

Direct Action

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The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism

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Poverty, Unemployment, Homelessness...THE
PRICE WE PAY TO KEEP THEM RICH

Paper of the Direct Action Movement - International Workers Association

Direct action vs. trade union inaction

As a result of the solidarity call from the DAM to our sister organisations in the International Workers' Association to aid the strikers at the Ardrbride company in Ardrrossan, Scotland (see DA 37) pickets have taken place in many cities. In a magnificent response from the Frei Arbeiter Union/IWA (Free Workers' Union) all Laura Ashley shops across Germany have been picketed (Bochum, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover, Stuttgart). The Workers' Solidarity Alliance/IWA have picketed Laura Ashley's in New York. In Britain, the DAM with help from other anarchists have picketed Laura Ashley shops in Bath, Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, London, Manchester, Shrewsbury and elsewhere. In France the Confederation Nationale du Travail/IWA (National Confederation of Labour), an anarcho-syndicalist union, has leafleted outside Laura Ashley's in Paris and as we go to press are organising pickets elsewhere in France (Bordeaux, Lyons, Strasbourg, Toulouse).

Also the DAM is contacting our comrades in Milan, Tokyo, Copenhagen and Melbourne for further solidarity actions while anarchists in Eire, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland are also being asked for help. The OVB, an independent syndicalist union has protested to Laura Ashley's directly. Meanwhile donations and messages of support have come in from all across Britain and abroad, including some Solidarnosc exiles in Canada (the Polish Workers' Solidarity Alliance).

This response from the rank and file of the working class both nationally and internationally has been in stark contrast to the actions of the local TGWU

to get the strikers to agree to watered down back-to-work proposals. The 21 women and men on strike at Ardrbride came out in defence of the right to organise against poor wages (£1.70 an hour), and appalling health and safety conditions causing chest pains, shortage of breath, streaming eyes, etc. They've had to fight all the way to gain official status from the T&G. When it did come 9 weeks later the damage was already done - workers had already crossed picket lines and a new workforce had been taken on. As Ross, chief coman and owner of Ardrbride, said: "The union has given me time to get my act together."



T&G treachery doesn't end there. They refused strike pay and a grudging "hardship" payment was offered only after strikers gatecrashed a T&G meeting in Saltcoats. A promise to inform shop stewards across Scotland of the strike wasn't kept - at a demonstration at T&G house, Glasgow, shop stewards said they'd never heard of the strike. When 3 women were charged with breach of the peace the T&G refused to provide a lawyer. This year Ross has made 2 offers to take back a handful of workers with vague promises of taking back more as

business expands, the 2nd worse than the 1st, which were rightly refused. T&G rep David Shoa told the strikers that if the 2nd offer was refused the union would seriously consider withdrawing official support. Since then with the development of rank and file pressure within the union they have relented and offered to "take a more active part in the dispute", resulting in "support" for demonstrations at Laura Ashley shops.

If that's the best the TGWU, with millions of pounds, extensive international contacts, squads of well-trained, chauffeur-driven, overfed officials and lawyers, can do to, beat some upstart, get-rich-quick merchant, then what chance do the rest of us stand when the bosses and the state make their next swipe at the working class. Well, of course we stand no chance if we put our faith in union bureaucrats. No, it's clear from Ardrbride, as it was clear from Silentnight, where the strike was sold out by the union, and the Contracts dispute last year that union officials' first concern is for their own positions. The union car and comfortable semi-detached, paid for out of members' contributions comes ahead of the local membership. We can't place our trust in the union bureaucrats any more than we can in Kinnock to present us with the socialist dreamland.

The future of the working class lies in rank and file action outside the control of the union bureaucracy. Only when we take action for ourselves will we see any change in society. We've already seen the anarcho-syndicalist method of nationwide rank and file co-ordination work to such effect in the recent rail and public sector strikes in

France and we are beginning to see the effects of international rank and file co-ordination with the spreading of the Laura Ashley picket.

As a result of the picket the Laura Ashley company wrote in a reply to Ardrrossan area MEP that they: "are concerned by the developments....particularly where they have affected our own business in the picketing of our own shops". They later go on to say that they are writing to Ardrbride advising them of the consequences of not reaching a rapid solution. Furthermore, as a result of the pickets in Germany, the European management of Laura Ashley held a special meeting in Rotterdam on the matter. Laura Ashley are clearly concerned about the effects on their precious international public image. This is all the more pressing as they are only indirectly involved in the dispute as receivers of goods (lampshades) rather than as suppliers.

The pickets need to be continued, displaying solidarity with the Ardrbride strikers. We again call on all readers of *Direct Action* and members of DAM branches and IWA sections to stage pickets, to call on their union branch to offer both moral and financial support. Pickets and donations are essential now if victory is to be won.

Please send news of pickets and enquiries about the progress of the strike by phone to 031 557 0718 ask for Bob or Mike between 11am and 4pm Mon to Fri. Send messages of support and donation to: Anna Druggen, 28d Montgomerie St, Ardrrossan, KA22 8EQ, Scotland.

NORTH EAST: GARMENT WORKERS RANK & FILE

SOURCE : THE TYNESIDE SYNDICALIST

The NUTGW (National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers) executive's behaviour in recent months has been nothing short of open collusion with the bosses of the many sweat-shop factories in the area. Such as Contracts Ltd (scene of a 6-month strike in 1985-86), South Shields and J & J Fashions (Involved in wildcat action in November last year) factories dotted around the North-East.

The massive wildcat strikes which took place throughout the region, which were totally controlled by rank and file committees, secured a pay rise higher than that which was negotiated between management and union officials and consequently "advised". Such activities have proved a catalyst for further organisation.



Shop stewards throughout the region met for the first time ever shortly before Christmas: "The atmosphere was so different from the usual meetings - we could actually talk to each other, instead of having to listen to our union officials talking rubbish" commented Jane Kingsland, shop steward at Contracts Ltd. Such sentiments are now echoed by many garment workers. Signs of a new-found power, emerging out of a previously male dominated, bureaucratic union. The workers usually meet only once a year and then with their officials present. This being totally inadequate, the shop stewards now plan to meet regularly ALONE.

The unions annual conference, in Wales, in May, is to be a target for the North-East shop stewards message. Usually the officials stage manage the conference by-passing motions they do

not like. This year the shop stewards plan to arrange a national rank and file structure of union members.

The North-East garment workers have no interest in such organisations as the "Broad Left" which spend most of their time trying to get "left wing" members elected into union positions. Garment workers in the area have experienced full well the bureaucratization of union officials once elected - Ron Bales local NUTGW full-timer was in the past a member of International Socialists (IS), going on to sell out the workers at Contracts during their six month dispute. Their power lies with the control with the rank and file

GAINING CONFIDENCE

The growing militancy of the area's garment workers began with the Contracts action. In the words of Jane Kingsland, shop steward at Contracts: "we showed our colleagues in other factories that it was possible to take on both the bosses and our union officials neither of them were going to dictate to us - and the workers at J and J fashions have taken up the struggle in the same confidence. Despite being forced back to work by a hostile press, union and financial hardship the workers at Contracts are still organised and militant, in the face of extreme provocation.

They are now regularly videoed when doing a new job so that the manager can decide with the help of a computer if they are working fast enough. Yet the system allegedly designed to improve wages for "good" work has not provided any increase in wages for the factory workers.

It is hoped that in the long-term an active rank and file union will in the end enable workers to smash management tactics of control and gain workers better wages, conditions and other practices. This development in the North-East may turn out to be one of the most important tasks to be undertaken in the working class movement for a very long time.

— KEETONS FIGHT ON —

The 38-strong workforce at Keetons & Sons engineering company at Darnall in Sheffield have been on strike since July 2nd last year. In November 1985 a staffing agreement between management and AEU representatives stated that employees would "where practical and possible, work combinations of machinery", that is, one worker running as many as four machines at any given time. The following safeguards were agreed: no redundancies; no lay-offs; no harassment or intimidation. With the ink hardly dry people were harassed, intimidated and told to work machines 25 yards apart which is neither practical nor safe. As if the agreement had never even existed management laid off workers and put others under extreme pressure to work the extra machines.

After a secret ballot giving a 2-1 majority to strike, the workforce was sacked within 5 minutes and given a written statement that they had dismissed themselves.

