people, though, racism in varying forms is something which they have to grow up with, but recent months/years have seen a frightening escalation in violent attacks - the Burnage stabbing is only the tip of an iceberg.

At a meeting on the 26th September, the Asian community made clear their intention to resort to self-defence. This was supported by the elder members, who had previously advised the children to turn the other cheek.

The following is from a leaflet issued by the local Asian community:-

WHAT HAPPENED TO AHMED IQBAL?

On Tuesday 16th Sept., Ahmed went to the assistance of a fellow Asian student who was being bullied by a group of racist white youth. On the way home Ahmed was attacked by the same group and threatened that he would be killed the next day.

At 8.30 the next morning Ahmed was fatally stabbed by a racist white youth, who immediately after the stabbing started boasting that he had "killed a Paki". Whilst Ahmed lay bleeding to

death, the school authorities at first refused to listen to his screams. By the time assistance was offered it was too late...Ahmed had bled to death.

CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

Since Ahmed's murder, a conspiracy to cover up the racist nature of this barbaric attack has taken place. The education authorities, the police, and the media have all been working together to hush up the issue. The headmaster of the school has gone so far as to state the murder did not take place in the school - let alone that it was racist. This conspiracy must be smashed.

ORGANISE AGAINST RACIST ATTACKS

All over the country racist attacks against black people are on the increase. Not only are we being attacked on the streets, and in our homes, but our children are being murdered in school. The racist murder of Ahmed is the reflection of the deep-rooted racism within British society. Racist attacks and attackers will not go away by being ignored or by being silent. The solution to these attacks lies in the organisation of self-defence.

Today as a direct result of Ahmed's murder, many of our children are not going to school. The conspiracy of silence engineered by the authorities is an attempt to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. WE SHALL NOT BE INTIMIDATED.

SELF DEFENCE

The murder of Ahmed and the attempted cover-up clearly shows us that our only solution to these attacks lies in uniting and organising our own self-defence. We call upon all black people and anti-racist white people to show their solidarity with us by joining the demonstration. This time it was Ahmed Iqbal who was murdered - next time it could be any other black child.

DOWN WITH RACISM

(P&PAhmedIqbalMemorialCommittee.
c/o 584 Stockport Rd, Longsight, Manchester)

RACIST POLICE

Rose Alaso and her baby son Brian escaped to Britain from Uganda in 1979. Rose feared for her life in Uganda's climate of political assassination and state repression. Her fears were justified - her brother and his family were murdered. When she came to Britain, Rose expected peace, freedom and political asylum. However she has received none of these things. In fact for Rose and Brian, Britain is just as repressive as Uganda ever was.



Rose and Brian Alaso

Rose's application for asylum has never been considered, so for some time now she has had to fight against deportation back to Uganda. But this is not the only fear Rose and Brian have had to suffer - she has been assaulted, intimidated and threatened by none other than the police.

In January, 1984, Rose returned home late only to discover that the police had broken into her flat and were rifling through her personal documents. Their excuse? - apparently a bleeding man had been spotted running into her flat - perhaps the police thought he was hiding in her desk. Strangely enough no body or blood was ever found, and the phone from which an anonymous caller is supposed to have rung the police had been broken for some time.

In August of this year Rose returned home to find her son barricaded into their home, in tears and frightened out

of his wits. Brian said that the police had called, saying they had come to take him back to Uganda. This was backed up by neighbours.

The next day Rose was woken up at 8am by a brutal knocking at her front door. Outside were several men claiming to be police officers with warrants. She refused to open the door to them until they showed her proof of identification - they refused and went away. Rose then went out to ask a neighbour to help her. They were just crossing Chapeltown Road when a car came screaming towards them almost knocking them over. Two men jumped out and threw them to the ground. When Rose asked to see identification, she was told to shut up and hit in the face. She was thrown into the police car, taken to Chapeltown police station and held for 10 hours while she was interrogated about her political beliefs, her opinions on the police and on the government's immigration policies. At the same time police raided her home, removing literature about her campaign. She was released after being charged with defrauding a taxi driver and causing actual bodily harm to a police officer - he probably hurt his hand when he hit her.

People may ask why the police spend so much time terrorising an innocent woman and her 8-year old son - why aren't they doing their job? The answer is that they are. The job of the police is not to protect the ordinary person. As anyone who has been on a picket line or suffered arrest knows, the job of the police is to suppress ordinary people and defend this rotten system.

Rose is settled in Leeds, having a job as a computer operator and Brian has lived here most of his life. Sending them back to Uganda would be just another brutal piece of state repression. Rose has a strong campaign to protect her from deportation, but she is one of the lucky ones - more than 50 Black people and Asians are deported every week by the racist British state. We never get to hear of most of these. A mass anti-deportation campaign must be organised to prevent this. We cannot allow the state to impose its will on any of our class.

Capitalism is Rubbish

UK 2,000 is the name of the latest government scheme to massage the unemployment figures. Man of the moment, millionaire rock entrepreneur Richard Branson, has been given charge of this latest drive against the problem of "litter", a very real problem everyone claims to care about. He has been given £23 million to try and "solve" what local councils, with a budget running into billions, have been unable to. At the same time, government rate-capping has taken away from local councils sums of money many times greater than the piddling amount they're supposedly putting back. UK 2000 is supposed to create 5,000 "real" jobs and a further 300,000 "short term" jobs on the government's community programme. How £23 million, a pathetically small amount is supposed to do this no-one has been told. Government rate-capping, over the last seven years or so, has destroyed a far greater number of real jobs in school meal provisions, hospital catering, cleaning, refuse collection and a whole host of other essential services. Model Tory London borough Wandsworth, meanwhile, which has privatised its refuse collection and street cleansing services, was recently voted "dirtiest borough in London" by readers of the London Standard.

