

THE SAME OLD BOLLOCKS!

It's got to that time again, when trade union leaders start arguing that we can do nothing but wait for a labour victory in the next election. Totally defeated by the Tory government the only hope they can offer is that Labour will come to their rescue.

It seems that they are willing to see a Labour victory at any cost. Already they are playing down the labour party's attitude to the union movement. Labour has made it quite clear that they have no intentions of reversing the vicious anti-trade union laws which have shackled the union movement and, more importantly, the rank and file. The Labour party is even back-tracking on its commitment to re-nationalise the public utilities.

Of course, we've been here before 2 years before the last election when there was much talk about the Tories being finished. There's no guarantee that Tories won't be re-elected and what will our union leaders do then? But let's imagine for a moment that their prayers are answered and the Tony Blair roadshow gets into number ten. What, as working class people, will we face? The union movement will be allowed to exist as long as it has no power. We can discount any attempt to introduce

THE UNION MOVEMENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO EXIST AS LONG AS IT HAS NO POWER

any measure with even the merest hint of socialism. What the Labour party is offering, in fact, is to run capitalism better than the Tories, sharing out the gains more fairly.

Both Labour and the Tories would have it that capitalists are going to suddenly start investing in Britain. Why should they when returns are far more lucrative in the rising economies of the Far East? And how can the British economy compete with the emerging, highly trained, low-paid work forces in the Far Eastern economies? At least people like Portillo in the Tory party

have a feasible capitalist solution - drive down wages. But a Labour party too timid to even threaten to raise tax levels for the rich by a few pence is not about to take on the might of the City of London and force it to divert investment into this country. Perhaps, by sharing a few cocktails with the Labour leadership, capitalists can be charmed into dropping their historic thirst for profit.

A LABOUR PARTY TOO TIMID TO EVEN THREATEN TO RAISE TAX LEVELS FOR THE RICH IS NOT ABOUT TO TAKE ON THE CITY OF LONDON

Given increased globalisation, workers in Britain, unless they are willing to accept slave wages, face a daunting future. We, as workers, have to relearn the lessons of the past. You cannot appease the capitalist system- you can only fight it. In the long term our only hope is to get rid of international capitalism. Under a Labour government, union leaders would certainly have a better life but it's highly questionable what improvements ordinary workers would see. The Labour Party has no solutions to the problems thrown up by capitalism. In fact they only increase the problems by offering workers false hope.

However difficult it may seem at present we must start to work for organisations which see their final role in breaking capitalism rather than getting the Labour Party elected at any price. We have to build an international working class movement. A mammoth task, maybe, but one which we have already started here at EWN which, through our links with the IWA (International Workers' Organisation), has connections with workers facing the same struggles in every continent.

DONATIONS
This bulletin relies on donations to keep it going. Please send any donations to EWN. Many thanks to all those who made this issue possible. Your continued support is vital.

EDUCATION WORKERS' NETWORK EVENTS

The EDUCATION WORKERS' NETWORK will be hosting a **Public Meeting** on anarcho-syndicalism and its relevance to all those involved in education. The date is **28 February 1995 at 8pm** and the venue is the **Vine Pub in Manchester**. If you want more information drop us a line at EWN or just turn up.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EDUCATION WORKERS' NETWORK. There will be a discussion workshop open to EWN members and contacts. The main topics will be around membership and finance issues, publicity and this bulletin, and directions for propaganda and action. Any other interested parties are welcome to attend and participate in debates. It will be in Manchester on **4th March**. Contact EWN for more details.

CONTACTS:

- SOLIDARITY FEDERATION, PO Box 384, Preston, Lancs. PR1 5PQ.
- PUBLIC SERVICE WORKER NETWORK (PSWN), PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.
- TRANSPORT WORKER NETWORK (TWN), PO Box 73, Norwich NR3 1QD.

If you want to know more about the Education Workers' Network write to:
Education Workers' Network
PO Box 29 SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW

EDUCATION WORKER

Formerly General Assembly, the Bulletin of the Education Workers' Network

New Series - Issue 2

Spring 1995

FREE/DONATION

ASSESSING THE PROFESSIONAL DUPES

An EWN member from Newcastle writes on the AUT plan to become a professional body.

