

IF YOU DON'T HIT IT....IT WON'T FALL

free



* CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW * GAY WORKERS' CONFERENCE

* CLOSED-SHOP * LOCAL STRUGGLES

* DIARY OF MEETINGS

CAMPAIGN AGAINST A CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW

The Nottingham groups of CACTL and NCCL will be holding a
PUBLIC MEETING
TUESDAY 17th FEBRUARY, at 7.30 p.m.
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE, 61B MANSFIELD RD.
to discuss the proposed Criminal Trespass Law.

Why a Criminal Trespass Law must be stopped

The Criminal Trespass proposals will create a new class of criminals - people who take direct action, however peaceful, in support of their interests. They will do this by making it a crime for anybody to be on property when the owner doesn't want them there.

Hundreds and thousands of workers have already been made redundant. Factories all over the country have been closed, and the situation is getting worse. As more and more lay-offs have been threatened, thousands of workers have proved that the only effective way to save jobs is to OCCUPY. The Criminal Trespass Law proposals threaten workers who occupy with IMMEDIATE ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT.

DEFEND OCCUPATIONS! STOP THE CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW!

Outlawing squatting makes homelessness a crime - vagrancy is already a criminal offence. The 1974 Local Government Act made the housing of homeless families a discretionary power of local authorities - it used to be an obligatory duty. And councils don't have to (and don't) do anything for single people and childless couples. The numbers of homeless are going up all the time - in 1969, 22,454 families applied for local council temporary accommodation for the homeless; in 1973, 33,225 families applied. On top of that there are an estimated 30,000 people squatting, many of them families.

The number of empty houses is increasing too - in 1961 - 314,141 in England and Wales; in 1971 - 675,000. And the cuts in public spending on housing are going to make the situation much worse.

Outlawing squatting won't make the homeless go away - it will make a fortune for the owners of bed and breakfast empires (at the ratepayers' expense). And it will put homeless people in jail for being homeless.

SQUATTING IS NOT THE PROBLEM: THE PROBLEM IS THE HOUSING CRISIS.

Background - The Current Attacks on Direct Action

CACTL and NCCL see these proposals as an attack on direct action, by both consolidating and expanding legal restraints. They put into neat, easy, legislative form crimes that have been recently created by judges' rulings and by raking up old laws. Conspiracy to trespass charges too have been increasingly used against demonstrators who have peacefully occupied public buildings; These proposals come at a time of falling living standards, large scale redundancies and massive cuts in social expenditure. They strengthen the legal machinery to back up attacks being made against those people who are prepared to fight for their interests by direct action. And they give the full and active backing of the law and police to property owners who leave houses empty while tens of thousands are homeless.

How to support CACTL

- (1) Raise the matter in your union or other group.
- (2) Lobby your local M.P. and Constituency Party.
- (3) Support CACTL's national demonstration in London on February 28th.
- (4) Support your local CACTL and NCCL groups.
- (5) SUPPORT THE PUBLIC MEETING ON FEBRUARY 17th.

G A Y W O R K E R S C O N F E R E N C E 1 4 & 1 5 F E B

GAY WORKERS CONFERENCE will be on 14th & 15th February 1976 at Leeds Polytechnic Students Union, Calverley St. There will be workshops, speakers and a video. A disco and the General Will Theatre Co. Reception is at the Wellesley Hotel on Friday from 7.30. Registration fee is £1 (50p wageless)

Small Discussion Groups

Cuts in Social Expenditure
Women, Lesbians and Work
Gays in Trade Unions

Unemployment
Working Women's Charter and GWPC
Gay workers and the Gay Scene

Speaker from Working Women's Charter

On Sunday Discussions on Gay Centres - Work - the Gay Scene

Gay Identity at Work

Definitions of 'Work'.

Also, Reports and Discussion of Policy.

For more information of the GAY WORKERS NEWSLETTER, GAY WORKERS CAMPAIGN and THE CONFERENCE EITHER phone Nottm 76410 or 75985 or write to GWPC, c/o People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Rd., Nottingham.

This reprint of an article from BLACK FLAG (organ of the Anarchist Black Cross) is not a statement of 'If you don't hit it...it won't fall' policy. Someone asked for it to be included in this issue and after a discussion we thought "Why not?". If anyone wants to do something similar then come along and discuss it at the meeting.