Recently, all the Fleet St. gutter press united in condemning the Peace Convoy. They were presented as trespassers, as scroungers, but worst of all as dirty litter-louts. No evidence was presented of this other than their "unusual" appearances. On the contrary, the evidence of the rubbish left by the self-righteous hypocrits who choose to read the likes of The Sun, Daily Mirror, and the rest is overwhelming; discarded newspapers, crisp wrappers, ciggy packs, beer cans, tissue paper, puked-up food, used johnnies etc. Multi-national fast food joints package their junk in tissue cardboard or polystyrene boxes, paper bags, the more times it has their name on the better. Un-packaged, no-one would

want to buy their rubbish. Advertisements which most people don't bother to read are pushed through letter-boxes to pile up behind the door or find themselves thrown out the back door with the rubbish and from there to flutter about in the wind. Record stores, including Branson's Virgin, increasingly go for the supermarket approach, all the records, stacked out for the customer to pick and choose, are individually wrapped in polythene, more rubbish to throw away.

"Direct Action" has in the past given much coverage to the issue of ecology. We will continue to do so, not out of some fascistic concern for tidiness and order, but because we believe that the problem of the destruction of our environment, of which the problem of litter is a small part, can't be separated from the class nature of the society we live in. Non-sensical ideas such as UK 2,000 won't solve the problem. Nor will cleaner streets. The problem of the wider destruction of the environment remains

Capitalism, in the ever shrinking world of the eighties, in pursuit of greater profits and wider markets, clearly puts its own interests before those of the wider world. In 19th century Britain, capitalist barons employed children working 12 and more hours a day (and still do today in the "developing" world) in sweatshops or down mines. The reason then, as it is now, was BOSSES' PROFITS. Then, alcoholism and widespread drunkenness among the working class attracted the headlines, much more than the poverty and demoralisation which led to drink. Today, it's rising crime or untidiness - causes such as widespread homelessness or general poverty caused by rising unemployment receive less coverage. Campaigns against litter are an obvious safety valve. If we're talking about cleaning up the rubbish, we should include the rubbish responsible, Richard Branson and all the rest!

OVERTIME BAN AT CONTRACTS

The workers at Contracts Ltd., South Shields have implemented an overtime ban and work-to-rule, in protest at breaches of contract by management. Despite this, management are behaving in increasingly provocative ways. They continue to break many of the agreements they made following the six-month long strike which ended at the beginning of this

year. These tactics include ludicrous anomalies in, and inaccurate calculation of wages. For instance, workers who reached the age of 18 have been refused the statutory increase in pay due to them. Also workers have been disciplined in the manager's office without a union representative being present - a requisite in the agreement.

Source: Tyneside Syndicalist.

N.U.U.&W.

Cuts, cuts and more cuts; that's what is expected from this government. Not that it's any different from many others - it's just that they shout louder about it.

In Tameside, after many meetings, we are no nearer an unemployed centre than four years ago. The Labour-controlled council have fobbed us off with endless excuses and continue to do so, even resorting to the press. The policy of most TUC-controlled centres mirrors the government's, that is to ghettoise the unemployed. We are not fooled however elaborate the hoax. All the white paint in the world will not remove the rot of unemployment from the industrial scene. We would like to see centres run by the unemployed for the unemployed. The ghettoising policy of the TUC and government must not be allowed to work.

HAPPILY UNEMPLOYED

For many of us the reality of unemployment may not be so unpleasant once resistance has been organised, rights established and higher benefits secured. There are many constructive things that could be done once unemployed centres have been properly organised. For example, work co-ops and entertainment collectives. However, the unemployed must fightback otherwise they will be used as a pool of cheap labour to be hired and fired at management's whim.

THE NUW

The National Union of Unemployed and Workers is the only union for the unemployed. It is organised on a decentralised and federated basis and holds two conferences a year to decide policy. Membership is open to workers who are unemployed, YTS, part time, seasonal or temporary. The union campaigns for a national minimum wage, the ending of the curse of low pay, a national social wage to replace all benefits to be negotiated annually and aims to link the struggles of the employed and unemployed in one organisation.

TRADE UNIONS

The existing unemployed sections in some of the reformist trade unions are merely a sop - the trade unions have no realistic solutions for the unemployed. They won't put money into their struggles because people on the bread-line can't pay enough dues to make it worth their while. The N.U.U.W is a workers' union firmly dedicated to the ideal of "one big union". This is the ideal behind those unions which in the past have fought effectively on the side of their members, instead of making compromises with the state and capitalism like the reformist unions of today.

From its now tiny origins it aims to become an asset to the labour movement and to grow into a fully-fledged negotiating union which will be able to deal with governments and trade union bureaucracy alike.

For further information, contact: Tameside DAM.

IRELAND: is Class Unity Possible?

The two communities in Northern Ireland remain as divided as ever with the situation having worsened since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. As a result any chances of class unity have been set back. Sectarianism along with partition have an important effect on the class struggle in Ireland. Clearly in Northern Ireland the entrenched sectarianism and nationalism (both loyalist and republican brands) discourage united and independent working class action. As anarchists/syndicalists we should work for British withdrawal while at the same time encouraging and supporting the formation of a working class movement which would cut across sectarian lines and oppose the backlash that would follow any possible British withdrawal in the future.