Professional institutions such as the AUT aspires to, like those for medical doctors and lawyers, are prevented from unionising or using familiar methods of workplace action. Is this what we want for education workers in tertiary education?

What is it about the term 'professional' that turns the brains of otherwise politically sound education workers into putty? It is becoming increasingly obvious that teachers' and lecturers' craving to be members of the 'elite' is being used by bosses to undermine their living and working conditions. The myth of 'professional status' is to make all education workers work longer hours for less money.

Examples of this insidious process are everywhere, one such is from my own place of work, the Department of Geography at the University of Newcastle. We have just had our teaching practices 'assessed' by a team of 'colleagues' from other geography departments. It is all part of the massive national assessment exercise forced on us by the government.

Millions of pounds are being spent on training assessors for each discipline. This consists of sending them in groups of four or so for several days at a time, to different departments up and down the country and publishing and distributing their reports. Because each subject area is self assessed the

whole package is being sold to education workers as peer-review or self-assessment.

The workload of all of us education workers involved in the tertiary sector has massively increased as student numbers have spiralled upwards. The self assessment exercise is designed to consolidate and accelerate this process with minimum complaint and maximum compliance.

THE MYTH OF 'PROFESSIONAL STATUS' IS TO MAKE ALL EDUCATION WORKERS WORK LONGER HOURS FOR LESS MONEY

At my department all staff have been required to work longer, more stressful hours. Many months of 'preparation' are required before the assessors' visits, involving the creation of endless memos and documents, most of which are entirely irrelevant to teaching quality. Needless to say the newly invigorated 'work ethic' instilled before the visits is set to be a permanent feature of our lives if we let it. Other assessment visits are planned, covering both teaching and research activities. Of course they are for our own good, 'to help keep us on our toes'. And do we complain? Of course not. We are, after all, professionals...

Academics like to think they are pretty bright. But how many other occupations, required to work longer
Cont'd page 2..

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Roundup of Direct Action in Education
- Criminal Justice Act
- Anarchists, Class and Education
- Trade Unions -The Same Old Bollocks!

Plus all the usual news and views, including forthcoming EWN events..!

MERGER NEWS: UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SALFORD & UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

It appears that plans to merge the University and University College in Salford are to go ahead in August 1996. Despite protestations to the contrary it is looking increasingly likely that the merger will result in the loss of jobs if not on the day of merger at least in the short term afterwards. At present very little information is getting out except in the form of rumour and management bluff. This only serves to alarm those involved at both institutions.

Whilst senior management jockey for their own positions and use of the executive shower the staff are faced with growing uncertainty as to whether their jobs will exist and if they do where and what they will be. Suggestions that there will be no merger of pay and conditions when the merger happens are

Cont'd from page 1
hours for declining salaries, would delude themselves that they are taking part in an honest and useful act of self-scrutiny? Professional is becoming another word for dupe.

from which teachers and lecturers come and more flexible degrees and student hours. But they clearly aren't concerned with quality. They are there to squeeze more sweat and blood out of the existing system.

What we need is the demolition of professional consciousness and the simultaneous development of union militancy. This has been said many times before but rarely has it been such an urgent task. Only by organising on the basis of an explicitly radical union solidarity, with everyone in the education sector, will the issue of working and living conditions for students, teachers and all those involved in education be able to be forced onto the political agenda.

Lib ED
The cartoon (right) is from Lib ED, a Quarterly Magazine for the liberation of learning. For more info. contact: Lib ED, 170 Wells Rd, Bristol, BS4 2AG.

HOW MANY OTHER OCCUPATIONS, REQUIRED TO WORK LONGER HOURS FOR DECLINING SALARIES, WOULD DELUDE THEMSELVES THAT THEY ARE TAKING PART IN AN HONEST AND USEFUL ACT OF SELF-SCRUTINY?

