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NUMBER 1

Paper of the

AUGUST 84

South Yorkshire Anarchist Group



**Better to be wanted
for subversion
then not wanted at all**

S.Y.A.G, P.O. Box 96, Doncaster.

POLICE TACTICS IN THE MINERS STRIKE

Tactics used by the police in this strike have been seen by some people as unprecedented attacks on civil liberties. Yet none of the tactics are new. Baton charges, turning vehicles away and road blocks have been used before on demonstrations picket lines and other "disturbances". As part of the state, the police force discriminates against sections

of society on the grounds of race gender and class as part of the normal routine. In certain circumstances the police will go beyond their legal guide-lines as is common place during the miners dispute.

What has been new is the scale of the operation, and how much these tactics have come into the open. The effect is to legitimise such actions, consolidate police power, and push back the limits of what is socially expected behaviour from them.

The police force in Britain has steadily increased its power and independence. Lately, the traditional velvet glove approach has given way to more paramilitary methods, and they are also accumulating more information on more people. The latest extension of police powers is to be found in the Police Bill now going through parliament, which increases discretionary police powers to arrest; detain, bodysearch and fingerprint suspects and search their premises for "evidence" of activities likely to cause serious harm to the security of the state or to public order such as picketing, demonstrating and agitating.

The police have a vested interest in increasing the power of the state. They share the same values as powerful groups in society and are paid to uphold these interests. The Tories

especially have backed the police with their stress on the importance of a strong state.

However, it is no good putting our faith in the Labour Party. It was past Labour governments which brought in riot shields, introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act, internment in N. Ireland, and used troops against the fire-fighters strike.

There is no point in trying to push for a more liberal police force and legal reforms. The task of the police force is to protect the interests of the powerful, and they could always switch to "hard" tactics if needed. Police repression didn't start with the miners strike and won't end when it's over. We need increased solidarity with all groups who are being oppressed by the police rather than legal reforms which aren't worth the paper they are written on.

In war, in peace you need his help

"WHY DO WE NEED SOLDIERS IN PEACE TIME? MUM?"

"FOR STRIKE BREAKING DEAR."

When help is needed, please help him and his dependants

A donation, a covenant, a legacy to
THE ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND
will help soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families in distress
DEPT. DT. DUKE OF YORKS HILL LONDON SW14 5SP

NUCLEAR POWER:
CAPITALISMS' ANSWER TO
MINERS POWER

The question of nuclear power is directly linked to the miners strike. While Macgregor puts forward his pit closures plan, we see parallel CEGB plans for ten new nuclear plants by the 1990's. Yet even NCB predictions show coal supplies will last well into the 21st century. Britain is supposed to lead the world in using coal safely and efficiently (e.g. fluidised bed combustion) but the pit closures and nuclear expansion go on. Coal-fired power stations are closed while plans go ahead for Sizewell PWR which is similar to the reactor which nearly caused a disaster at Three Mile Island, U.S.A. The dangers of nuclear power are known and have been shown by the Windscale leaks and the nuclear waste train derailments in Yorkshire. The increased rates of leukaemia, cancer and other health problems around nuclear power plants are well documented.

So, why is this disastrous energy policy continuing? We only have to look as far as some leaked cabinet minutes from 1979 to find one important reason.

"A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial proportion of electricity production away from the dangers of industrial action by coal miners and transport workers." (MEC minutes 1979)

When we look to workers in the nuclear industry we see them bound by 'no strike' clauses and unable to complain about unfair dismissal or poor working conditions because of "official secrecy".

The nuclear programme is part of the whole state plan for a high technology, heavily policed future. For it to succeed the state must defeat the miners and beat the rest of the working class into submission with crippling mass unemployment and