LOYALISM

While recognising that Loyalism is reactionary it is important that we do not just simply ignore it. If working class unity is to be achieved sooner or later Loyalism will have to be faced. It survives because of its value to the capitalist class who first introduced the "bogey" of the Fenian after loyalist jobs. Since then sectarianism has kept the working class divided. It was institutionalised by the 6 county state as the loyalist working class were allowed marginal privileges in areas such as housing, education and jobs. So although they are worse off than the British working class, as long as they are better off than the Catholic working class they are happy. In this way sectarianism and loyalism are tied to capitalist/imperialist interests.

REPUBLICANISM

Although the left wing of Sinn Fein is involved in the unions and struggles in the wider community it is difficult to see Republicanism leading to working class unity or independence. In fact, republicans give the class struggle a back seat. But the British presence can only be removed when its main pillar, sectarianism, has been challenged which can only happen as a result of loyalists beginning to question what they are

loyal to. Sinn Fein shop stewards have no conception of independent rank and file activity but are hostile to it. Only through working class struggles can a movement come about which unites working class militants from both sides of the sectarian divide to fight for their common interests. Republicanism instead stands for some form of benevolent state socialism similar to the left wing of the Labour Party.

CLASS UNITY

At present it is extremely difficult to unite on a class basis because people see their situations differently - for example repression by security forces is an issue for people in West Belfast or the Bogside in Derry, but loyalists relate differently to issues like this. There have been a number of occasions in recent years when class unity has come about - the trouble is, though, that these have been short-lived. As long as the basis of sectarianism remains - Loyalism propped up by the British state - then united working class action and building a non-sectarian workers' movement will be difficult. However, when class unity does arise it must be encouraged and built on.

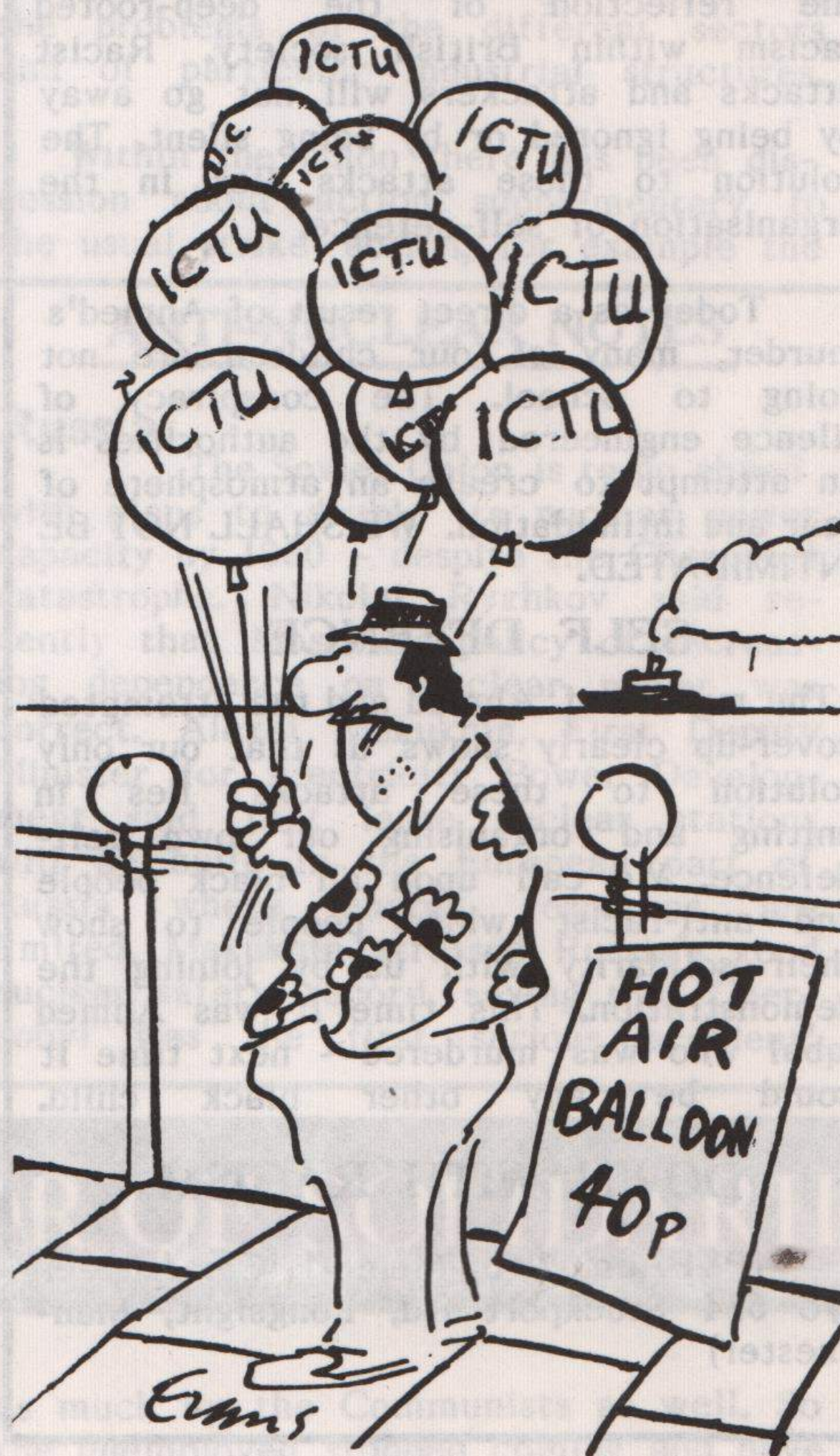
WITHDRAWAL

In the past British capitalism used sectarianism to maximise profits but Britain by itself can no longer sustain the same economic supremacy for significant sections of the loyalist working class as it did before. It may be that Britain wants to withdraw from Ireland but not until Ireland is militarily and economically under the thumb of NATO and international capitalism. This is why the USA and EEC countries are interested in the Anglo-Irish deal. Such a capitalist solution will not make things any better for the Irish working class as sectarianism can and will be used as a tool to divide and rule them. Calls for "troops out" and "self-determination for the Irish people" are valid ones for anarchists/anarcho-syndicalists to support. However such demands are pointless unless there is a call for class unity to go with them. It is British interfer-

ence in Ireland and partition that are the root causes of sectarianism and disunity in the working class, and so must be opposed.