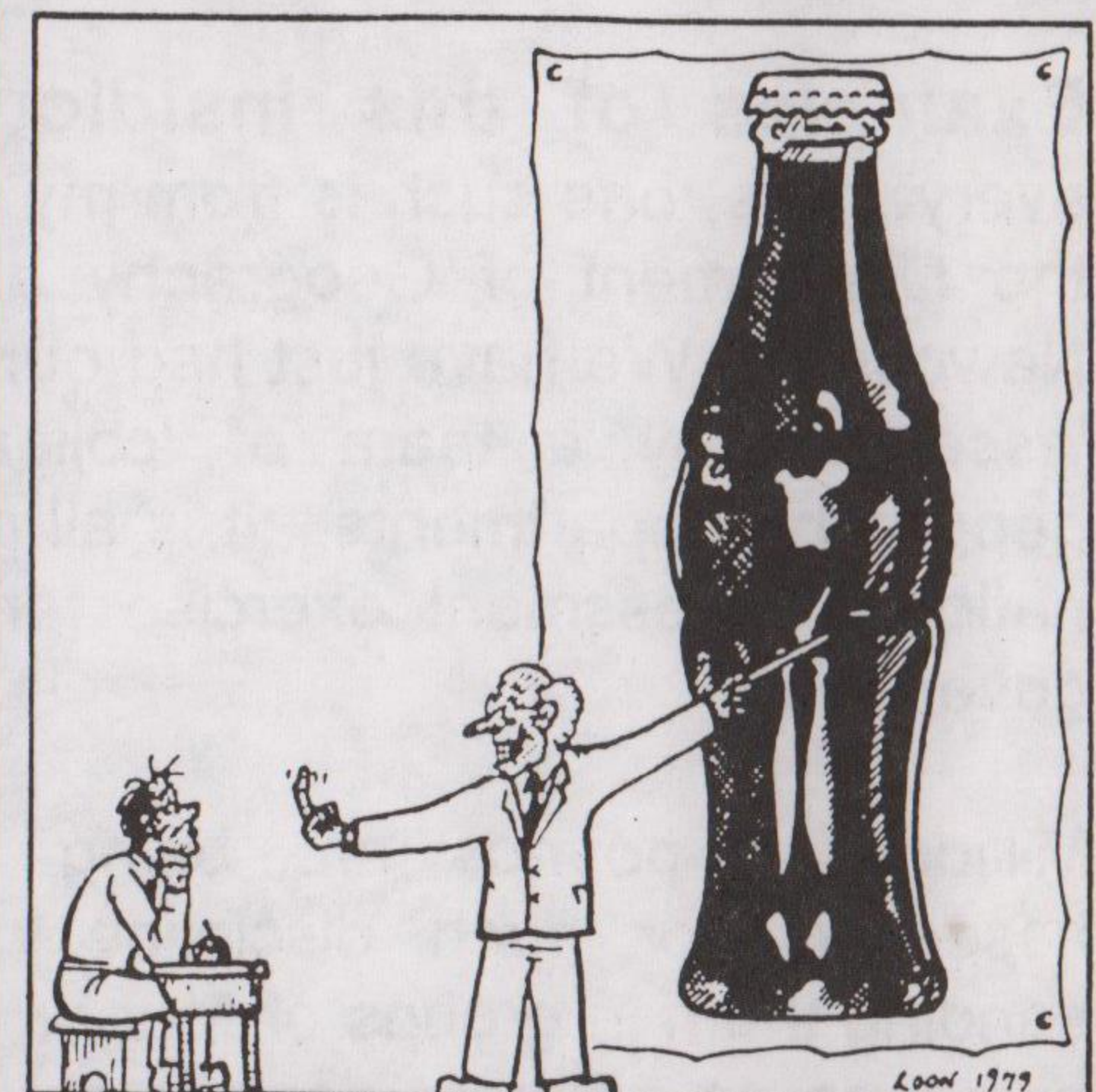
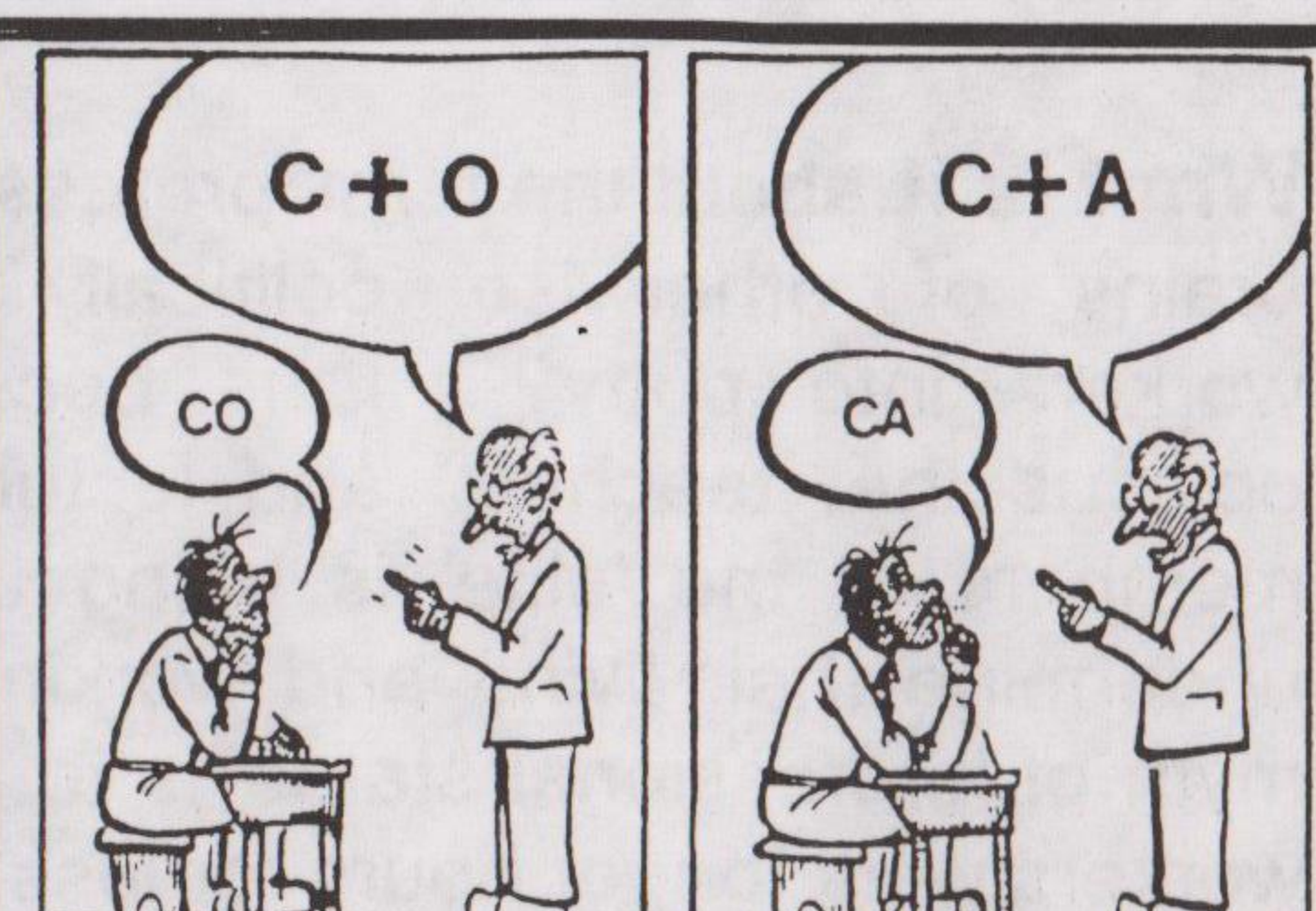
If the government and its cow-eyed teams of frantic, self-flagellating 'assessors' were serious about teaching quality they would be attempting to re-organise the tertiary sector to enable such things as smaller class sizes, the development of outreach teaching, the widening of the social base