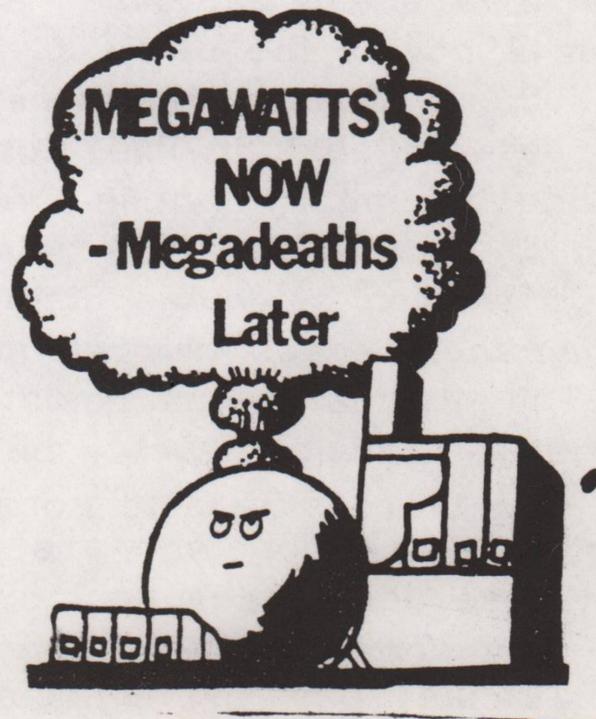
THE ELECTRICITY FOR A ONE-BAR FIRE FOR ONE WEEK WOULD COST £4.43* FROM MAGNOX NUCLEAR STATIONS BUT ONLY £2.94* FROM COALFIRED PLANT.

*1979/80 FIGURES

increased police powers to prevent a backlash. We must not forget all parties have supported this drift; Labour expanded the nuclear programme and it was Tony Benn who presided over the arming of over 400 nuclear security guards, when he was Energy Minister. Governments benefit from nuclear power as it produces plutonium for their obscene and expensive nuclear weapon programmes.

The miners strike is not only for a livelihood, it is against the nuclear power programme and increased state control. It has exposed the state and capitalism as the real enemies of workers, unemployed and dispossessed people.

In response to this, our aim is the building of a society with popular control of energy and industry, where production is for human needs. It is in all our interests to fight for freedom, equality and control over our own lives. Bureaucrats cannot give us this better society. We must be clear about our aims and control our own struggles.



WOMEN IN THE MINERS STRIKE

Much has been written about the women in the miners dispute. It has been claimed as an incredible phenomena - working class women organising themselves, apparently, is unheard of. But what is the reality? From day one of the strike, women have been on the picket lines; after all they have been active within the union (N.U.M. 'C.O.S.A. '), and are directly affected if a pit closes. They also organized themselves into groups to provide food, moral and practical support in the struggle. Many of these groups have had to struggle to maintain autonomy from local branches of the N.U.M. Not that they are opposed to the strike - women are not the conservative element they were portrayed as at the beginning of the strike - but because they saw the need to take decisions and actions for themselves. The women had and still have no desire to have their new-found independence and power absorbed into a body over which they have no control.

Their organisation has been open and non-hierarchical with decisions being taken by all the women, and generally being unafraid to contribute or criticise constructively. Ideas are discussed and acted upon without the top heavy bureaucratic structures that imprison trade union actions. The enthusiasm and energy are just two of the constructive elements that will carry on after the strike, as political awareness has risen and things will not be the same as before. And all this in areas renowned for being rife with sexism. The closed masculine community that is the pit has led to distinct separate roles for men and women but those distinctions have had their edges blurred in this strike. Initially, there was resistance to women picketing (COSA members apart) and there still is to some extent. But those women who are picketing now are doing because they want to and they see this as an important element, unlike some men on the pick-

et lines who stand back while others push, and you don't know who is with you when the push comes and who will just stand there. This assertiveness and drive must have come from somewhere. To say that it is purely because they see their interests threatened is simplistic and non-sensical and does not explain why or the scale of actions. Perhaps one of the factors is Greenham. We have been barraged with images of women working together in an imaginative and determined way without men. Whilst this factor may not be conscious, I am sure that it has had some effect. No matter how oddly they are portrayed by the media, they have proved that women have the guts to stand and be counted, and have the collective strength to carry out their principles. The Greenham women too have had their share of harassment - daily evictions and abuse and violence including being dragged through razor wire, tied up with barbed wire whilst soldiers masturbate in front of them and bad write-ups in the press.