RANK AND FILES

To do this there needs to be an anti-sectarian rank and file movement built up in workplaces to link up with non-sectarian initiatives in the community. Such a movement would oppose sectarian divisions as well as the bureaucratic and ineffective reformist unions in the ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which stands well to the right of the TUC). In fact the ICTU has never confronted sectarianism - this is because a large number of union members have the sectarian employment policies of most employers to thank for their jobs; the ICTU would prefer the money that this raises rather than challenge sectarianism. Going hand in hand with the fight



for a non-sectarian working class movement are struggles against British state repression; against the domination of the communities by the Catholic and Protestant churches; and ultimately for the ending of partition and for a British withdrawal.

THE SOUTH

An important factor is the activities of the working class in the south of Ireland. At present there are no rank and file groupings but at least any struggles that do arise are mainly to do with bettering the wages or conditions of the working class. Thus it seems likely that a fighting and independent class movement will develop in the south before the north. The importance of this is that there would then be a chance to show sections of the loyalist working class what can be possible once class unity is achieved. Recently there have been campaigns in the south to change the laws concerning contraception, abortion and divorce. These are important as they challenge the basis of the southern state - i.e. the power of the Catholic church, which is one of the main stumbling blocks in the way of the ending of partition as far as loyalists are concerned. If working class militancy in the south is to point the way towards positive action in the north then links must be built up between working class militants on both sides of the border.

BRITAIN

British working class militants have a role to play by agitating against the use of plastic bullets, supergrasses, strip-searching and all other repression; for a British withdrawal and for an end to partition. This does not mean having to support the IRA. Although the demands are the same, and although working class militants in Ireland may work together with republicans on particular issues such as plastic bullets, we do not agree that armed struggle by small elitist groups is the way forward for the Irish working class. Instead we encourage the self-activity of the working class itself, not the activity of others on behalf of the working class.

THE POLICE: from Bobbies to Bastards

When the British police were first established it was in the face of massive opposition from a wide range of political interests, but while middle and upper class suspicions were quietly allayed, working class resentment lived on. This resentment, always bubbling below the surface was always more pronounced during times of working class unrest such as the syndicalist revolt of 1910-14, the period after World War 1 and throughout the '20's and '30's. Yet by the 1950's the police had become not merely accepted but idolised by the broad spectrum of opinion, as a 1955 Police Journal editorial commented;

"the law abiding sections of the community have come to accept the police more as guardians and less as oppressors. Time and experience have dispelled old fears, and even when engaged in illicit or unofficial strikes trade unionists now rarely resort to rowdiness or disorder"

POLICING BY CONSENT

So by the 1950's policing by consent was achieved in Britain to the maximum degree it is ever attainable. Police power had been changed into authority, power which is accepted as at least minimally legitimate. But by the 1980's this has changed and policing has come to the forefront of political controversy.

This process began in the late '50's with the rise in crime statistics and the first sign of an emerging youth culture with Teddy Boys and Beatniks. The "race riots" at Notting Hill and Nottingham, the Anti-Suez demos and the first Aldermaston marches were the start of future concern about public-order policing.

In the 1960's changes were made that included greater central control, state strengthening of the power of the Home Office and of police constables. The British "bobby" was recast as the tough,

formidable (but still brave and honest) "Crime Buster". The police themselves became seduced by the new action-centred perspective with the technology of fast cars, sirens and flashing blue lights. The image of the police started to change but it was at the end of the '60's with the growth of the counter-culture and police clashes with anti-Vietnam and anti-apartheid demonstrators that finally meant the police had been transformed from plods to pigs from bobbies to bastards.

CORRUPTION

There were many reasons for this; one was the low level of intelligence of police recruits and the inadequate training. There was also a series of corruption scandals involving the drug squad and the obscene publications squad which were riddled with corruption on a grand scale. Also police violations of the rule of law especially in the treatment of suspects' rights and the methods of gaining false confessions. There was a growing number of deaths in police custody; from 8 in 1970 up to 48 in 1978 - these did not include cases in which deaths occurred shortly after release (Liddle Towers) and from contact not leading to custody (Blair Peach).

But the most crucial factor which politicised policing was the development of a consciousness of antagonism towards the police especially amongst the working class and the black community. This owed something to the development of more self-conscious youth culture, the return of long term unemployment, and most importantly the increasing militancy of industrial conflict since the early '70's.

ANTI-UNION

The panic that followed the seamen's strike in 1966 produced a climate in which "conspirators", "union agitators" and "militants" were considered alive and well and running the unions from the



Police Occupation of Armthorpe 22/8/84

shop floor. The Donovan report of 1968 concluded that "the use of the unofficial strike by workers coupled with the power of shop stewards represented a twin threat to industrial order and worker discipline". The election of the Heath government in 1970 set workers on a collision course with the state. The Tories came in on a strong, law and order and anti-union platform, opposition grew and more working days were lost in 1972 than at any other time since 1919.

In January 1972 there was a national miners' strike and at the Saltley coke depot in the West Midlands the miners met the government's desire to outlaw

picketing. In a week long confrontation 15,000 pickets confronted the police, their resolve hardened in the face of excessive violence and intimidation. The mass picket grew and Saltley gates were closed.