increasingly met with angry exclamations. Given the increasing uncertainty and the apparently perilous financial state of the two institutions, particularly the College which is currently in crisis budgeting with less

STAFF ARE FACED WITH GROWING UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHETHER THEIR JOBS WILL EXIST

than minimal money being made available for capital equipment or consumables, is it any wonder that a recent stress survey at the College found significantly higher stress levels amongst College workers than in the population at large. With stress already high enough to warrant reporting in the Times Higher Education Supplement what is going to happen to ambient stress levels over the next two years?

There is only one way to reduce workers' stress in the long term - we have to take on the bosses using our own weaponry - unity, solidarity and direct action.



SAT's, GCSE's, "A" Levels, the lot. All these prove nothing. A good memory is all you need in order to "do well". Just agree with everything they say, don't argue, take the lies in and shut up. These obedient children will get an A. Those of us who offer an alternative way of learning, as opposed to being dictated to by the teacher, are "just going to have to learn to respect the rules".

ROUNDUP OF DIRECT ACTION IN EDUCATION

Here we profile a number of recent direct actions which have taken place within education. They are by no means always reported in the press, and we certainly don't find out about many of them. We want to give just publicity to all such direct action, all we need is to hear about them! Have you been involved in a dispute in your workplace or do you know someone who has? Why not write in to us with your experiences? Write to: EWN, PO Box 29, S.W.P.D.O., Manchester.

RENT STRIKE IN BRADFORD

The recent rent strike by students at the University of Bradford has shown the strength of feeling against the proposed extortionate rent increases in university accommodation. More importantly, those involved have shown that feelings are not enough and that action has to be taken to show just how unacceptable such proposals are. Negotiations are currently underway following the students' refusals to pay the rent.

This form of direct action stands as an example of the strength of those who unite together against injustice.

UPDATE ON FIXED CONTRACTS

Though not strictly direct action, there have been some successes on the subject of fixed and temporary contracts: An industrial tribunal found that two externally funded staff at Glasgow University were unfairly dismissed because of the "complete absence of proper consultation" on alternatives to redundancy when their contracts ran out. Will this decision change the attitude of institutions to fixed and temporary contracts? *We must be ready to put these AUT tactics aside and use our own direct action when the need arises.*

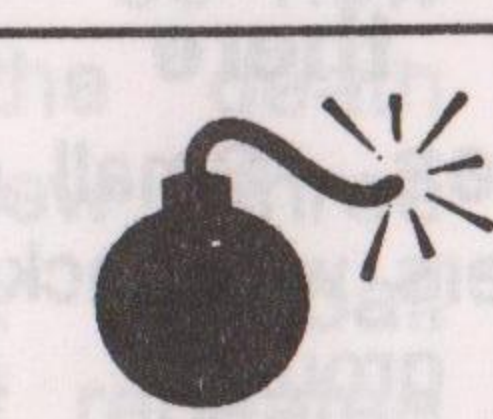
£1½ MILLION PAYOFF AVERTED AT HUDDERSFIELD

One of the few that did make major press headlines was the successful actions of students at the University of Huddersfield to get a board decision to award a ridiculous golden handshake to a departing Chancellor with

only a few months service completed at his new job.

The settlement was all the more disgusting given the Government's policy to squeeze grants and university costs but at the same time allow the bosses new freedoms to spend as lavishly as they like on themselves.

Justifiably outraged students, who are watching numbers rise and standards fall despite the efforts of teachers in the front line, organised themselves for a series of occupations and watched the management cave in.