Although 12 scabs have been employed hundreds of people who applied for the jobs refused to cross the picket line when informed of the dispute. In an amusing incident pickets followed a lorry from Keetons on a journey of 10

miles. In a vain attempt to shake them off the driver actually drove 82 miles. Because of mounting pressure certain hauliers have stopped crossing the picket - the only ones going through now are:

S & H Motors, Tinsley Park
A & D Transport, Ecclesfield
T Roberts, Aston
and an unmarked green lorry, registration NWB 513K.

The latest news from the dispute is that the caravan and shelter at the main gate have been destroyed by fire, but luckily no-one was hurt. On 12th Feb the management came up with a new offer, if you can call it an offer that is. It included staff working any machinery, no shop stewards, no union recognition, a no-strike agreement, no annual pay review. Not surprisingly this was rejected unanimously.

Keetons strikers are determined not to be starved back to work. To this end they require donations of money and food. You can help by sending donations and messages of support to Keetons Strike Committee, AEU House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield. (phone 769041)

In Brief

A Burnley woman who was fractured her knee cap knee cap in an accident and subsequently underwent an operation has hit out at DHSS officials. Her family rallied round to give the constant attention she needed, including her ex-husband. Sometimes he has to stay overnight to help her get up in the morning. However the DHSS got wind of this and barged in "acting like the Gestapo, accusing them of co-habiting and making false benefit claims". The DHSS declined to comment on the case but said "Harassment is not the name of the game. No?? Parking outside people's houses for hours at a time to check up on comings and goings, asking neighbours, paper deliverers, milk deliverers who is in the house and how long they have been there - this is not harassment? All unions (for the employed and the unemployed) should be demanding an end to the co-habitation rule NOW - to stop discrimination against individuals.

MEAT SLAB !

Don't know if anyone out there is interested in rugby but....A couple of weeks ago a 6ft 8inch rugby player who looks like a meat slab smashed Phil Davies (also a rugby player) in the face breaking his jaw. Phil was attacked 4 minutes into the game and the English Rugby Union has said such scenes will not be tolerated and has disciplined the person concerned. The assailant is called Wayne Dooley and if you see him on a picket line don't hang about - he happens to be a full time copper!

FTAT RATS !

There is an investigation going on in FTAT into financial irregularities in the Silentnight dispute. Apparently some officials have been claiming money for some time on behalf of 80 strikers who'd already found other jobs. A nice little earner for some rat!

The Price We Pay

We live in a very much divided society, not just North/South as the papers often tell us, but in every town and city. Even the official statistics in "Social Trends '87" published in January reveal the gap between rich and poor yawning wider. From 1976 to '84 income of the bottom 2 fifths of households fell from 10% to 6% of the total, while the top 1 fifth's share rose from 44% to 49%. Ownership of wealth shows an even greater contrast: 1% of the population owns more than the bottom 80%.

HEALTH DIVIDE

The "Health Divide", an update of the Black report by the Health Education Council (after Sir Douglas Black, former Dept of Health chief scientist - the report was suppressed by the Government in 1980) shows the widening of the health gap between rich and poor over the last decade. A press conference on the updated report, planned for March 24th wasn't allowed to go ahead "because it was a sensitive business in the election year" - Sir Brian Bailey, the chair of the Health Education Council. The report says: "All the major killer diseases now affect the poor more than the rich and so do most of the less common ones". It then goes on: "The unemployed and their families have considerably worse physical and mental health than those in work". The conclusions are that material deprivation - whether poverty, poor housing, or poor work conditions - is the major factor explaining the poor health of the less well off. This, of course, comes as no surprise, but the Government is embarrassed by it.

Obviously related to this is the housing crisis with over 150,000 officially registered homeless people. Their plight was the subject of "World in Action" which interviewed many families forced to live in hostels, ex-isolation hospitals, army barracks and caravans. One couple in Hertfordshire were living in a single hostel room 12 ft by 10ft and were expecting their first child at any time. In Wareham, Dorset, homeless families are treated like dirt by Purbeck council.

One councillor said: "Homeless people shouldn't be breeding like rabbits"; and another: "They should have their children taken into care and the parents should fend for themselves". The Homeless Persons Act states: "...mobile homes are not satisfactory for families with children...", yet Purbeck have put families in run down caravans. Not surprisingly Housing Minister, John Paton and Environment Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, refused to be interviewed on the programme.

These examples of serious social deprivation are in the "affluent south" illustrating that society is divided wherever you live. Just think; in the same town there are dispossessed families living in caravans while rich Tory councillors and business executives live in large, posh detached houses. Most of us live slightly higher up the social ladder than those in the programme, but what have we got? - run down council estates or pokey Barratt homes mortgaged to the hilt, and most of us struggle to make ends meet.

DIVIDED BY CLASS

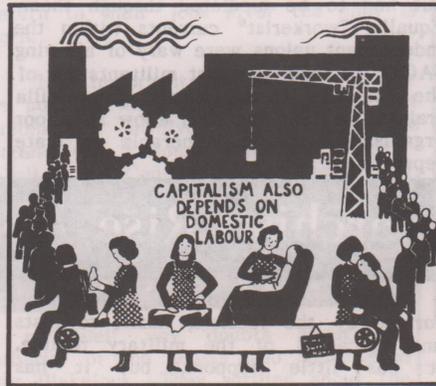
The facts speak for themselves. We live in a class-divided society - a minority wealth-owning class and a wealth-producing class (the immense majority). Many don't immediately recognise this fundamental divide - skilled workers are rewarded more than the unskilled and higher up are the "professional classes". In other words capitalism divides workers into a career hierarchy, with the unemployed at the bottom and lower management at the top. But all these people do essentially the same thing - provide labour, whether physical or mental, that turns the wheels of capitalism. The social wealth created isn't used to benefit all of us equally - far from it! A large slice is constantly creamed off by a small section of the population who do no work at all - the ruling class.

This small percentage who own most of the wealth also control it. And so the interests of society are sacrificed to their interests. While this system

may produce lots of profit (not much going our way though!) and inflated salaries for directors and managers, for most of us we have to put up with a low wage, bad housing, poor health (and a crumbling NHS), second rate education, unemployment - the list goes on. In short - pleasure for the few, misery for the rest of us. Surely society could be more fairly organised than that! Yes, but the government or the bosses certainly aren't going to do it for us - it's up to us to change things.

SEXUAL INEQUALITY

Although the women's movement has made some gains, women are still treated as second-class citizens. In conversations and arguments women are often interrupted or even told to shut up "because their opinions don't count". The "woman's place is in the home" attitude still persists. They are expected to do most of the housework and look after the kids. Again, the figures speak for themselves - women in full time employment only have 24.6 hours free time per week whereas men have 33.5 hours; even housewives only have 32.2 hours free time ("Social Trends '87"). Women, on average, are paid lower wages and suffer sexual harassment at work. Because of the attitude that "women are there to be fucked" they are in danger of being assaulted or raped, often by husbands who consider their wife to be their property to be used or abused as they see fit.



RACISM

With widespread poverty and frustration people look for a convenient scapegoat. In 1930's Germany it was the Jews. In 1980's Britain it's blacks and Asians. They are blamed for "taking our jobs" or even "our hospital beds". Yet the nationalistic press conveniently forget that blacks and Asians have worse housing than whites and suffer from higher unemployment and social deprivation. On top of all this they get hassle from the police and beat up and murdered by gangs of fascist thugs.

The problems in our society that are blamed on ethnic minorities are problems generated by the capitalist system we live under. Quite simply it cannot satisfy our needs. Instead it produces poverty, division, frustration, violence.

Society is divided into classes, and our class is artificially divided by sexism and racism. The key to maintaining inequality is power - imposition of the will of persons considered more important on to those considered less important. Yet all human beings ought to be socially equal, but this system denies us that right. Power is expressed as authority. Hence the chain of command in workplaces where the shop floor worker is reduced to the level of a machine. At school our children are subject to imposed discipline in preparation for the job market. Women suffer the authority of men who "know what's best". And we are all subject to the authority of the State which claims to be acting on our behalf but in fact is acting on behalf of the ruling class.

