

# A C T I O N

## Kronstadt

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Kronstadt sailor's revolt against the oppressive regime created by the Bolsheviks in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. In light of the recent turn of events that has been seen in the East it is appropriate to look back at the events that led to the Kronstadt sailors revolt, the very ones that Lenin had called only a few years earlier "The pride of the revolution".

By 1921 years of war, revolution and civil war had bled Russia. As civil war drew to an end people awaited the end of wartime restrictions and the start of reconstruction. In February, workers in 4 Petrograd factories went on strike after an extremely hard winter of cold, hunger and exhaustion. Although some concessions were made, it set in a wave of brutal repression. Sailors in nearby Kronstadt were very concerned by this turn of events. Some crews passed resolutions demanding re-elections of the Kronstadt soviet (tenure of office was about to expire). March 1st saw a mass meeting of 16 000 sailors, soldiers and workers. The main points being made were freedom of speech and press for revolutionaries, amnesty for imprisoned revolutionaries and re-election to the soviets. On March the 2nd Lenin and Trotsky denounced Kronstadt as a mutiny against the communists charging the sailors of being "tools of the former Tsarist generals who together with Social Revolutionaries traitors staged a counter revolutionary conspiracy."

Meanwhile in Petrograd those suspected of sympathy with Kronstadt were arrested. Petrograd sailors and many army regiments thought "politically untrustworthy" were sent far away. Relatives of Kronstadt sailors living in Petrograd were taken hostage.

In Kronstadt few communists were arrested, despite the kidnap of sailor's families. Izvestia contained communications from communists condemning the government attitude and endorsing the revolutionary committee set up in Kronstadt. Many communists left the party in protest at the governments actions.

On March the 4th the Petrograd soviet met. On the basis of the March the 1st resolutions and Kalinin's (chair of the All Russian Central

Executive Committee) hysterical denunciations, Kronstadt was found guilty of counter-revolutionary uprising and immediate surrender was demanded. Next morning Trotsky

to retreat. On the 16th they made a concentrated attack from the north south and east, with re-organised forces. "Sympathetic" troops had been removed and punished while as-



issued an ultimatum: "Only those surrendering unconditionally may count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic... This warning is final". A group of anarchists in Petrograd urged the Committee of Defence to resolve the crisis through negotiation but was ignored.

On March 7th the 1st shot was fired against Kronstadt. Artillery fire was followed by an attempted storming. But vicious snow and widespread desertion forced the government

sault troops went to battle with machine guns behind them. By the next day a number of forts were taken. Street fighting continued and each house was defended like a fortress, but the rebels were overwhelmed and surrendered. Thousands fled to Finland. On March 18th, whilst the Kronstadt rebels were being executed by the Cheka, the Bolshevik government and the Russian Communist Party celebrated the Paris Commune of 1871.

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# SYNDICALIST

## Bury the Poll Tax

After two years of non payment, the message is clear- we are winning. In spite of all the Labour and Tory threats and smears non-payment is growing. The anti poll tax movement helped to force Thatcher out and is showing the ruling class that workers are capable of going on the offensive. Non-payment is striking at the heart of the poll tax. Direct action has proved itself once again to be the working classes only effective weapon. Be it through non payment or stopping the sheriffs, direct action is getting the goods. However, the powers that be have been attempting to split the movement.

## Council Cuts

Everyone, from Labour to the Tories, have been trying to blame non-payment for council cuts. The truth is different. The poll tax was designed to force local government to cut or privatise jobs and services as well as to increase massively each year. The facts speak for themselves. In Strathclyde, the region made budget cuts of £77m in order to avoid a further poll tax increase of £58 on top of the announced rise of £66. The same applies across Scotland.

The high levels of non payment are being used to justify local service cuts. It is the poll tax which is to blame, not non payers (who mostly can't afford to pay it anyway).

The cuts will put our services under threat as well as council jobs. The trade unions, such as NALGO, want to reduce the issue to one of no compulsory redundancies, rather than fight the cuts. The unions will not fight, and it would be dishonest for us to argue that council workers should waste their time trying to force them to. It is up to council and other workers, and the anti-poll tax movement to organise and fight these attacks directly instead of relying on trade union bureaucrats to fight our battles for us.

Compared to the wide organisation in our communities, the industrial side of our movement is small. True, some trade union branches have affiliated to the anti-poll tax federations, but this in no way means that strike action or blocking of poll tax/cuts is any closer.