The Greenham women's focus may be on the military and nuclear weapons, but they have been on the picket lines with miners and mining women to show their solidarity. We must learn from all people in struggle, by making the connections that make up the framework of our oppression we gain sufficient strength to rid ourselves of that oppression. But this must be done independently of hierarchical bureaucratic structures. We must work in the ways we have found to work best; horizontal structures that are open and dynamic. And we must not hand that new found power over to anybody, union or party, as this will only destroy the energy and plunge us back into apathy and inactivity. Together we are strong, together WE WILL WIN. Don't let them tell us otherwise.

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

by Errico Malatesta

We aspire to communism as the most perfect achievement of human solidarity, but it must be anarchist communism, or communism freely desired and accepted. Anarchism is the means by which the freedom of everyone is guaranteed and can expand; for these reasons we maintain that state communism (Marxism), which is authoritarian and imposed, is the most hateful tyranny that has ever afflicted, tormented and handicapped mankind.

Those anarchists who call themselves communists do so not because they wish to impose their particular way of seeing things on others or because they believe that outside communism there can be no salvation, but because they are convinced, until proven wrong, that the more human beings are joined in brotherhood, and the more closely they co-operate in their efforts for the benefits of all concerned, the greater is the well being and freedom which each can enjoy.

They believe that man, even if freed from oppression by his fellow men, still remains exposed to the hostile forces of nature, which he can't overcome alone, but which in association with others can be harnessed and transformed into the means for his own well-being. The man who would wish to provide for his material needs by working alone is a slave to his work as well as not always sure of producing enough to keep himself alive.

It would be fantastic to think that some anarchists, who are communists, should desire to live as in a convent, subject to common rules, uniform meals and clothes, etc; but it would be equally absurd to think that they should want to do just as they like without taking into account the needs of others or of or of the right all have to equal freedom.

Everyone knows that Kropotkin, who was one of the most active and eloquent anarchist propagandist of the communist idea was at the same time a staunch defender of the independence of the individual, and passionately desired that everybody should be able to develop and satisfy freely their artistic talents, engage in scientific research and succeed in establishing a harmonious unity

between manual and intellectual activity in order to become human beings in the noblest sense of the word. Furthermore, communist-anarchists believe that because of the natural differences in fertility, salubrity and location of the land masses, it would be impossible to ensure equal working conditions for everyone individually and so achieve, if not solidarity, at least justice.

But at the same time they are aware of the immense difficulties in the way of putting into practice that world wide, free communism, which is the ultimate objective of a humanity emancipated and united, without a long period of free development. And for this reason they at conclusions which could be expressed in the following formula;

The achievement of the greatest measures of individualism is in direct ratio to the amount of communism that is possible; that is to say, a maximum of solidarity in order to enjoy a maximum of freedom.

In theory communism is the ideal system which, so far as human relationships are concerned would replace struggle by solidarity and would utilize natural energies and human labour to the best possible advantage and transform humanity into one big brotherhood intent on mutual aid and love.

But is this practical in the existing spiritual and material state of human affairs? And if so within what limits?

World wide communism, that is a single community among all mankind, is an aspiration an ideal goal at which one must aim, but which could not be a possible form of economic organisation at present. We are of course, speaking for our times and probably for some time to come; so far as the distant future is concerned we leave it to future generations to think about that.

For the present one can only think of multiple communities among people who are kindred spirits, and who besides having dealings with each other of various kinds, communistic or commercial and even within these there is always the problem of a possible antagonism between communism and freedom. Assuming the feeling exists that draws men towards brotherhood and a conscious and

desired solidarity and which will encourage us to propagate and put into effect as much communism as possible, still complete individualism would be uneconomic as well as impossible, and complete communism would be impossible as well as anti-libertarian, more so if applied over a large territory.