As anarcho-syndicalists we reject power relationships because we are passionate believers in freedom - freedom from domination, from exploitation and from tyranny. We also reject the class system and the economy based on capitalist relations of production and distribution, because we believe in social and economic equality. We advocate class struggle for the liberation of humanity and fight for a world in which the wealth created by all is enjoyed by all.

ACTIVISTS NOT BUREAUCRATS

In March the women's TUC conference met in Blackpool. For the first time the 350+ delegates could discuss broader political issues, not just those directly affecting women. Although superficially they voted unanimously for radical motions - e.g on South Africa, ethnic monitoring, gay and lesbian rights and abortion - they never voted for any real action on any issue. Time after time all they called for was a Labour government.

After 57 years the conference is still an advisory body. This seems typical of a feminism that demands only a "ministry for women" such as the Labour Party plans, despite one delegate's warning: "We don't want a paper tigress handed down from on high". Or of feminists who want their own women's department in the TUC - i.e one staffed by women on as senior grades as the men in other departments. Currently the women's committee is a rather junior TUC body. Only 10 of its members are elected with the remaining 15, including 6 men appointed through the TUC general

council. But do women really believe that their interests will be any better served by having a bunch of women careerists - new Brenda Deans - joining the ranks of the TUC bureaucrats? To me a women's department sounds like a convenient way of putting the problem of women's issues to one side.

Despite all this there were some developments at this year's conference. For the first time there were reports on black and ethnic minority women in employment and in trade unions as well as women in prison. The feminist direction of the women's TUC has, it is claimed, led to some advances within unions and a growing commitment to equal opportunities. As a result a younger group of women came. Also there were a number of contributions from new quarters. No longer was the feminism of the women's TUC the exclusive preserve of middle class, non-manual women. The NUM for the first time sent a full delegation of 12; the National Communications Union, inspired by its new women's committee, was another new con-

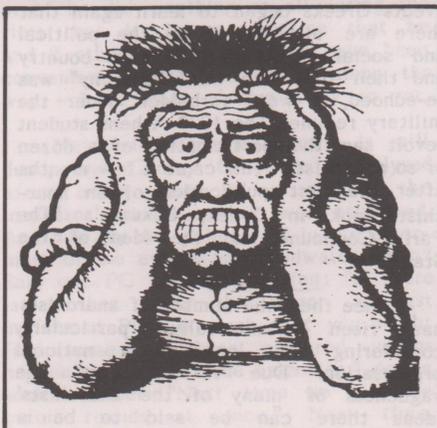
tributor and UCATT whose delegation reflected the benefits of new skills training opportunities for women in manual trades.

While welcoming this new interest from working class women in feminism and trade unions, we can't help but wonder if all their interest and energy isn't going to end up frustrated and misplaced. While encouraging all working women to get involved in their unions or to try to establish a new branch if their workplace isn't unionised, we must point out the pitfalls of placing one's trust in any trade union bureaucrat, female or male. We encourage all women to be active within the rank and file and not to become careerists. The DAM position for women within trade unions is the same as for men - get involved, be active, but do not strive to rise above the rank of convener or shop steward. Most of all we must reach working class women with the message of anarchist feminism as the alternative to the bourgeois, reformist feminism they are more likely to come across.

SHOP STEWARD SACKS WORKER

Recently a Community Programme worker (Graeme C.) with Age Concern, North Tyneside, was sacked unfairly, without warning, and not in accordance with the agreed procedure. The union (ACTS, part of the TGWU) weren't interested. Finding a union rep at all was an uphill struggle. This may be more than a bit connected with the fact that Irene Sword, a member of the management committee and one of the people responsible for the sacking, is also the ACTS shop steward - a conflict of interests methinks. After over a week waiting for a rep to turn up, he took up his own case. The outcome being that instead of a sacking for alleged (imagined) misconduct, he was to be given a

good reference and a letter saying he was only employed on a short term contract. I have since found out that had he pushed harder he would have been reinstated. I too have been in a similar position - but because I fought my own case I was reinstated - but Graeme who waited for the rep to show up wasn't. The rep eventually turned up - the day after Graeme finished his job. He smiled politely, took all the details, and said he'd be in touch. That's the last I heard of him. Before he left though he was kind enough to inform me of the ACTS elections, and that he'd be standing again, should I wish to vote for him. (Too bad that I'm in NUPE eh?)



Victimisation

With bus deregulation Cambridge has seen the typical chaos. Many local people blamed the drivers for the mess with letters in the local paper telling of minibus drivers missing out stops due to being late, saying how rude they often are. One driver, Graham H., replied to put the record straight, laying the blame fairly and squarely with the local Cambus management. Schedules were impossibly tight; drivers, often driving for as much as 5 hours without a break, are enormously stressed. As he put it: "I used to be a nice person until I became a bus driver". Four days later he was charged with breaking a company rule he'd never heard of and sacked for telling the truth to the public. He was already unpopular with management as he had been sacked from his job as a porter for joining the domestics' heroic 18-month long strike.

Being a minibus driver is not only extremely stressful, it's also badly paid. They earn less per hour than the regular bus drivers with no higher rate for overtime, divisively pitting one group of drivers against another, making them as a whole a much weaker group. This was negotiated by the TGWU. The Addenbrookes strike was stabbed in the back by union bureaucrats (see D.A 32) and Graham's experience on the buses hasn't made him any more favourable to trade unionism as it exists presently. The T&G helped with his appeals but any union worthy of the name would have done something more to defend one of its members so outrageously victimised. The truth is that the branch, which had literally earned itself the thanks of management for its co-operation, was upset at Graham "going it alone" and writing a letter to the paper.

Amongst the drivers there was passive support for Graham but, with the union stitched up by hacks, nothing was done. Discontent at Cambus obviously remains, so management had better not think this act of repression against a working-class militant will mean plain sailing from now on, because it won't.

Politics of Boycotts and Art of Struggle

Arguments over Paul Simon's "Graceland" album have spilled over into the national, left, and music press. Simon is accused of violating the cultural boycott of South Africa and siding with the racists who play Sun City. Revolutionaries may well dismiss the issue but important similarities exist between this controversy and one that raged at the '81 and '82 Anti-Apartheid Movement AGM's over direct "union to union" links between western and black workers.

"Graceland" was recorded with African township musicians and his subsequent world tour includes these musicians as well as Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba who have performed countless anti-apartheid benefits. Masakela has defended Simon: "People who are not consulting South African artists made up the rules; they don't know what the musicians in South Africa feel". Although Simon's album is not explicitly political, other cultural exports such as the play "The Bijers Sunbird" which were more so, have received the same treatment.

This "see-no-evil" boycott of all South African produce has blinded many to the dynamics of social change within southern Africa. For years western liberals have gone along with the ANC policy of forcing governments to act through the weight of public opinion while dutifully moralising about the iniquities of buying oranges and apples from the forbidden regime. (This strategy of winning public sympathy, applying "moral pressure" and appealing to the consciences of "consumers" proved so ineffectual during the bitter News International dispute). As long as multinationals can squeeze super-profits from African workers they will do so despite public opinion. The growth of a

large urban industrial working class which organised itself during the '70's and early '80's through mass struggles has sure enough turned the capitalists into "progressive businessmen". Now they call for reforms and negotiations with the ANC because they don't want "the baby of free enterprise to be thrown out with the bathwater of apartheid".

From the 1973 Durban mass strikes onwards the ANC and its industrial wing, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), have tailed behind workers' struggles. As the new unions came into conflict with transnational companies they began to see the need for international links with western workers especially those in the same company. This need was articulated in the campaign for "direct links". These could involve telex links, twinning union branches, fact finding visits by trade unionists to South Africa and speaking tours of black trade unionists to the west. If direct links were established it was argued, then black workers on strike could receive quick and effective solidarity action and morale boosting messages of support. Furthermore, ill-informed western workers could learn from direct links and take inspiration from the growing class confidence of their South African counterparts.

SACTU, however, opposed direct links using a number of different arguments which were underpinned by the thinking that any contacts could not be "direct" but had to be mediated through them. Equally, "workerist" currents within the independent unions were wary of allowing SACTU to take the best militants out of the factories to be wasted in guerilla training camps, and thus allow shopfloor organisation to be vulnerable to state repression.