As anarcho syndicalists we have always argued for both community and industrial action against the poll tax. Community ac-

tion has been effective in stopping poll tax collection, in our homes, but industrial action will drive the final nails into the poll tax's coffin and help stop service/job cuts.

## The Union Makes You Strong?

The trade unions have proved to be more concerned with their funds and "staying within the law" than fighting attacks on their members and the working class as a whole. The interests of the bureaucrats, their influence and power, always comes first. The STUC has actively worked against the non payment campaign, from informing its members not to support the anti-poll tax federations at its



marches, to calling a Scottish march (which does not support non payment) on the same day as a national non payment demo in London on March 23rd.

The anti poll tax/anti-cuts movement must look beyond the bureaucrat union structures and bosses to what created and developed the unions at their start; working class solidarity, direct action and class struggle.

## Anarcho-Syndicalism

Our movement must spread its influence into the workplace by the creation of anti-poll tax/anti-cuts groups there. These must be organised not on trade lines (which divides a workforce into competing unions) but industrially, one boss one union, and organised at a workplace level controlled directly by their members and not by "officials". These groups must federate with both industrial and community groups by area in order to maximise their strength and support.

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Only this form of organisation (anarcho syndicalist) can destroy artificial divisions in our class and unite the fights against the causes and effects of the cuts, as well as fight other attacks on our class and the injustices of capitalism. Therefore these organisations must be made permanent. However, they must not repeat the mistakes of trade unionism. We must learn the lessons of past struggles and develop forms of organisation that are not compromised by hierarchy and make our movement more consciously anti-capitalist and not just anti-Tory.

## Organise Now Organise Right

To develop further, the anti-poll tax movement must strengthen the anarchist tendencies already in it. Hierarchy (decision making from the top down) must be eliminated and replaced by a real federation which allows local groups to discuss and co-ordinate action directly. The Scottish open forums of independent anti-poll tax groups and the various regional forums show that this form of organisation exists and works. It is just a question of strengthening these bodies and extending their influence.

This organisational form allows power to remain in the hands of people at the base of the federations, not handed over to a minority at the top. As can be seen from political parties, the trades unions and Militants activities in the anti poll tax federations (such as threatening to "name name's" of poll tax protesters last year, dominating the federations by creating phony groups and bureaucratically manipulating conferences) those at the top will always use that power to further their interests, not ordinary peoples.

The anti-poll tax movement shows that the real power to change things does not lie in Parliament, but in the streets and workplaces, in the hands of ordinary working class people organised to fight injustice and gaining the confidence to go further. It is creating the ideas and facts of a free world in the present, oppressive one.

The poll tax is only one attack on our living standards and rights, only one battle in the class war. This struggle will only stop when the working class organise as a class and take over and run our communities and workplaces for our needs and desires and the well being of the planet, and not for profit.



Labour's Answer to the Poll Tax

### Until All Are Free

The struggle against the Poll Tax must continue until the following conditions are met:

- 1/ Amnesty for all non payers. All Poll Tax debts must be written off otherwise millions of people would be in debt for years.
- 2/ All Poll Tax prisoners must be released. Defending yourself and other people against police attacks is no crime.

#### The Trafalgar Square Defendants Committee

was set up after the London anti poll tax demo on March 31st 1990. So far they are defending 625 people facing charges. They need your support to carry on. Write to TSDC, Room 205, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1

#### The Prisoners Support Group

contact same address.