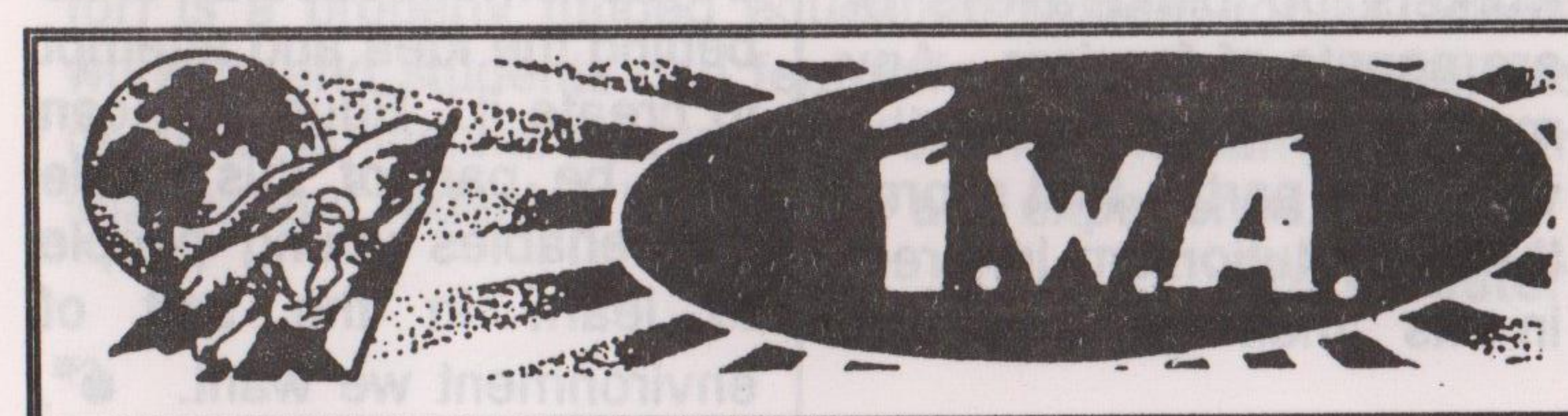


DIRECT ACTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SEVILLE

Spanish anarcho-syndicalist comrades in the CNT at the University of Seville have been taking on the bosses and in so doing setting an example for the rest of us to take up. While the Communist-led union discusses pay and conditions behind closed doors with the University management, the CNT has proposed the use of direct action as the most effective way of getting workers' justifiable demands met.

The CNT proposed that levels of technical support staff at the University should be raised to meet increased demands - readers won't need reminding that similar ever-present crises exist in education institutions across Britain. To make sure the technicians got what they wanted, the CNT led an occupation of the Director's Office. The fact that workers outside the CNT have taken on board the CNT's proposals is an indication of the effectiveness of the approach and the possibility of progressive workers everywhere getting what they want for themselves through united direct action.

While others talk, the CNT acts -on the decisions taken by its members in open workplace assemblies.



COMMENTARY

One of the worst of the many injustices in education today is the ever present spectre of job losses. But there's no use moaning about it. We know who is responsible, and only we ourselves can stop them.

Any and all action taken by workers directly affected, aimed at getting a better deal and ultimately emancipation for all, deserves and will get the full support of the EWN.

Marches and petitions are all well and good, but when it comes to the crunch direct action, solidarity and determination are going to deliver the most effective results. Only by occupying our workplaces, strikes and sympathetic action, can we protect our workplaces and help build a better future, not by waiting for the next Labour Government or obeying employment laws that are designed to keep us divided and powerless.

If we don't stand together and act together we will fail. Industry-wide action must be taken. The politicians and education bosses are organised, determined and ruthless: So must we be.

ANARCHISTS, CLASS AND EDUCATION

In 1995 the necessity for class action can seem dated: but logic tells us it is an even more urgent priority than ever. Accepting the former notion flies in the face of the latter reality. True the state has colonised our consciousness with a media barrage unthinkable thirty years ago. True its very presence hangs over us like

CLASS ACTION ... IS AN EVEN MORE URGENT PRIORITY THAN EVER

a lead cloud. The left lies splintered. Each group claiming for itself the Holy Grail of correct practice. Some 'anarchists' continue the retreat into personal politics unable to link the personal struggle with the wider one of class.

Yet there are victories. Small groups of workers win back some of the ground... always employing mutual aid and often despite union organisers and Trotskyist groupings. Marxism as a force to challenge capitalism has failed as we have always said it would.

We know there is another way. The solidarity of the working class beyond party lines, instead of this or that vanguard party, is the answer and we have a historical precedence in the CNT- FAI, THE IWW, the ZZZ... and in countless strikes, disputes and propaganda groups that have contributed to what we know as class struggle.

Anarchist educationalists have a role in all this. Infant, Junior, Comprehensive, Sixth Form College all serve the needs of the capitalist state.

MARXISM AS A FORCE TO CHALLENGE CAPITALISM HAS FAILED AS WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID IT WOULD

We know this yet still try to balance our link our economic struggle with our practice in the classroom. We constantly walk the tightrope. Sometimes we fall off, lose direction, just stand still. We have tried to distinguish an anarchist methodology. Isn't it time we involved some anarchist content?

There is an anarchist history and culture waiting to be discovered. It's a history of anarchists and anarchist practice. (Not the same thing though sometimes they interrelate.)

There are countless names we must keep alive. Countless names that need to be fleshed out, that echo and re-echo the struggles we're going through today.

Already the Marxists and Socialists have tried to create an untrue picture of working class history. The movement from Utopian Socialism to the 'sophistication' of 'Scientific Socialism' reflects their view of the history of struggle. To them, at best, anarchists are naive, unrealistic, chaotic and confused; at worst we lead workers up blind alleys or are agents of fascism. Any movement that scorns the vanguard party, that scorns the substitutionism inherent in its makeup must be

rubbed. The workers may be brave and courageous in struggle but they need the sophistication of a party to win. This is the picture of the working class that has come from the traditional left. It is a picture we know is not true.