SACTU's analysis was a product of the repression and downturn of the '60's. They argued that the regime was fascist, that working class opposition was crushed and therefore change must come externally. The workers struggle was subordinated to the armed struggle, and their interests subordinated to the multi-class "Congress Alliance". As a 1982 position paper entitled "SACTU's Present Role" stated: "SACTU was forced underground. And there is nothing to suggest that the apartheid regime will ever tolerate a strong, progressive and open trade union movement for very long."

In actual fact the state was forced by the industrial muscle of workers to make concession after concession following the recommendations of the Wiehahn and the Riekert Commissions of 1979. Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK, the ANC guerillas) had achieved little during that same period and SACTU had no mass base, nor any leading role in the new unions. Still tied to the South African Communist Party's theory of "2-staged" revolution, first national democratic, later "socialist", SACTU's function was by-passed by the growing workers' movement.

Internal tensions within SACTU developed and came to a head when a group emerged demanding the uninterrupted struggle for socialism. The dissidents who were kicked out formed the South African Labour Education Project which is associated with "Militant" in Britain. Their critique of SACTU made the crucial point that: "The black working class is the only social force capable of leading this revolutionary struggle in the interests of all the oppressed."

The controversy over direct links has been overtaken by the establishment of many inter-union links. Even the Labour Party NEC in February 1983 approved contacts between unions which: "have proved invaluable during disputes when solidarity must be based on an in-depth knowledge of the organisations and personalities involved." Despite the posturing of bureaucrats there is much to be done at a rank and file level. Educational activities about strikes in South Africa are an important preparation for future struggles and this cannot simply be carried out at the level of International Trade Secretariats or even through conference resolutions, but in the workplace and the local union branch.

The connections between the "direct links" issue and the Paul Simon controversy consist in the fact that the upsurge of resistance in the factories, mines and townships also has a cultural dimension. Struggle has always produced new and powerful art forms which are integral to the revolutionary experience. The posters of May '68 and Spain 1936, the songs of Paul Robeson, and of the Wobblies, the writings of Victor Serge and George Orwell enrich our understanding of social movements in the past. Whether Paul Simon is introducing township music to a wider audience or whether he is making a fast buck by colonising black music is debatable. Whatever side trendy "radicals" take over this particular issue we must not allow calls for the isolation of the apartheid regime to obstruct the development of real internationalism amongst working class people.

GREECE - Anarchists Rise Above the Ashes of the Dictatorship

A wave of general strikes hit Greece at the end of February, the culmination of 2 years of working class discontent and brutal police repression against dissidents, most notably anarchists. It now seems a good time to look at the background to events in Greece.

NEW POLITICAL FORCES

With the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974 came new political forces. The right-wing found itself having to change its appearance, as it was considered responsible for the dictatorship. It changed its name to "New Democracy", coming into line with the rest of the European right with its neo-liberal conceptions. Despite this it is still composed of the old politicians of the parliamentary right who hadn't hesitated to collaborate with the military dictatorship. Unable to break with the past they lost the elections of 1981 and conceded power to the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK).

PASOK, founded by former liberal militants after the dictatorship fell, soon lost its socialist "friend to the workers" facade, despite "socialisation" of some sectors of the economy. Since 1985 it has frozen workers wages, despite the highest inflation in Europe and ended up applying national-socialist policies (in its treatment of foreign workers and national and social minorities, the militarisation of daily life, police repression, imposition of computerised identity cards, concessions to the US - as well as the USSR - on a military and economic level). Its pacifist declarations and activities are not for home consumption.

The Communist Party, made illegal after the 2nd World War and Civil War, split in 1968. The so-called CP "of the exterior" is strongly pro-Soviet - it cannot, and will not, do anything today. Being satisfied with its legality and the government's economic overtures to the USSR, it has ceased to attract the working class - if it ever did. It has played the role of cheerleader of PASOK's policies, while controlling the official workers' movement in favour of the status quo which allows it to continue to exist. The Greek CP "of the interior" is "Eurocommunist" and adopts a less hostile attitude towards the anarchists. Because of its intellectualism and elitism it has little grass roots support.

The "National Political Union" was formed by the fascists, nazis, royalists and ex-cadres of the military regime. It has little support, but it has succeeded in sending a delegate to the European Parliament and in making a lot of noise by organising congresses to which French and Italian fascist leaders get invited, provoking demonstrations, particularly on the part of the extra-parliamentary left and the anarchists.

THE ANARCHISTS

From the 1860's to the early 20th century quite a strong anarchist movement developed. This was really the only workers' movement until the founding in 1918 of the Greek Socialist Workers' Party (later the Communist Party). Anarchism found a fairly fertile terrain due to the wretched conditions of workers in the tobacco industry. Landless farmers too were favourable to a social change allowing them to live as human beings. Agrarian reform, resulting from a peasants' revolt in Thessaly in 1910, remained a reform and no more, due to the lack of a central anarchist organisation to co-ordinate the activities of the peasants and manufacturing workers. The run down of the tobacco industry and the founding of the Communist Party (in its early years, showing a more active revolutionary character than the anarchists) led to the disappearance of the anarchist movement. With successive coups d'etat, the 2nd World War, and persecutions against anarchists and sympathisers, only 2 or 3 of these old militants were left living.

Under the influence of the May '68 events Greeks began to learn again that there are alternatives to the political and social structure of their country and their life. The word "anarchy" was re-echoed, a word forbidden under the military regime! The 1973 Athens student revolt saw the participation of a dozen or so anarchists. This came a few months after the first publication of an anarchist book in Greek, Bakunin's "The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State".

Since then the number of anarchists has risen dramatically, particularly considering the lack of a national organisation. Due to this and the vagueness of many of the anarchists' ideas there can be said to be a "pre-anarchist" situation. Millions of



people are unhappy with politics, parties, their wages and their lives. Until the present struggles they have not known what to do. But the anarchists are now recognised as the most militant tendency in Greece though they've lacked both strategy and a revolutionary vision of the society they want to create. A great step forward came in April '86 with the 1st Panhellenic Anarchist Conference attended by hundreds of comrades. This didn't establish an organised federation, but it did establish the need for one, along with much else.

To understand better what our Greek comrades are faced with, it is necessary to state that Greece is quite industrially backward compared to western Europe. A significant consequence is that class divisions in Greece aren't as strict as in many other countries. Thus between the middle bourgeoisie and the working class is a range of intermediary strata. Changing of employment, and even economic class, is easier in Greece, but this is changing. The economic situation is bad. The highest inflation in the EEC, very low wages and constant price rises, too slow industrialisation give a clear picture of a country passing from a purely agricultural economy to an industrialised one, but lacking raw materials, capital and modern technology. It is thus becoming an economic colony of central Europe, while the EEC

countries are themselves an economic colony of the US. The neo-liberal concepts of Greek governments are leading the country's economy into a dead end.

CLASS STRUGGLE

The worldwide recession is felt severely in Greece and, as in other countries, it is causing disillusion with democratic capitalist politics and shows the bankruptcy of state socialism. Thousands of young people are turning to anarchism, the revolutionary struggle for free communism, and present events show that workers as a class are beginning to fight back. Workers in France have recently shown that things only get done by working-class self-organisation, solidarity and struggle, not by political parties or reformist, official-ridden trade unions. After the years of so-called "post-war economic boom" and the abandonment of revolution and free communism as a goal by the working class, anarchism and syndicalism are now attracting increasing numbers of working people. This can be seen in the present growth of our International Workers' Association. This world-wide situation is clearly reflected in Greece despite its present lack of either a section of the IWA or a national anarchist federation. Hopefully this lack will not continue for much longer.

—Women's Rights Under Attack—

Maternity benefits and rights have never been a high priority in this country - the maternity grant has not increased since 1969; 1986 saw cuts in single payments for maternity and baby items; maternity rights at work have only been with us for 10 years. On April 6th 1987 there are to be even more cuts which will undermine women's positions still further.

The £25 maternity grant - a payment which is at present available for all pregnant women and is a non-contributory benefit - is to be abolished and replaced by a means-tested payment for women on supplementary benefit or family income supplement (FIS). The payment is expected to be £80 maximum which is less than half the maximum amount currently available to supplementary benefit and FIS claimants in the form of a single payment. Also means-tested benefits have a much lower take-up rate than other types of benefits.