The closure of Saltley gates is regarded as the point at which the full blown crisis in industrial relations arrived and was linked to the Tories' defeat in 1974. It was obvious that the police, regardless of their use of intimidatory tactics, were not capable of handling well-organised mass pickets.

continued on page 7

The Police (contd.)

Subsequently the priority for the police was to establish contingency plans and appropriate training for the containment and control of picket lines. Policy took three directions:

- the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) was set up, based at the cabinet office and entrusted with the long-term monitoring, intelligence gathering and planning for an immediate response to any civil disturbance like strikes, demonstrations and riots;
- a new code of practice was introduced for picketing, including a ban on secondary picketing;
- the emergence of "mutual aid" policing with provision for specialist training.

This was brought together under the centralised co-ordination of the National Reporting Centre (NRC).

WINTER OF DISCONTENT

These contingency plans were first used in the confrontation at Grunwick's in 1976 when the police demonstrated their resolve to use forceful means in containing a picket and to assist in the breaking of a strike. The CCU met almost every day during the '78/'79 "winter of discontent" and James Callaghan used this time to perfect its information gathering capacities. But it was the election of the Thatcher government in 1979 that brought the rule of the police to the forefront. The legacy of Saltley gates had not been forgotten. The 1980 Employment Act embodied principles which had long been popular with the police. It gave them a great deal of discretion and provided the framework by which workers in dispute, taking part in peaceful protest could be branded criminals.

During the years of Thatcherism the notion that the police are neutral and impartial enforcers of the law has been

exposed. The strike at Laurence Scott Engineering Works in Greater Manchester was broken when goods were air-lifted out of the works with the full support of the police. The 1980/'81 uprisings in St. Pauls, Brixton, Moss Side and Toxteth made it clear that contingency plans existed for co-ordination between forces for the deployment of specially trained riot control officers. These plans announced the arrival of a national police response to civil disorder.



I can arrest you if you are.....

.....black, Irish, lesbian, gay, young, a punk, a skinhead, long-haired, a trade unionist, a peace campaigner, a political activist, a woman without a handbag, a person driving an old car (particularly a Ford Cortina or a Morris Minor), a black person driving a flashy new car, anyone riding a motorbike....

and hold you in a police cell for 4 days before I charge you.

PARAMILITARY

The lessons learnt in the street battles were to be applied to mass pickets. The evidence was shown at the Stockport Messenger dispute in Warrington in 1983 when paramilitary tactics were used by the police with several

forces combining to ensure the movement of Shah's papers. These tactics reached their peak during the year long miners' strike.

From the beginning of the strike central co-ordination of police operations took place from the NRC, the main object of the police was to reduce the effectiveness of mass pickets with police from all over the country being used in operations. Nottinghamshire was virtually sealed off as the police prevented the free movement of vehicles in to and through the county. At Orgreave the miners tried to emulate their success at Saltley gates. But the heavily armed police on horseback and with dogs charged the pickets and the lorries got through. At Armthorpe in South Yorkshire the whole village was occupied by cops from several police forces and a curfew was imposed.

RESISTANCE

The confrontation between the police and the miners and mining communities underlined the class nature of British policing. Where the police most vividly come up against the working class is where the explicit mistrust of their role is at its sharpest. Public order and industrial conflict at Tottenham and Wapping have once again shown the true nature of policing. The poor and unemployed, workers on strike and political demonstrations have always represented a threat to the established order. Working class resistance to poverty, job losses, unemployment, etc. has been met directly, on the picket lines or on the streets, by the police as the state's civil force of regulation and control. In the last ten years of political, social and economic conflict and upheaval, the police have become identified closely, both in operational policies and practice, with the interests of the state and capitalism and are directly opposed to the working class.

'Organise'

Anarcho-syndicalist paper of Ballymena Anarchist Group. Includes the current situation in the 6 counties, Victorian working conditions in Ballymena, Wapping and Silentsnight, the Anarchist Black Cross and anarcho-syndicalism. Available from Michael Murray, 3, Devenagh Way, Ballymena, Co. Antrim. (no mention of "anarchist" on the envelope, please.) Please enclose an SAE or a stamp.

Meetings

NATIONAL SQUATTERS' NETWORK CONFERENCE:-

Manchester, November the 8th. To discuss possible aims of such a network and to prepare for a weekend of workshops and discussion on aspects of housing and squatting to be held in Bristol on December 13th and 14th. For further details on both Manchester and Bristol events, write to Manchester Housing Action, c/o Raven Press, 75, Piccadilly, Manchester. Please enclose an SAE if possible.

TAMESIDE DAM-IWA:-

Meetings at the Toad and Tulip, Stamford St., Ashton-u-Lyne, every Wednesday:-

8th October - Chile
15th " - Tenants Unite
22nd " - Free Namibia
29th " - The NUUW

November 12th - folk benefit for Ashton Unemployed Centre at the Enville Club, Katherine St., Ashton-u-Lyne.

NORTHERN BLACK CROSS:-

First meeting to be held at Bolton Socialist Club, Wood St., Bolton, on Saturday, November the 8th at 1pm. Topics include bulletin/newsletter to spread information on anarchist and class struggle prisoners, as well as a discussion on the role of the Northern Black Cross.

DAM-IWA

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

5. We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the workplace and community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers' organisations must be controlled by the workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers' movement. Any and all delegates of such workers' organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.

6. We are opposed to all States and State institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all States do not exist to protect the workers of those States, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.

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

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

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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.

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DAM Contacts

South East Region:

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

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

South London...c/o 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London, SE24.

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

Central London.Box DAM, 234 Camden High St., London, NW1.

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

North West Region:

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.