No one in their right minds would want to give any child to the corrupt, careerist and bureaucratic institutions that are the Unions of today. Yet the passage of time should not hide from us the possibilities of the working class. Nor should the cynicism of the eighties contaminate us and make us afraid of aiming high. Education alone will not bring about the destruction of the selfishness, hypocrisy

THE PASSAGE OF TIME SHOULD NOT HIDE FROM US THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE WORKING CLASS

and pain that characterises capitalism. Morris, Lane and many of the Socialist League members realised that it had to be linked to the practicalities of the class struggle.

The unions will have to be replaced- the sooner the better. Isn't it time to start? There are lots of militants who have been betrayed by their officials. Is a Union embracing all trades- a Union that links home and workplace, that links social, educational and political events so unobtainable? Surely it would be less so if a movement could unite behind the idea and attempt to create it. Education can then be part of this whole that enables young people to learn in the sort of environment we want. *

IGNORE LEGISLATIVE THUGGERY: ORGANISE!!

The passing of the Criminal Justice Bill onto the statute book as the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) has left a new set of draconian laws in force designed to disempower and divide workers everywhere.

The CJA is of concern to all of us. It is not only the civil rights issues popularised in the left press that will affect us ie. attacks on the right to silence, squatting, and trespass. It is not 'only' hunt saboteurs, travellers, and the homeless that will be affected - abhorrent though this blatant attack on these groups is. The CJA adds a further string to the bow of the Government, bosses and police to add to the armoury they already helped themselves to with the series of anti-trade union laws of the last fifteen years. Sections of the CJA are specifically designed to further restrict our capacity to organise ourselves. In particular those dealing with trespass and the rights to assembly seriously undermine the ability for workers to undertake peaceful direct protest against employers.

And it is not just in Britain that capitalism is twisting the knife

on civil rights to make all innocent workers potential 'criminals' punishable by the state. Clinton's recent Criminal Justice Bill is set to take the US further down the already crazy 'command and control' road to 'solving the problem of crime'. With 100,000 more police by the year 2000, many new prisons and longer sentences for all this must be one of the most direct examples of the



"These Brits sure know how to put on a jobless march"

bankruptcy of capitalist ideas on 'tackling' crime. More and more of the same things which have dismally failed to date. 55 new offences will carry the death sentence and the new 'three strikes and you're out' baseball approach ensures that repeated offences, even for minor things

like smoking soft drugs, will lead to sentences out of any proportion to the so-called crime.

In taking on the CJA in Britain, the knowledge that capitalism everywhere is desperate and bankrupt of ideas over law and order is a source of strength to those seeking to oppose and end it. The EWN has always recognised the right of people to choose to ignore, circumvent or break the law in appropriate circumstances. It is vital that workers throughout education have the courage of their convictions in this respect, and in order to achieve this, an awareness of the effect of the CJA. It follows that innocent workers will fall foul of this piece of legislative thuggery, and maximum support must be given to those who are unfortunate enough to be involved.

Determination, courage, and unity are essential if we are to break the foul legislative machine which produced the CJA and ensure that nothing like it ever happens again.

L E T T E R S

WHAT RECOGNITION FOR HARD WORK?

Those of us support staff in HE who are lucky enough to be in Unison were delighted to see that Unison in conjunction with other HE unions got Bryan Davies MP (opposition spokesperson on HE) to table a petition calling for "recognition of the hard work being done in higher education". We immediately retired to the bar and awaited our free drink and pat on the back.

Whilst recognition of hard work is always nice, what we should be demanding (not putting in polite petitions asking for) is a properly funded education system for all, where workers and students can feel safe from the machinations of idiotic politicians and treasury sharks and can get on with sharing and widening knowledge and experience.

RC, Manchester.

TURNING THE SCREWS - THE FIGHT AHEAD

The screw is being turned in higher education once again. We are all aware of the HE/University bosses' eventual aim to end the 38 week teaching year, start teaching earlier in September or even August, and ultimately the 3 semester year, the 2 year degree.

Here in Sheffield we have seen the first round go to NATFHE - a (temporary) climbdown by the bosses. But this is the first battle and it will be a long war. I wonder whether NATFHE is ready for it. Are we?

RH, Sheffield.