The new statutory maternity pay (SMP) which replaces the existing maternity allowance and pay, will be paid by the employers to women who have worked with them continuously for at least the first 6 months of their pregnancy. This payment is to be the equivalent of the lowest rate of statutory sick pay - £32.85, for a maximum of 18 weeks. Employers are not keen on taking on this additional administration work needed to award the payment and women will have increasing difficulty in finding out their rights.

Those who've been in their jobs for less than 2 years may find that they could be sacked during pregnancy, so that the employer can avoid paying out the higher rate of SMP. Women who have been employed for more than 2 years full time or 5 years part time will receive this higher payment which will be nine

tenths of her average rate of pay over the 8-week period prior to the claim. Obviously this specific time period will disadvantage women whose "normal" pay varies with piecework/bonuses etc. This higher rate will only be payable for the first 6 weeks of maternity leave, the basic rate of £32.85 will then be paid for the following 12 weeks.

Other cuts include the abolition of free milk and vitamins to pregnant women and children under the age of 5 years, also the abolition of free school meals. There are more complex changes involved with this attack on maternity rights - to find out more write to: The Maternity Alliance, 59-61 Camden High Street, London.

There is also a white paper in existence, "Building Businesses Not Barriers", which includes the following proposals: 1. firms with less than 10 employees would be exempted from the rules on reinstatement of mothers after maternity leave (currently it is firms with less than 6 employees); 2. the "hours of work" requirement for maternity rights would be increased from 16 to 20 hours a week for full time workers, and from 8 to 12 hours per week for part time workers; 3. a £25 fee will be charged for access to industrial tribunals which is only refundable if the applicant wins.

EASY TARGETS

Once again we see the government attacking the employment and financial rights of women, forcing them to be even more dependent on men. At the same time this will take women out of the workplace, and back into the home, not only to re-establish "women's rightful place", but as an attempt to reduce the competition for work between men and women. Thus male unemployment figures will be reduced. Whenever the economy is

in crisis, employers expect changes in the law, thus enabling them to hire and fire at random. Women are always easy targets in these circumstances, as they are less likely to be involved in trade unions due to their work practices - e.g. 85% of all part time workers in the UK are women, and therefore vulnerable to attacks from both the state and the employer.



As from the 6th of April, not only will there be less money available to pregnant women and mothers, but many women will be sacked for just being pregnant, and fewer than half of working pregnant women will have the right to return to their jobs after the baby is born.

It is important that as many women as possible know of the changes; that unions get involved; and that people attend the national rally en masse - April 6th, Central Hall, Westminster, London.

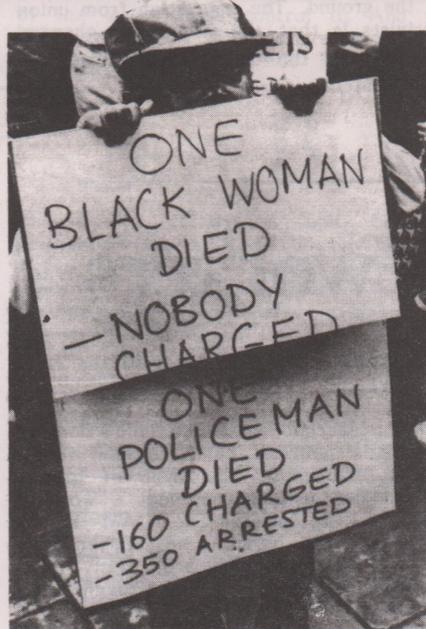
STATE TAKES REVENGE ON THE FARM

Three men have been convicted of murder and sentenced to life in one of the most obscene farces ever to take place in the law courts in a trial where no evidence and no witnesses against them were produced. They have been imprisoned solely on the weight of admissions obtained during police interrogation. The men - Winston Silcott, Enqin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite - took part in protests over the death of Cynthia Jarrett while police searched her home on the Broadwater Farm estate in north London.

On Sunday, October 6th, 1985, after an all-day protest outside Tottenham police station at the police's lack of concern over Cynthia's death and a meeting at the estate's Youth Association an attempted march to the police station was blocked by a police cordon. The police were well-prepared for the situation with 400 riot cops already on stand-by. People panicked and rushed to protect themselves. Police eventually swamped the estate, claiming the need to protect fire fighters from rioters. Interestingly enough, though police said 250 of their officers were injured no fire fighters were hurt. Three hours after the police invasion PC Blakelock was stabbed to death.

Six people were initially charged with his murder - the 3 already named plus a 16-year old and 2 15-year old boys. All 3 were acquitted of murder and riot charges while one was sentenced to community service for affray. Of the six only one 15-year old was interrogated in the presence of a solicitor - he didn't admit to any attacks on Blakelock, though a "witness" testified against him. Jason Cobham, aged 18, testified that he saw the youth join the attack on Blakelock. Unfortunately for the police he later admitted to lying and to have taken money, a flat and job offers from the police. A detective, when asked about Cobham's collapse under cross-examination said: "The coloureds make notoriously bad witnesses". Racist remarks aside, someone must have appreciated Cobham's grassing as he was only charged with threatening behaviour and fined £200 whilst others doing similar things at the riot were imprisoned for affray.

The other 2 of the 3 youths did admit to attacking Blakelock. One con-



fessed to having stabbed him in the chest and legs but a pathologist later testified that he received no such wounds. But then a boy (who at the time was only 13 years old), held for 3 days without being allowed to see his parents or a solicitor, interrogated while wearing only his underpants could confess to anything.

The third youth also admitted to stabbing Blakelock. This boy is said to be mentally handicapped. According to the Guardian: "charged with the killing the next day, he had turned to a teacher who sat in on the interviews and said: 'Does this mean I have to go and live with you?'. Neither his mother nor a solicitor were present while police interrogated him.

One might naively think that such an absurd case could not have carried on. How could the lawyers, the judge, and the jury proceed when already half of the defendants had been acquitted because the police's outrageous lies and illegal actions had been exposed, and when the only witness in the case was shown to be a grass? Perhaps some of the jury - maybe even the judge himself - wavered, but the media quickly stepped

in to quell any doubts about the barbarity of the beasts who slaughtered dear Blakelock. They shrieked about the "Death Estate" and plans of revenge; about how masked armies of demented youths armed with knives, machetes, swords (swords!?) had planned to cut Blakelock's head off and stick it on a pole. In an atmosphere of such unbiased, fair and objective reporting the outcome of the trial is hardly surprising. Nor is the continued filth they churn out. Abuse is showered on the convicted men while Blakelock and his widow are elevated to some sort of semi-angelic status. No one cares that Cynthia Jarrett is dead or that 3 men have been sentenced to rot in jail.

And what evidence is there against Winston Silcott, Enqin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite? None. None of the 1000 police photos taken during the riot show any of these men; none of their shoes fit the prints taken at the murder scene; there is no forensic evidence: there is no murder weapon; there are no witnesses.

But the police have been clever - they surely picked Winston Silcott as their prize victim because no-one will defend him. He has a record of violent crimes and was on bail on a murder charge when Blakelock was killed. If one formulates one's opinions from information spewed out by the media then it is quite reasonable to be glad that such a beast - or an "evil and dangerous man" in the judge's words - has come to justice. He seems so evil and dangerous that it doesn't matter that there is no proof he did anything at all during the riot; that it is no sacrifice that he and 2 others - who seem to have been conveniently forgotten about along the way - have been thrown away to rot.

Meanwhile Cynthia Jarrett is still dead, and Cherry Groce is paralysed after being shot by a cop - the inspector who shot her was acquitted. And how do the police feel in the aftermath of the events on Broadwater Farm? Said one PC to the Guardian: "If there is another riot, the anger amongst uniformed PC's is such that you might find some of these coloured youths happen to jump off the balconies." And a senior officer: "Next time we will fire baton rounds at once." Next time,

UNHOLY WAR

Trench warfare; deliberate air attacks on civilian targets; Iranian "human wave" attacks; Iraqi mustard gas attacks; Iranian children shipped to the front to fight the Ayatollahs' "holy war"; the Iraqi general's reference to Iranians as "insects" to be wiped out with chemical weapons - these are the brutal images of the Gulf War.