To organise a communistic society on a large scale it would be necessary to transform all economic life radically, such as methods of production, of exchange and consumption; and this could not be achieved other than gradually as the objective and material circumstances permitted and to the extent that the masses understood what advantages could be gained and were able to act for themselves. If on the other hand, one wanted, and could carry out in one sweep the wishes and ambitions of a party the masses, accustomed to obey and serve would accept the new way of life as a new imposed on them by a new government, and would wait for a new supreme power to tell them how to produce, and determine for them what they should consume. And the new power, not knowing, and being unable to satisfy a huge variety of often contradictory needs and desires, and not wanting to declare itself useless by leaving to the interested parties the freedom to act as they wish or as best they can, would reconstitute the government, based as all governments are, on military and police forces which, assuming it survived would simply replace the old set of rules by new, and more fanatical ones. Under the pretext, and even perhaps with the honest and sincere intention of regenerating the world with a new gospel, a new single rule would be imposed on everybody; all freedom would be suppressed and free initiative made impossible; and as a result there would be disillusionment, a paralysing of production, black markets and smuggling, increased power and corruption in the civil service, widespread misery and finally a more or less complete return to those conditions of oppression and exploitation which it was the aim of the revolution to abolish.

The Russian experiment must not have been in vain. No system can be vital and really serve to free mankind from the slavery of

the remote past, if it is not the result of free development.

Human societies, if they are to be communities of free men working together for the greatest good of all, and no longer convents of despots held together by religious superstition or brute force, cannot be the artificial creation of an individual or of a sect. They must be the resultant of the needs and the competitive or divergent wills of all their members who by trial and error find the institutions which at any given time are the best possible, and who develop and change them as circumstances and wills change.

One may, therefore, prefer communism or individualism or any other system and work by example and propaganda for the achievement of one's personal preference; but one must beware, at the risk of certain disaster of supposing that one's own system is the only, and infallible one, good for all men everywhere, and for all times, and that its success must be endured at all costs, by means other than those which depend on persuasion, which spring from the evidence of facts.

What is important and indispensable, the point of departure, is to ensure for everybody the means to be free.

Errico Malatesta was born in Santa Maria Capua Vetere, Caserta province, Italy on December 14, 1853. He came from a family of modest landowners, and from an early age was interested in anarchism. He met Bakunin in 1872 and became an active member of the International. In the years that followed he was to become one of the most important anarchist propagandists of his time, contributing to a large number of journals around the world. He was editor of many different anarchist papers, "Questione Sociale" (Florence, Buenos Aires and Paterson NJ), l'Associazione (Ancona), l'Agitazione (Ancona) to name a few. In 1900 he came to London and was for the next nineteen years an active member of the British anarchist movement. He died in 1932.

Note: We object to the use of 'mankind, free men, his fellow men' because it excludes women, but we have left the article as it was written in 19th century.

Unions and The State

Unions in this country are based on the same structures as the state and capitalism, that is centralised and hierachical, with officials climbing up a ladder of authority. If unions are intended to fight the state and bosses, then they should be organised on alternative lines to that of the enemy.

The question is - can unions be organised without a hierachical leadership, without fulltime paid officials and without entangling the union amongst the bosses structures and the state? Would it be possible to remove all full timers and successfully divide the work of union organisation amongst the membership? Would it be possible to ensure that those positions that exist, such as branch secretaries and treasurers do not become positions of power? Would it be possible to destroy all privilage that are associated with working for the union?

If unions were organised along the lines that many people did a little work, then there would be no need for "Full Timers" as the work load would be divided up. Privilage would no longer be necessary as all union work could take place outside of the workplace, without favour or reward. OF course working without full timers would mean that more unionists would have to be willing to take on responsibility, but people would be more willing to take an active part in a union where responsibility was shared rather than when it is handed over to a handful of people.