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

North East Region:

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

Huddersfield...c/o Old Stewards House, Northgate, Huddersfield, HD1 1RL.

Leeds.....Box DAM, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds, LS2 3AW.

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

Others:

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

Edinburgh.....P.O. Box 83, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.

For contacts in other areas write to national secretary (same address as Cambridge DAM).

DAM Building Workers...c/o ELDAM, 84b, Whitechapel High Street, London.

DAM Health Workers....c/o Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir St., Cambridge.

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

Letter

Dear comrades,

I've been reading "Direct Action" on and off for a year now, and have just bought the "official" issue of number 32 and your pamphlets on Spain and the "IWA Today". All of these are excellent. D.A 32 is well written, laid out and printed. It's quite clear you put some effort into it.

Although I have reservations about some aspects of syndicalism, I respect what you are doing, and believe you're one of the most positive elements in the anarchist movement today. My reservations are over your coverage (or lack of coverage) of what are too often seen as

"side issues" to many anarcho-syndicalists, such as the animal rights and environmental movements, etc. Though you address these issues your overwhelming emphasis on industrial struggles may lead people to believe you see industrial workers as the only potential revolutionary force. But I'm sure you've heard this before!

As for the industrial coverage itself, it's good to see you reporting on the smaller strikes - Nove Leather, A1 Feeds, etc. - Reading the left papers could give you the impression only miners, railworkers, etc. go on strike!

Anyway, well done on issue 32, and I wish you all the best.

Tony, Lancaster.

Direct Action

PICKET

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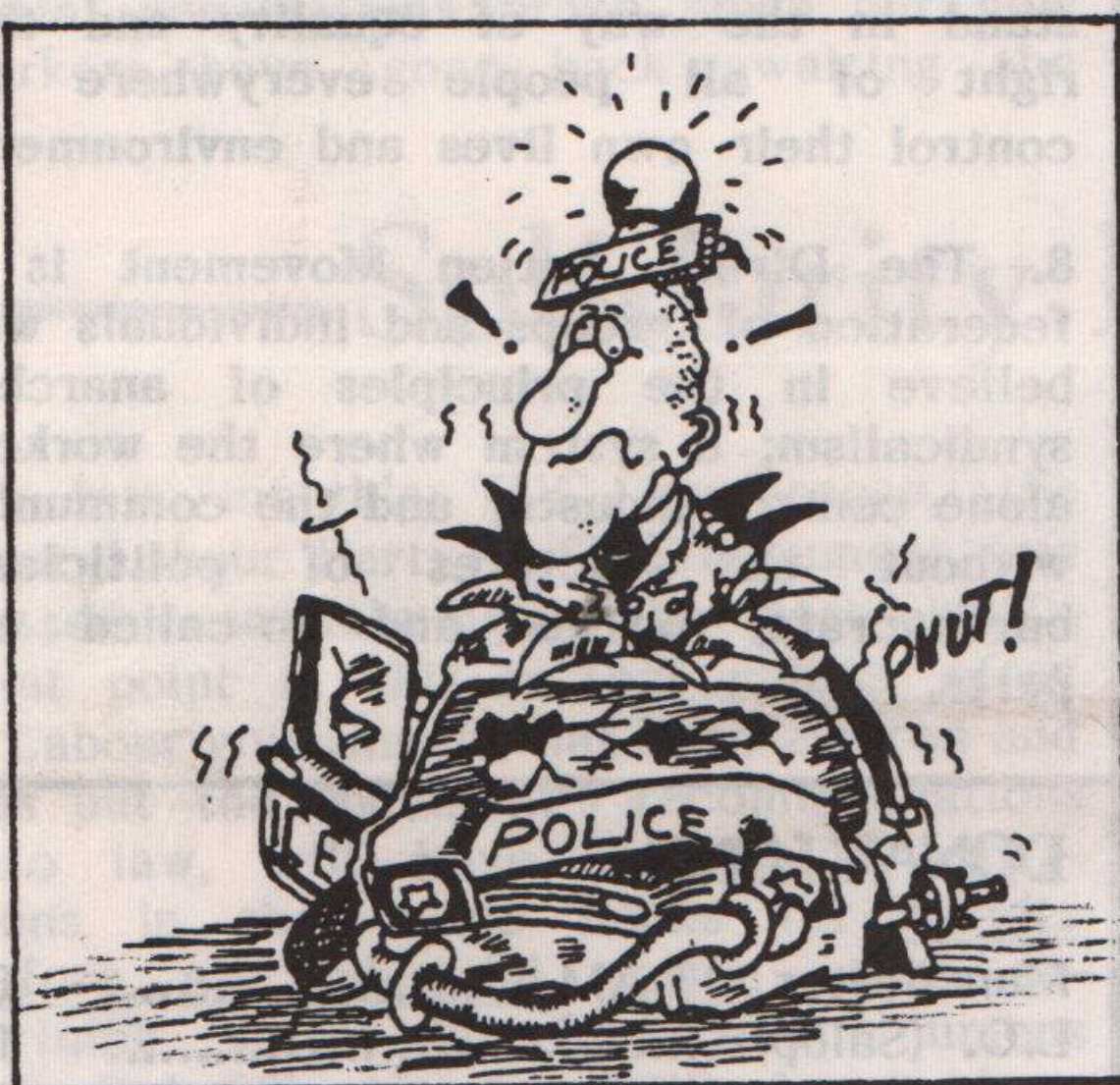
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ST. PAUL'S TAKES ON THE POLICE STATE

On Thursday 11th of September just after 4pm, Avon and Somerset police force launched a carefully planned attack on the St. Paul's area of Bristol. "Operation Delivery" had been prepared at least 2 months in advance according to police statements. It should be seen as part of a pattern of police invasions of areas where black people live - invasions carried out under the pretext of the need to clamp down on "hard drugs", but actually intended to ferment public panic over law and order - race - drugs issues.