This massacre doesn't solely involve the Iranian and Iraqi ruling classes though. The international arms industry is more than happy to supply the ayatollahs and generals with their murderous needs. It has been common knowledge that Western chemical companies have provided Iraq with the raw materials for its chemical weapons industry. The Irangate scandal has shown that the US government has been involved in this meat trade too. And of course Britain couldn't remain out of such a nice little earner.

From the offices of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), appropriately enough opposite the department of Trade and Industry, the Iranian government buys small arms, howitzer shells and missiles. They also buy chieftain tank spares and other equipment from companies like Plessey and Land Rover, in spite of the supposed government ban. When asked why the NIOC was allowed to operate Thatcher said that closing it would "lose business for British firms". Money doesn't talk it swears as someone once said.

The arms going to stoke up the Gulf War is just one instance of the disgusting international trade in death and destruction involving multinationals and governments. Remember that the next time you hear some politician sermonise on "international terrorism".

A ship skipper interviewed on "News at One" described picking up US arms in Portugal, Spanish arms in Valencia and hand grenades in Greece. He unloaded some of them onto Iraqi army trucks in Saudi Arabia...then he went on to unload the rest in Iran. Now that's what I call capitalism!

—In Brief—

PRISONS

Britain imprisons nearly 1 in every 1000 of its citizens. This is the highest prison population of any EEC country, according to a report from NACRO (National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders). As a proportion of its population, Britain has 48% more people in prison than Spain, 146% more than Greece and 180% more than Holland. (Figures are for September 1986.)

WOMEN IN PRISON - REVIEW

"Women's Imprisonment - Breaking The Silence", available from: London Strategic Policy Unit, Women's Equality Group, Room 40, Middlesex House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V.

This new report on the imprisonment of women uses first hand accounts to highlight the condition of this most neglected group. It shows that the majority of jailed women have been imprisoned for offences against property, for sums of less than £100. Black women are over-represented - 31% of women in Holloway are from black and ethnic groups.

CASHING IN ON AIDS

The London International Company, the Durex contraceptive group is reaping in the profits, rising from £10.487 million to £12.173m for the first half of last year. The company is poised to invest large sums of money to market condoms as medical opinion is convinced they are the only defence against AIDS for the sexually active. The chair of the company, Alan Woltz, disclosed that they are working with health authorities throughout the world. He is quoted as saying "as a socially responsible company and one of the major manufacturers of...health care products, the company is committed to supporting further education and research." He neglected to mention that they stand to increase profits even further because of the horrific AIDS epidemic. Ah, "Its an ill wind that..."

BARCLAYS: Still striking it RICH!

Just before Christmas last year, Barclays Bank announced its withdrawal from South Africa. They admitted it was because of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's campaign against them, and the fact that thousands of working class people had boycotted or taken direct action against them. But, Barclays haven't severed their links with South Africa, merely changed the ways they fuel the apartheid economy.

Barclays officially pulled out when they sold their stake in Barclays National, a South African subsidiary. However they still have a "corresponding banking" relationship with Barclays National, including co-operation over management, trading, technical assistance and an automatic credit line (allowing further lending to happen). Also, nearly £90 million obtained from the sale of its shares in Barclays National was invested in South African money markets, with the interest returning to Barclays. Barclays is also a member of the Technical Committee, a group of international banks assisting the Pretoria government with re-scheduling its debts, some £3/4 billion of which was lent by Barclays.

This move can be seen on 2 levels. Firstly, it is a public relations stunt designed to appease public opinion at home. This is illustrated by Barclays contacting student unions who've boycotted their services, trying to convince them to change their policy. They have even gone so far as to say that the ANC no longer recommend they be boycotted. The ANC, needless to say, re-affirm their policy towards the bank. Their investment in South Africa is now at the same level as the other "high street" banks, i.e. loans instead of a high street service there. Secondly, the withdrawal shows, as does the other recent withdrawals by transnationals, they are worried by the instability of the South African economy, and the increasingly revolutionary black working class. The continued solidarity of the working class worldwide, in every way it can be given, is vital to that struggle.

Workers' Control not controlled workers

Anarcho-syndicalism is a theory of society and a form of organisation with its own distinct plan of action. The ultimate aim is to bring the class war to a successful conclusion - victory for the working class. We see the way forward in building a mass organisation, democratically controlled by the rank and file, which will smash capitalism and the state leading the way to a libertarian society. To anarcho-syndicalists there is no separation of theory from practice. It wasn't concocted in the reading room of the British Museum, but distilled from generations of working class struggle.

In the British labour movement there is a long tradition of activism without "theory", or at least without one which is revolutionary. To many working class militants theory is a luxury, not a necessity. On the other hand intellectuals have tried to develop one as an academic exercise with no real contact with the class struggle. In the 1960's and '70's following the student activism of the period, armchair Marxists got a foothold in the sociology departments of polys and universities. They spawned the various vanguard parties which, although they have a critique of western capitalism, are the embryo of the "new boss class" that dominates the countries of the Soviet Bloc, China and the so-called socialist societies of the third world.

However a working class movement, no matter how militant, can't operate without a theory whether it's "Labourist", socialist or anarcho-syndicalist. It is impossible to be an effective trade unionist without one. If theory is not drawn from working class experience then

"Down There"

A Play by Yorkshire Women Theatre Company

For many women cervical cancer is a very frightening and embarrassing subject. We have grown up to be "ashamed" of our bodies, particularly our "private parts". But cervical cancer is treatable and preventable, if only more resources were available for us to have regular check ups, but more importantly, if only women were more willing to have tests taken.

The play "Down There" which has been taken to venues throughout Yorkshire is a comedy about cervical smear testing and aims to take away women's fears about the test. It is enlightening, funny, and highly worthwhile seeing, not only for women but for men too. If you are interested in seeing the play, or better still book it for your workplace, community group, etc - contact Yorkshire Women Theatre Group, on Leeds 620418. It is essential that more women are made aware of the dangers of cervical cancer and should have a smear test every 3 years if any of the following apply:

- * You have had intercourse with a man at any time in your life, no matter what age you are now.
- * You have never had a test before.
- * You have intercourse with a man who has had other partners.
- * You notice any changes in your menstrual cycle, such as bleeding between periods, pain, discomfort or discharge.
- * You are taking the contraceptive pill.

Smear tests are available at local

family planning clinics, well women clinics, and increasingly trade unions are working towards screening at the workplace - see your rep/steward to see what your union is doing.

Women should also do the following:

- * Keep yourself clean by regular washing.
- * Tell your partner to do this as well, and especially to wash under his foreskin if he has not been circumcised. This is important for all men, but even more so for those who work in dirty jobs.
- * Ask about barrier methods of contraception, as they do give added protection.
- * Be aware that intercourse at an early age and with several different partners can increase your risk - although women who have only had one partner should still have regular smears.
- * It's also a good idea to take care of your general health, eat a healthy and try not to smoke.

If the result of a smear test is positive it only occasionally means that you have cancer. What is more likely is that probably some cells have been found that may become cancerous in the future, and something can be done about it.

Remember a smear test is not a cancer test - it is a test to prevent you getting cancer. Cervical cancer can be prevented, so have your test done regularly.

Leeds Teachers Rally Sabotaged

Leeds teachers took strike action on March 19th. Members of the NUT and NAS/UWT struck for half a day. A planned rally of striking teachers was less of a success. The venue was changed on the very last day from Eland Road football ground to a smaller site with no parking facilities. The reason given for this was that the union executives

were "unaware" that 28 days notice must be given for use of the ground if not connected with football. However the union executive are part of the machinery that give permission for use of the ground. The suggestion from union activists is that the venue was changed to prevent the rally from being too "successful".

Jack-boot police

Rose Alaso was assaulted and hit in the face by Leeds police officers on August 30th last year. Far from the police being charged, Rose was arrested and this March found guilty of assaulting them!

Readers of DA 33 will be familiar with the case. Rose who came to this country in 1979 to flee persecution in her native Uganda, has been systematically harrassed by the police, DHSS snoopers and immigration officials. On August 29th last year her 9 year old son, Brian, was threatened and frightened by men claiming to be police officers at their home. When Rose attempted to investigate this, she was told by all the local police stations and immigration officers that no visit had been made to her house. It is not surprising therefore that, when she was visited by 2 men claiming to be police the next morning, she was suspicious. They refused to give identification and left.