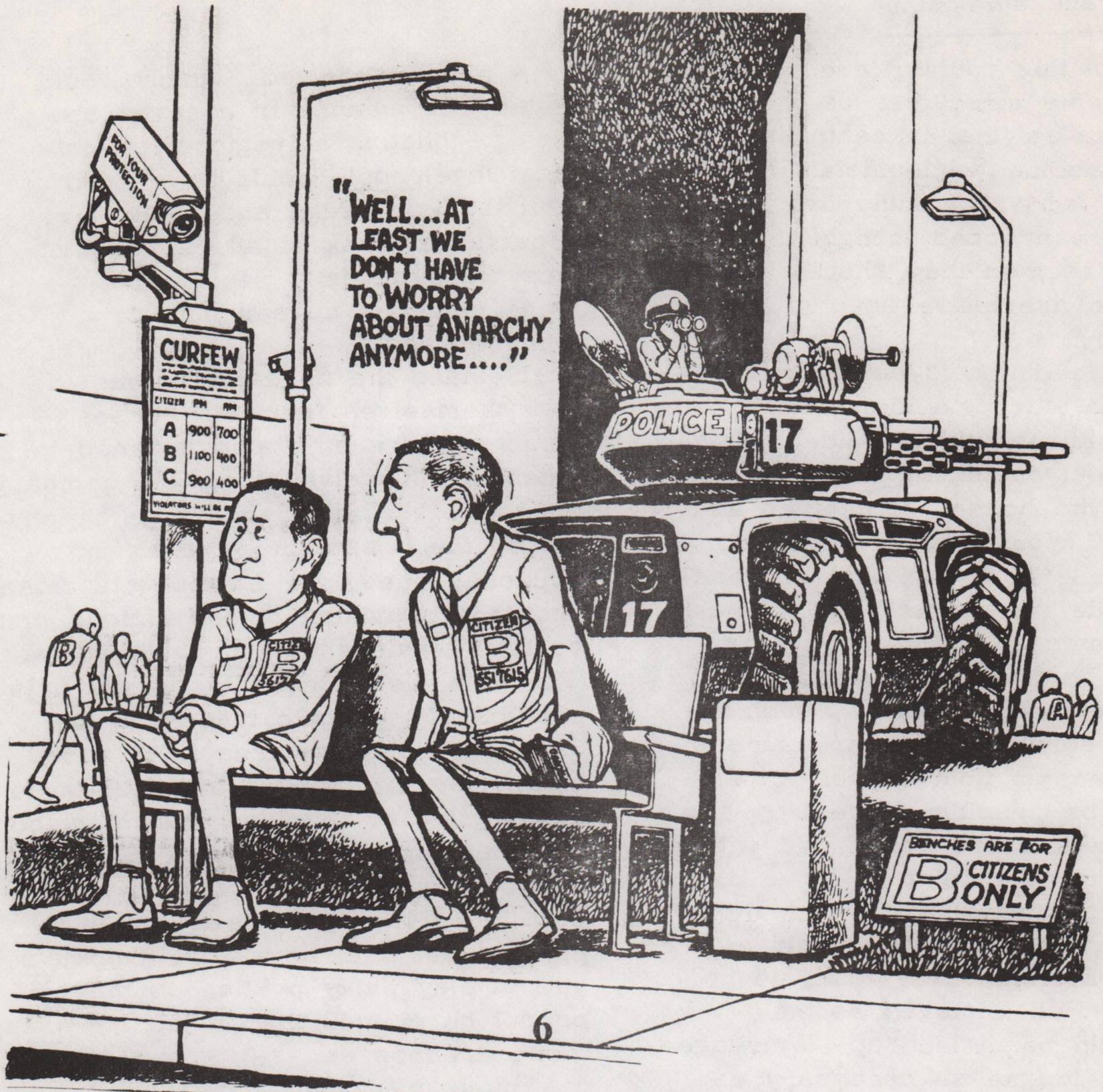
Unions without full timers would have many advantages including, more people would become experienced in organising, militants would remain in the workplace where they could pass on information, there would be more direct contact between branches locally and nationally. Any complaints against the boss could be taken directly

by a person affected, which would reduce the chance of a cover up. For negotiating at regional or national level people could be elected with the knowledge and ability for a particular task. If all representatives were instantly replaceable, there could be no sell outs or compromises.

Besides the need for unions to free themselves from the bosses structures, there is also a need to untangle themselves from the company and state. No union should be dependant on the bosses for anything - for collecting dues, for enforcing a closed shop, for providing offices, Unions must be totally independant of the bosses. There is also a need to remain independant of the state, free from the decisions of judges, free from social contracts. It is better for a union to be illegal than shackled with legal bonds. UNions also do not need to be tied to a political party, as this will only divide the unions loyalty to itself and to a party when it is in power. Unionists cannot play party politics as they cannot be councillors or ministers as these are bosses.