Some facts about St. Paul's: fact; there is a large amount of open, illegal activity in St. Paul's; red light district, gambling houses, blues clubs, drug trade etc; fact, there is a very strong hatred of the police among local residents; fact, the drugs trade in St. Paul's is almost exclusively in dope (hard drugs are simply not available in St. Paul's, better to look for those in rich areas of Bristol) and is tolerated if not supported by local residents.



STRATEGY OF TENSION

The police are aware of all these facts, which begs the question; why did 600 filth in riot gear (many drafted in from outside Bristol) descend on St. Paul's that Thursday? Was it to smash a dangerous vice ring terrorising St. Paul's? as the Assistant Chief Constable claimed; or was it the British State terrorising St. Paul's, creating a climate of fear among local people for its own ends, fuelling the racist sentiments sometimes hidden but never too far from the surface in most white people? Was the police invasion in fact not part of a "strategy of tension" being pursued by the British state to divide the working-class and to create an atmosphere where it can further militarise our society and threaten our liberties? The view of locals discussing the police's massive attempt at intimidation from Thursday night through the weekend, was an overwhelming "yes"!

"The raid had nothing to do with crime. The police wanted to show they

ruled St. Paul's" - Jagun Akinshegun, Secretary of St. Paul's Community Association.

POLICE STRATEGIES

The police have developed other tactics since the 1980-81 riots. They have grasped that the way to control the crowds is to trap them between the main parallel roads running through St. Paul's. To this end the police made great efforts to secure Grosvenor Rd, City Rd and Ashley Rd (see diagram) and then to baton charge the crowds in the narrower interconnecting streets. There were memories too of the crowd-control tactics used in the miners' strike, with police splitting up large crowds and then sending in snatch squads to pick up stragglers.

DIRECT ACTION

The response on Thursday to the police invasion, though hastily prepared was fierce and enthusiastic. However on Friday night preparation and organisation were better. Attacks on police lines were centred on Grosvenor Rd. from where there was a good escape route into a housing estate. Looting took place in Picton St. and Shaftesbury Av. and rioting was much more widespread than on previous occasions with street battles and looting outside the St. Paul's area. In addition some enterprising urban guerrillas trashed 15 or more shops in the richest areas of Bristol.

There was a good spirit of comradeship and solidarity amongst the crowds, with anyone who wanted to help fight the police welcomed to do so, whatever the colour of their skin.

"We support the right of youth to fight back and defend themselves. And we don't condemn the involvement of white youth. They share many of the same problems" - Jagun Akinhegun

SMASH THE STATE

Today the British ruling class is turning its violence on its domestic working class more viciously than it has done for fifty years. This is a sign of their growing insecurity as the gap between the rich and the poor grows. As Britain's manufacturing base dwindles and as violence of poverty asserts itself more and more in working class life sparking off militant direct action in the ghettos and on the picket-lines.

As the legacy of the British State's imperialist past and present is brought home to it, we must beware of two dangers:

The unions, he mourns, are in decline: they have patently failed to resist the new '80's style capitalist onslaught (haven't they always?); they are backward-looking, always on the defensive, divided, run by white male bureaucrats, lacking in any appeal to the community or to the young and are not accountable to the rank and file.

Fair enough. And he even admits that the Communist Party has to take some of the blame. Not bad, eh? for a prominent member of an organisation that for years has been stitching up and ballot rigging positions for itself on union executives as well as spawning some of the worst

The first is the resiliency of capitalism and the power of the state. The ruling class need desperately to keep the working-class divided and thus weak. One of their most powerful tools for doing this is racism. It is both because they are racist and because their political masters want to promote a racist backlash (as in France) that the police invaded St. Paul's.

"I asked a police cameraman by whose authority he was filming the raid. Whereupon I was grabbed from behind, handcuffed by my hands and feet. They dragged me on my stomach on to a coach...One of the police said, 'We'll show you whose England this is.' - Kuomba Balogun, Chair, St. Paul's Community Association.

Anarcho-Syndicalists support the struggle of the black working-class against the British state, but to defeat racism we must win the support of the white working-class, for their's is a struggle with the same enemy.

The second danger is "the left" who shout loudest about racism and imperialism but whose only recipe for defeating them is for black people to accept the "wise" and no doubt "scientific" leadership of the revolutionary party (with their white, middle-class and male leaders). "The left" sees nothing but potential for recruitment in the St. Paul's riots. We welcome such courageous examples of direct action against oppression. The community, syndicalists believe, as much as the workplace is where the class must struggle, organise and win control.