Later Rose and a neighbour were attacked by the same 2 men. Again they refused to give identification. When Rose was attacked, she struggled and was hit in the face. An officer also had his arm scratched by the heel of her shoe. Rose was charged with biting the officer and, despite the fact that photographic evidence did not support this and the fact that she was arrested on a non-arrestable offence (non-payment of a taxi fine, since dropped), she was found guilty. She has been fined £50 and charged £55 costs, but is to appeal. Once again the police and the courts have proved to be racists and liars.

Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On 6th May 1987 I will be having my first appeal against the Home Office's decision to refuse my husband, Shakeel, entry to the United Kingdom to join me and our daughter, Natalie. I have not seen my husband now for nearly two years and he has never seen his daughter Natalie.

The Home Office refused Shakeel entry on the Primary Purpose Rule, saying that our marriage was one of convenience, in spite of the fact that we lived together for two years before our marriage.

The appeal hearing will be at Aldine House, New Bailey Street, West Riverside, Salford 3. There will be a demonstration on 6th May at 9am outside Aldine House for my appeal. I urge all my brothers and sisters from anti-racist and women's groups to join me and help me in my struggle. **YOUR HELP IS VITAL.**

Yours in struggle,

Barbara Ahmed.



In Russia Lenin Established a New Boss Class

idea the class struggle can't be won without a "workers" party to pursue state power. This is to be a "political" struggle with electoral manoeuvres, parliamentary or otherwise, taking over from industrial and community action. We, as anarcho-syndicalists, reject this artificial division into separate industrial/community and political stages. While it is true that strikes rapidly come into conflict with the state and therefore are "political", this is in no way an argument for separate industrial and political organisations. Unions, if they are real workers' unions, do not

need a party to lead them to the free society.

An anarcho-syndicalist union doesn't require a political party to lead it by the nose because this type of organisation has a political ideal - working class self-liberation. The DAM argues that political parties, no matter how left or revolutionary, are divisive and parasitic on working class struggles and therefore unnecessary. This type of political organisation can only lead to a pseudo-socialism with a hierarchy of the party leaders forming the core of a new class.

Societies like Russia and China have been described as "state-capitalist" but this ignores and disguises the fact that these states were set up in the aftermath of bitter revolutionary, anti-capitalist conflicts which saw working class liberation strangled by party bureaucracies. Leninists hold that workers on their own, without the help of the middle classes cannot attain more than a trade union consciousness. This we dispute. If workers can see the necessity of unions, then it is far from difficult to realise that to take on the bosses means taking on the state. It is no problem for class conscious workers to see that the state is merely the strong arm of the capitalists and that it cannot be used as a tool to establish socialism. In fact it stands in the way of the creation of such a society.

The real way forward for the working class is the building of an organisation which unites political theory and class action - an anarcho-syndicalist union. This is all that is needed to overthrow capitalism and to proceed with the task of setting up a free socialist society.

REVIEW

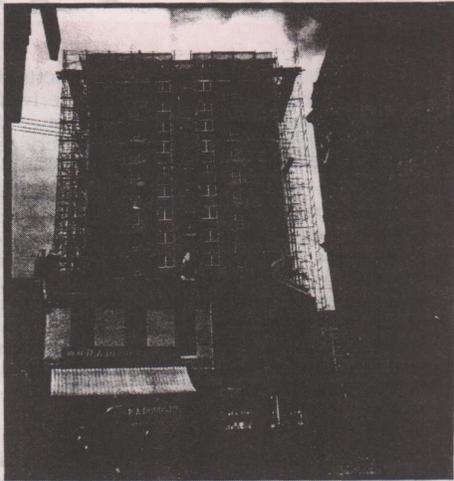
A Class Portrayed - 'Scotswood Road' - by Jimmy Forsyth

Jimmy Forsyth began taking pictures in the early '50's after losing an eye in an accident as a fitter. Surviving marginally on National Assistance, finding it a struggle to buy his next roll of film, he began to photograph his friends, neighbours and community in Tyneside as it was irrevocably split up and destroyed by the advancement of so-called modern housing and its bulldozers.

His pictures in the book and exhibition of the same name cover the period between the end of the '50's to the middle of the '60's, and as it says in the foreword: "Nor are these mere documentary residues from the bad old days of living". What we see is a vital and energetic representation of working class life as witnessed by someone who was also an intrinsic part of it. As such his work is not affected by political or class differences from those he was depicting - he was with them and not separate. His work stands in stark contrast to the modern popular "documentary" depiction of the north which seems to rely almost exclusively on imagery so obviously associated with unemployment and poverty. Jimmy's work shows us this but he also reveals to us so much more.

For a start we see people enjoying themselves. He shows us happiness, fashion and a complete range of events and activities concerned with Scotswood.

His pictures of children are particularly pleasing. On every level he seems to get on with his subjects and there appears to be no aggravation, no sense of them and us. It is an honest book of hard times of which we are all aware - you or your mother and father could easily have lived and dressed similarly. The combination of an informative text with regards to the involvement of Scotswood and its relation to the Armstrong Vickers armaments factory and Jimmy's tales and images provides a book which is interesting and highly enjoyable.



As Jimmy himself said: "There's not much recorded of the working class now, not really. I'm pleased when people pull me up in the street and say: 'Are you that man who took all them photographs?' It gives you a bit of pride in yourself." Jimmy's work is perhaps the most interesting and important document of working class history that has appeared recently. The fact that it nearly didn't appear adds to its magic. As such it stands alongside some of the photographic greats and often runs them into the ground. His intelligence and foresight has led to the production of a marvellous book which is both critical and celebratory of working class life as seen by someone whose involvement is total.

Jimmy still lives in a council flat in the town and continues to photograph his friends and community (even though he is in his 70's) and can often be seen around. Tyne-Tees TV have produced an interesting documentary on him and he has briefly appeared on the "Tube" with his work. Individual prints from Jimmy's negatives are available at a reasonable price from the Jimmy Forsyth Collection, Benwell Library, Newcastle. Get the book - it's excellent.

"Scotswood Road" by Jimmy Forsyth is published by Bloodaxe Books - £6.95 (128 pages): c/o PO Box ISN, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE99 ISN. Available through good bookshops.

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.

DAM Pamphlets

Anarchism in Action - the Spanish Revolution (see review) £1.00

Come and Wet this Truncheon - by Dave Douglass (Hatfield Main NUM) 80p

Tell us Lies about the Miners - by Dave Douglass (Hatfield Main NUM) 60p

Strike Action 20p

Anarchism and Feminism - Women Workers and the Trade Unions (2 pamphlets) 35p

Syndicalists in the Russian Revolution - G P Maximoff 45p

100 Years of May Day 30p

What is Anarcho-Syndicalism? Free

Write c/o Direct Action, Box D.A., Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester.

Make cheques/postal orders payable to DAM. Add 20% of total price for post and packing

ASP Publications

The Methods of Anarcho-Syndicalism - Rudolf Rocker 50p

The Tragedy of Spain - R Rocker £1.20

The Art of Anarchy - Flavio Constantini (Anarchist Black Cross) £3.00

Program of Anarcho-Syndicalism - G P Maximoff £1.00

My Social Credo - G P Maximoff 50p

Libertarian Communism - Isaac Puente 60p

Miguel Garcia's Story £1.20

Anarchism: Arguments For and Against - Albert Meltzer 80p

REBEL WORKER (Australian Syndicalist Federation)

IWA - Principles, Aims and Statutes 50p

Syndicalism in Practice:

1. Spain - The CNT 20p
2. Argentina - The FORA 20p
3. Chile - The IWW and FORC 20p
4. Poland - The ZZZ 20p

Write to: ASP, BM Hurricane, London, WCIN 3XX. or

ASP, P.O Box 96, Doncaster, South Yorks.

Make cheques/postal orders payable to ASP. For post and packing please add 20% of total price - minimum is 20p.

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

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

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

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Anarchist Day

SATURDAY MAY 2nd 1987

BOLTON SOCIALIST CLUB, 16 WOOD ST, BOLTON.

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Russian Revolution, Anarchism & Feminism, the Public Order Act, Racism, Black Cross, Unemployment, Peace Movement, Art & Anarchism, Animal Rights & Ecology, Anarcho-syndicalism and the Rank & File, and others.