Unions free from capitalist structures free from entanglements with the bosses, state and party politics, federated together not only on industrial lines, but on community and regional lines, involving unemployed, "housewives" and retired as well as employed, would be a force not only to defend and improve conditions, but eventually to destroy the state and replace it with a free society, based on equality and liberty.

The ideals of unions free from state bosses and bureaucracy, where everyone is a worker and equal, is not a dream as there have been many such unions in the past, until destroyed by fascist, military or stalinist dictatorships, and in various countries they still continue.



THE ROLE OF THE D.H.S.S. IN THE MINERS STRIKE

Many miners have felt deliberately victimised by the DHSS but on the whole they have been receiving the same 'service' as other claimants. Research in 1977 showed that 6 out of every 10 people thought social security benefits too generous and too easy to get. There will be very few miners who agree with this.

Why is claiming social security such a bad experience?

Firstly, the system was never designed to cope with mass long-term unemployment. It was envisaged that the unemployed would be covered by national insurance with Supplementary Benefit acting as a 'safety net'. Instead, the system is nearing crisis point as it sinks under the increasing number of pensioners, single parents and the massive increase in the unemployed, particularly since 1979.

In the face of cuts in staffing levels the only way the DHSS can keep the work under control is by deterring claims. Anyone who has ever tried to claim benefit will be only too familiar with the problems of trying to get through to the DHSS only to be told "your giro's in the post" or "sorry, we can't find your file". Officers have been instructed not to advise claimants what they are entitled to and the emphasis lies on fraud detection rather than on distributing the millions of pounds of benefit which goes unclaimed each year.

The answer is not reform of the social security system for it is an integral part of the state and is used by all governments to control the work force. The unemployment benefit system is not simply a working class victory. It was introduced to keep the unemployed from actually starving and to prevent riots and social disorder. Social Security has its origins in the 'poor law' and still retains the

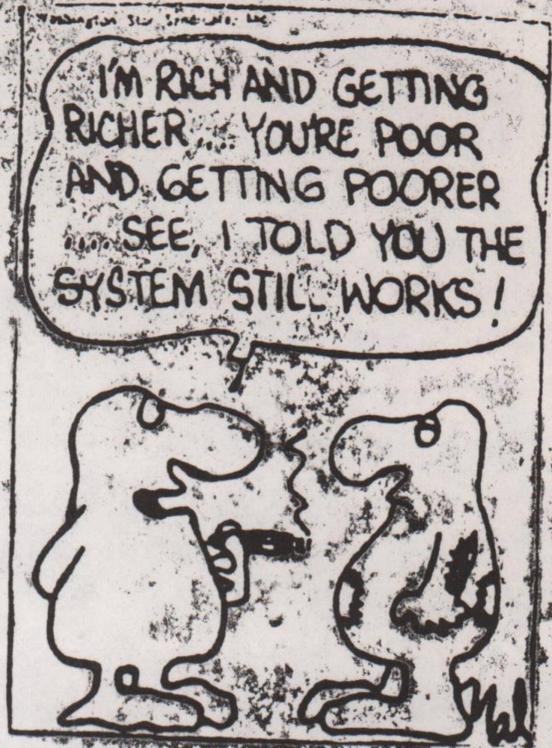
less eligibility principle that an unemployed person should never be better off than even the lowest paid worker so that the rates are set deliberately low. In addition, there is specific discrimination against the unemployed. They never get the higher long term rate of benefit, they may be interrogated as to why they have not found work by an Unemployment Review Officer. This official has the power to cut a claimant's benefit, and a person who leaves their job may receive reduced benefit or no benefit at all for up to six weeks as a punishment.

As the miners know only too well, this work discipline function also means that strikers receive no benefit at all for themselves and, since last year, £15 in "strike pay" is automatically deducted whether the claimant is getting it or not.