#### The 4th Scottish Independent Forum.

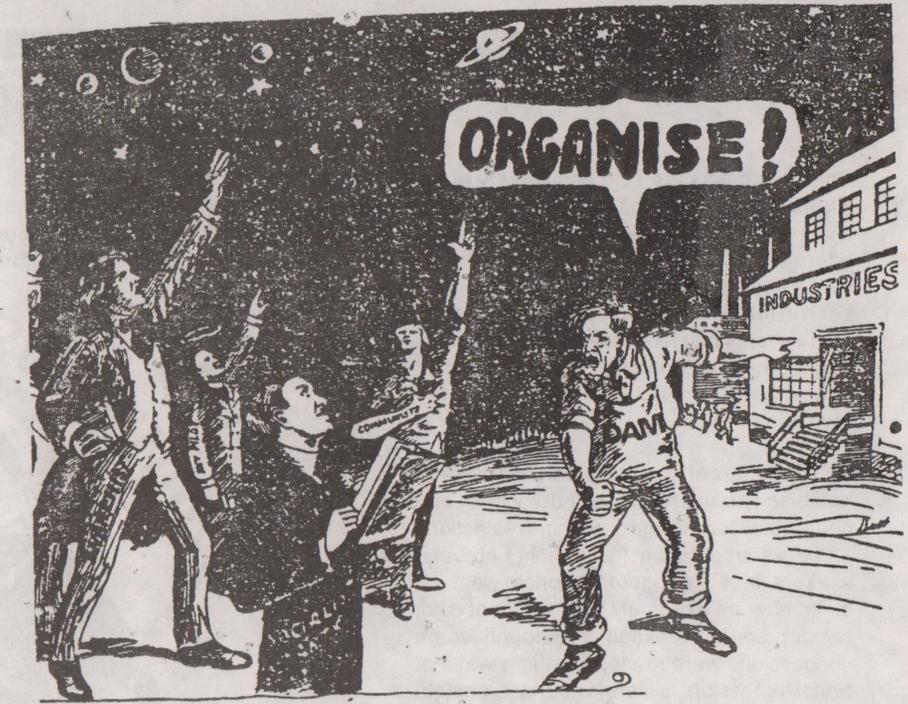
Anti Poll Tax / Anti cuts. Happening in Edinburgh, May 11th. All welcome.

Contact  
c/o Common Sense  
PO Box 311  
SDO  
Edinburgh

## Organise

The DAM was formed in 1979 after a renewed interest in anarcho-syndicalism. It is the British section of the International Workers Association formed in 1922 with sections in 14 countries. In recent years there has also been a rebirth of anarcho-syndicalism in the USSR as more people there have realised that Western-style capitalism will be no better than state socialism. In Britain we believe that there is also a genuine alternative to power politics and sell-out trade unions. Real opposition to the Tories, the capitalist party, is opposition to capitalism, unlike the Labour Party who just want to tinker around with the nasty bits. As anarcho-syndicalists we want to see a revolutionary change in society. This means overthrowing capitalism and creating a classless and stateless society, a world without bosses and politicians. Production should be managed by the workers themselves, for human needs and the needs of the environment, not for profit. We seek the immediate improvement of the lives of working class people, by fighting the Poll Tax and supporting strikes etc..., but any reforms this might achieve will only be partial and temporary within class society. The immediate day to day struggles must be related to a fight for a new society. Working class self-help organisations such as trade unions, friendly societies and so on have been taken out of our hands and professionalised by the middle classes. It is time for us to create new working class organisations.

We aim to bring about this new society by setting up revolutionary work-place and community unions, creating the structures of the



new world in the shell of the old. We do not aim to take over the present trade unions. They are beyond hope and have been for years, wedded as they are to permanent compromises with the ruling classes. Setting up small anarcho-syndicalist unions doesn't mean isolating ourselves from other workers, as they would encourage decisions being made by all the workers in a work-place in a general assembly. At the minute we are setting up industrial networks which will grow into revolutionary unions. There already exists education, health railway and local government networks. Unlike sectional trade

unions, these networks are open to all workers in a particular industry, e.g the education network is open to cleaners, students and teachers.

Join us in the fight for direct working class control of industry and the community.

### SOUTH AFRICA

COSATU (Confederation of South African Trade Unions) and its affiliates have been under renewed attacks in the aftermath of the Sebokeng massacre earlier this January. On January 14th, arsonists set fire to the Germiston offices of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), completely destroying union records, furniture and equipment. Three days later on January 17th, four armed men, their faces disguised by masks, arrived at the COSATU Regional Office in Germiston, and demanded to see COSATU vice president Chris Dhalamini and the Regional Administrator. Though the men left without further confrontation, COSATU has concluded that "the circumstances leave us with little doubt that Cde. Dhalamini and the Administrator's lives are in danger."

COSATU believes these incidents are further evidence of a new wave of terror against the democratic movement, COSATU is "convinced elements of the security forces" are behind the renewed attacks.

Write letters of protest to:

State President  
F.W. DeKlerk  
State president's Office  
Private Bag X213  
Pretoria 0001  
South Africa



### 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 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 such 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 resolved to initiate, encourage and whole heartedly support the creation of independent workers' unions based on the principles of anarcho syndicalism.
- 9 The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho syndicalism: a system where workers alone control industry and the community without dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called