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Omorí, Patagonian Workers' Struggles, Stop The City, and "Mujeres Libres (Free Women)

(Further details, see to: Bolton DAM, c/o Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St., Bolton)

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PUBLIC MEETING

CHILE

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

OSCAR ORTIZ (National Secretary of the Libertarian Movement of Chile).

LONDON: Tues 7th April 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1.

MANCHESTER: Weds 8th April 7.30, Town Hall, Albert Square (Lloyd St entrance).

LEEDS: Thurs 9th April 7.30pm, Trades Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7.

GLASGOW: Fri 10th April 7.30pm, City Hall, Albion St, Candle Riggs.

RANK AND FILE

HEALTHWORKERS

The NHS is collapsing around us. Wages are bad and so are conditions. Labour governments close as many hospitals as the Tories and both keep healthworkers pay down. NUPE and COHSE don't oppose the exploitation but participate in it. In June this year a conference will be held to start a rank & file organisation to fight for healthworkers' interests. If you are interested, write to: Rank & File Healthworkers, Box 222, c/o 53 West Ham Lane, London E15.



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LOCAL CONTACTS

Direct Action

Maternity Rights Under Attack!.....

Contact: The Maternity Alliance,
59/61 Camden High St, London.

YOUR FLEXIBLE FRIEND

It isn't alcohol which produces the worst headaches these days. In 1987 more people than for half a century are discovering what it's like to finance their own and their family's lives on debt. It's worrying and depressing living under the constant threat of final demands and repossession orders so much so that people are made to feel that they are failures. However, the misery that debt causes so many families today isn't an unhappy coincidence. Debt is being deliberately used as a powerful economic tool by the government, against working class people.

WOULD YOU CREDIT IT ?

Of course debt is nothing new, it's probably been around as long as inequalities in wealth have existed. However, in the 1980's we are seeing a greater reliance being put on personal debts (that is to say, consumer credit) by the economy in general and the big financial institutions in particular, and on a more calculated mass scale than ever before. Consumer credit has been described by a top executive of Barclay card as, "The most powerful marketing mechanism that we have."

In the 1950's, the use of credit was deliberately used to open up the way for the new "consumer society". In particular the lucrative new market of teenagers and young people was created. At that time, the preferred mechanism for loans was Hire Purchase, pioneered by the shops trying to corner the youth market, but taken up by the H.P. companies, created on the basis of the so called "post-war economic boom". In the 1980's, we can see that the economic experiences of 30 years ago provided a prototype version of Thatcher's "betting shop economy".

The classic 19th century capitalists were either landed gentry who had transferred their assets from agriculture to industry (often supplied by their colonial estates abroad) or the self-made men like Dickens' Mr Gradgrind. The trouble with this arrangement was that it was too simple and too static. For the workers, it was obvious who their enemy was - the individual or family who employed them and kept them in abject poverty. However capitalism thrives on the confusion of the workers, and to this end a major change took place in the method of capital ownership during the late 19th century.

This change involved the separation of the roles of "ownership" and "management". Ownership became much more complex with the extension of shareholding to attract more capital to industry and allow greater flexibility to the market. Management, of course, still remained the function of the majority shareholder, often the previous owner.

By the early 20th century it was clear that there was something drastically wrong with this method of managing industry. Ownership based on share speculation was intended to respond more readily to the fluctuations of the market and to surround "management" with such a complicated web of mysticisms that it would seem inconceivable for anyone not from the bourgeoisie to perform such a complex task as managing their own lives. Its failing was that the laws of the market were so complex and responsive to every paranoid whim of the speculators, that no-one could understand them. Financial speculation, originally conceived of as a way of restricting the management of industry to a select capitalist class, had taken

on a life of its own. The creation of a "finance culture" had taken place and, like Frankenstein's monster, was completely out of control.

It was failing both to manage a stable society (the unpredictability of the slumps and booms of the capitalist economies constantly threatened the wealth of their ruling classes) or to be as successful in deceiving the working class as had been hoped. By the first decade of the 20th century industrial workers had gone a long way towards building their own organisations for fighting their oppression by the ruling class.

The period up to the 1st World War saw one of the bitterest eras of class confrontation ever; for example in

of "welfarism". This theory as practised by the Labour Party from 1945, derived from Liberal political thinkers of earlier decades, notably from Bainbridge and Keynes. Applied to the means of production, it meant that the state owned (and guaranteed a minimum level of employment in) the heavy industries which formed the basis of the economy: mines, shipbuilding, railways, steel etc. These areas of the economy were then taken out of bounds from the speculators on the Stock Exchange, although the bureaucrats who took over the job of management hardly proved to be any less incompetent.

The post-war "finance culture" was therefore, by necessity, based around the financial rather than the industrial sector. Although the Stock Exchange

longer to have a trade, a skill or even just a job. It became more than previously, your ability to be a consumer, to command goods, to intervene in the market as a buyer - hence the "consumer society".

In the 1980's, this process has been intensified. Thirty years ago it took place on the back of a declining economy - nevertheless Britain was then still an industrial manufacturing nation. Today, the massive expansion of the financial sector has taken place simultaneously with a 28% decline in manufacturing and construction since 1979. A clearer example of the difference between the capitalist obsession with generating money and the creation of social wealth, would be hard to find.

The extent of debt in Britain today would surprise many. A few years ago the thought of the banks lending money for holidays was ridiculous - not any more. The largest amount of consumer credit circulating in the economy comes from credit cards. There are now 1200 different kinds of credit cards, the majority being in-store charge cards (which take about 30% interest, roughly 3 times the normal rate). In addition, having a card generates an increase in consumer spending of between 200 and 600%.

It is estimated that 1 in 10 of credit card holders are 2 or more months behind with their payments, and the average credit debt now, is £600 per person. Barclaycard admit that 1% of their customers are "having difficulties" with their payments, and that half a per cent are in long term difficulties, but that shouldn't bother them too much since they also admit to making a 6% profit on all credit card loans and that goes up when the payment is late.

One of the most sinister developments of the credit boom, has been the proposal for a national credit archive, as in the USA. The files would contain personal information on your financial status, existing loans in your name, criminal record, etc. Forget about Big Brother - in the 1990's it'll be the man from the Pru who's watching you.

CREDIT CARD CON !

The Tories are using debt as a weapon against the working class and to create the illusion of an economic revival. One of the chief aims of the government on taking power, was to cut inflation. This they have done. However, the inflation of the 1970's was caused by the government debts to the IMF. Debt itself is still being used by the government, except this time the debt is being transferred directly to the poorest people in society. It is they who have the stigma of being debtors now, not the government.

Debt is clearly a class problem, but we are supposed to think of it as a personal one, accepting the situation as being of our own making and not a design of the bosses. The "finance culture" has now attained the status of religion, with its own morality and hypocrisy. Debt is one of its cardinal sins.

The money system has always been a con, a cover for the theft of the social wealth that working class people create. The rise of the credit card economy and mass debt is a development of this, caused by the economic weakness of the ruling class in the 80's and their urgent need to create the impression of a healthy and self sufficient economy. It doesn't fool us.

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LOW COST LOANS

Ads from union papers urging workers to get into debt

France, where the syndicalist union CGT embarked on an escalating series of strikes with the aim of bringing down capitalism and the state and creating a system of working class direct self management. In Britain too, the class struggles leading up to the 1914 war made a Socialist revolution more probable than at any time since. The capitalist response to the class war, was an inter-imperialist war and - following rearmament - a 2nd "World War". This period was also, of course, characterised by the crash in the Stock Markets throughout the world. Inflation was rampant, unemployment rife, and the "finance culture" discredited.

The re-establishment of "finance culture" in Britain after the Second World War, took place under the auspices

still played with the fortunes of much of industry, its preference was for the new boom sector of the economy - advertising, insurance and investment companies - all totally non-productive but where the big money was to be made. Thus, the 1950's saw the revival of the "finance culture" which had been so thoroughly humiliated in the 20's and 30's.

The 1950's was of course, the era when we'd "never had it so good", according to the Tory Prime Minister of the day. To be more accurate, it was when we were told that the whole population had adopted the values of the "finance culture" - for, the 1950's version, was much more populist than its Victorian predecessor. The mark of being a socially worthwhile person was no