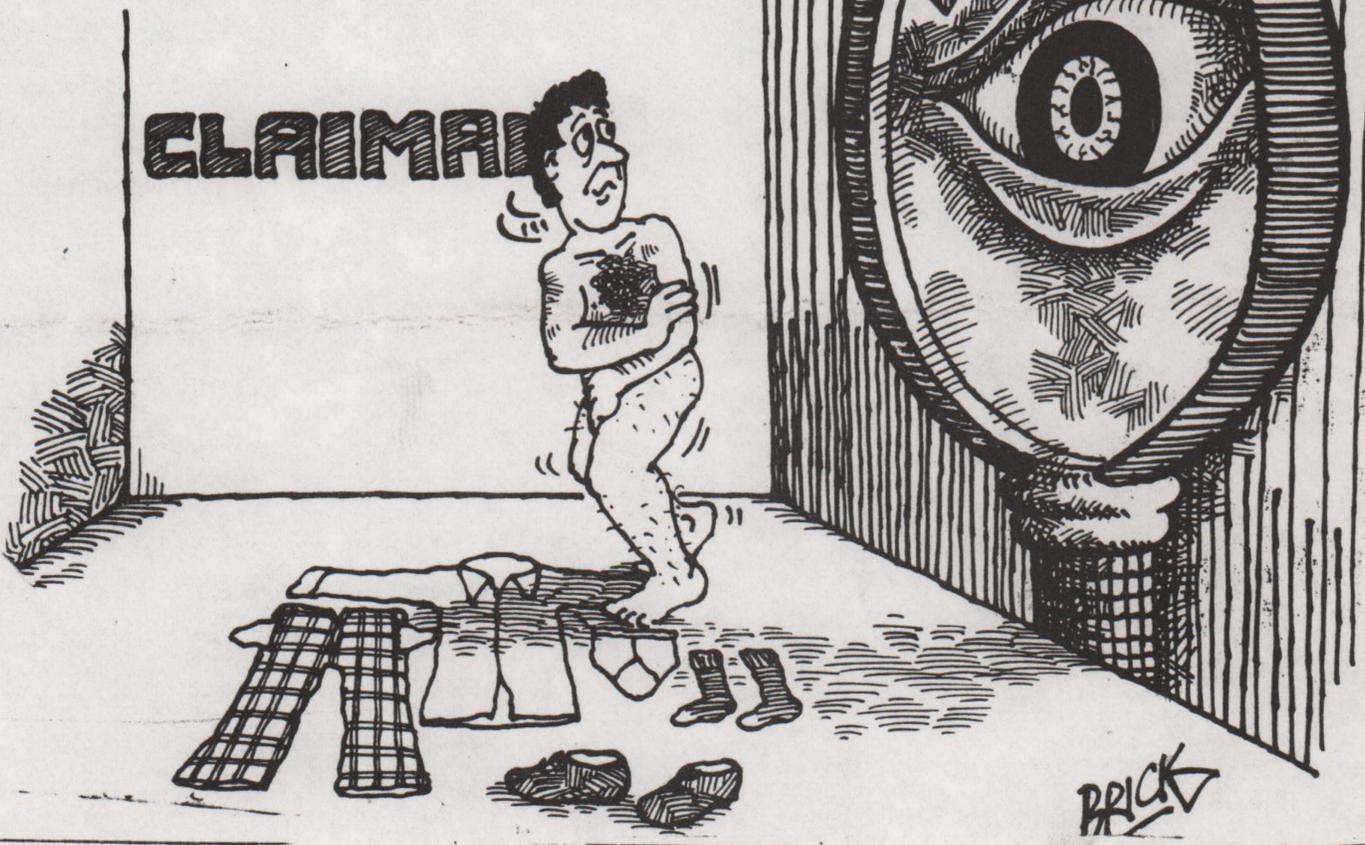
The fear of unemployment and the stigma and poverty it brings will make workers all the more determined to fight for their jobs, but their needs to be solidarity not only with other workers but also with unemployed people who are simply workers without a job.

The state attempts to create divisions between those who are in work and those who are not by discretionary policies and this is reinforced by the press who stigmatise them and present them as a separate class. Trade Unions have tended to follow this pattern and have often excluded members who have lost their jobs and deny the unemployed any real say in the unions, appeasing them with drop-in centres. Instead there must be solidarity amongst workers and the

unemployed and the struggle must not simply be for jobs and a reform of the social security system - what the state gives it will claw back again - but for a society where there is not this division between work and unemployment and where people do not have to struggle every inch of the way and accept degrading treatment in order to receive a pittance (if they are lucky).



1984 NOW!



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Steve Bell

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