TIMETABLE OF EVENTS, ST. PAUL'S, 11-13 SEPTEMBER

11/9/86

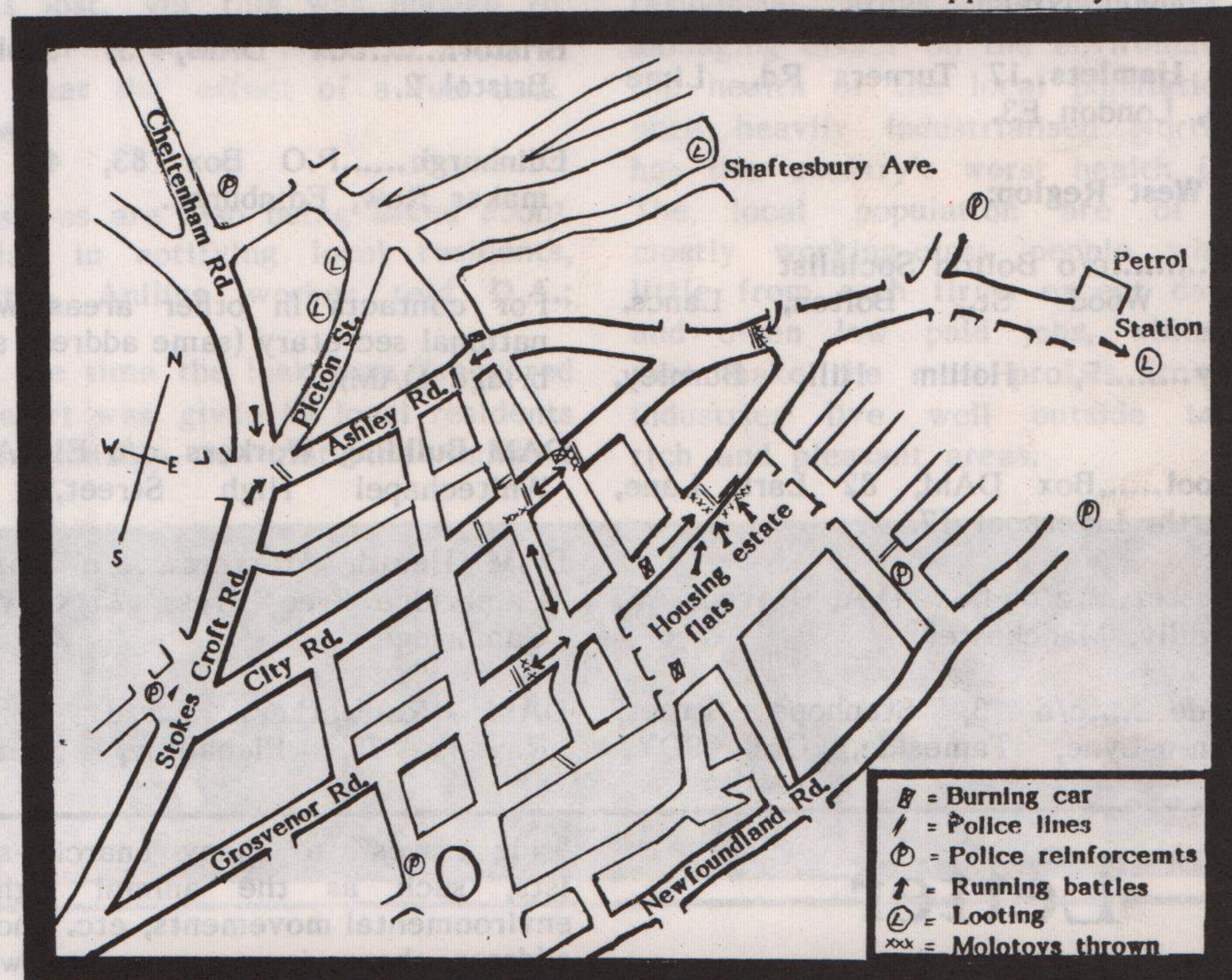
4.00-4.30pm Police arrive in furniture vans, raid 12 premises, 60 arrests.
4.30pm Resistance succeeds in driving police back to the west side of Grosvenor Rd.
4.30-7.30pm Large crowds gather outside flats opposite police lines.
7.30-8.30pm Police try to withdraw from "frontline" are attacked by missiles and molotovs for about 20 minutes. Police seal off St. Paul's, clear cars away from Grosvenor Rd. and shut down Ashley Rd petrol station.
8.30-9.30pm Further confrontations between angry locals and police, some street battles, one cop in a landrover is surrounded, has his leg and hip broken and is stabbed.
9.30-11.30pm Police control Ashley Rd, City Rd and Grosvenor Rd. Crowds gather.

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11.30-1.30am Running battles in streets between City Rd and Grosvenor Rd and as far away as Cheltenham Rd. About 50 further arrests for rioting.
1.30-3.30am Crowds decrease as people begin to go home.
9.30-11.00pm Increasing tension on the frontline.
11.00-12.00pm Burning cars on Grosvenor Rd, Ashley Rd etc. Large crowds on Grosvenor Rd attack police with molotovs and escape into flats.
12.00-1.00am Rioting continues in City Rd and Grosvenor Rd and moves to Easton (next district). Extensive looting in Picton St and Shaftesbury Ave. Crowds disappear very quickly, few arrests.

13/9/86

Rain Stopped Play.



REVIEW

TRADE UNIONS AND THE NEW REALITY
PETE CARTER; COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATIONS.

Pete Carter, "Euro-Communist" industrial organiser, has taken a critical look at today's trade unions and has come up with some unpleasant facts that anarchists and others have been saying for years. In fact it prompted the Morning Star to comment that "this pamphlet represents the greatest class betrayal since Khrushchev's speech on Stalin".

tyrants in the history of the "labour movement", Bevin and Crappell among them.

But, like Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalin, his solutions are new wine in old bottles - they patch up the symptoms. Take the issue of rank and file control, an issue dear to our hearts and also apparently to the C.P which, he boasts, "has an honourable record of championing the cause of trade union democracy". Bollocks! The best Mr Carter can do here is to winge on about the Tory Employment Acts.

One paragraph out of the 20 in this

section actually deals with increasing rank and file participation - which of course to him means devising new ways of making official power more acceptable to the members it exploits.

Let's face it, the corpse of the trade union hierarchy needs to be buried now, not resurrected. The structures they support are becoming increasingly irrelevant to our survival in the workplace and the community. As the decay progresses, new working class structures may emerge, independent of the hacks and the full-timers. That is the challenge we should take up. C.P corpse lovers, beware!