C L O S E D S H O P

THE TUC IS DETERMINED to push the "closed shop" principle through. It has even got to the point of threatening "industrial disturbances" if the Lords manage to block that part of the trade union bill, and when the TUC gets to that point, principles (or something) really are involved. Though one need hardly say that rarely does the TUC stick to that point: it has a facility for avoiding confrontation when it comes to the crunch.

The principle of the closed shop is one that is essential to British Trade Unionism, not because of its strength but because of its weakness. It can fight on the political field to get the closed shop, and does not hazard anything industrially. Then when it has a closed shop in which members are legally bound to join the union or get out of the industry, it does not have to 'justify itself by works' at all. The member is bound to be in the union because the law says he has to be or, where it is a closed shop by agreement and not law, because his employer tells him he has to be. He cannot be critical of the leadership; he cannot wildcat or take much unofficial action because in such a case he faces expulsion from the union which also means not only the sack from his job, but the loss of his skill. Perhaps it means the loss of a chance to earn his living by working altogether.

Naturally, this gives greater power to the union and sometimes that power is on behalf of the worker. But the worker is totally subject to the TU boss.

It is a form of state socialism and inevitably consequence of the growth of state socialism among the trade unions. The conservative criticism is not frankly material selfish interest, but the hypocritical one of individual freedom, in which they do not believe but which is a good stick with which to beat the state socialist. Faced however with a socialism that does believe in individual freedom, they cry 'criminal'! - for they dearly want to curb the unofficial strikers and wildcatters by law with no 'nonsense' about individual freedom.

The closed shop is something that has grown out of the weakness of British socialism which uses its political arm to great effect but which has the ultimate effect of delivering the labour movement over into the hands of social democracy. In many countries not only is there no closed shop, but there are four or five rival trade unions fighting it out. In those countries the union has to earn its membership. People join not because they have to, but because it's worth their while; and where an anarcho-syndicalist union existed in pre-Franco Spain, they belonged, despite and during the intervals of dictatorship when the ~~political~~ socialist trade union took advantage of its political representation to strengthen itself. And they did so because there was greater value in the one than the other. It took genocide to stop them.

Perhaps it is too late in the day to expect that British workers will break away from the state socialist conditioning in which the closed shop is regarded as a triumph for labour bargaining?

Yet do they so regard it? It is more regarded as a fact of life, something inevitable as the wind or rain or the economic depression, all apparently regarded as acts of God. The demand comes from a limited circle, and the fact that the majority couldn't care less is precisely one of the reasons that the political minority want it; without the safeguard of the closed shop they would lose their members for few people today join a trade union willingly, for its own sake and not as a precondition of work.

The closed shop principle has presented any sense of loyalty or pride in a union. It is a public thing, no longer a 'union'. Perhaps it is too late in the day to make a principle of not joining. It is, however, not too late in the day for people engaged in the class struggle to think of further, voluntary organisations which it is not necessary to join - but which people do join nevertheless, because they get results. Works councils: based in the beginning on groups of militants: industry by industry. It is not a question of thousands of millions. A start can be made with five. Five ~~militants~~ militants, in each unit inside heavy industry, would equal if not surpass the strength of the trade union movement as at present, by agreement and occasionally by law, appointed.

* * * * *

I N F O R M A T I O N P A G E

THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION GROUP meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. at the Women's Centre, 26 Newcastle Chambers, Angel Row, Nottm. We try and have discussions every week. (Meetings for women only) For more info phone Newsletter Coll. 75985
NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN holds meetings every fortnight, phone 45689 (day) or 42808 (evenings). SEX DISCRIMINATION CAMPAIGN meetings at Women's Centre.
NURSERY CAMPAIGN for more information phone Margaret 865894. WRITE ON SISTERS (magazine of women's writing.) Contact 7.34 Vic Centre or phone 43081.
REFUGE FOR BATTERED WOMEN CAMPAIGN now has a hostel! Meetings on Mondays at 8.00 at the People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Rd., Nottingham
NALGAY can be contacted c/o Howard, 108 Foxhall Rd., Forest Fields, Nottingham
Gay Workers Campaign details c/o People's Centre.
LESBIAN GROUP meets every Monday details phone Char, Maggie, Helen 75985
GAY LIBERATION FRONT meets Wednesdays 75985

PUBLIC MEETING on THE CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW PROPOSAL 17th FEBRUARY at International Community Centre. More details inside or phone 602510

IF YOU DON'T HIT IT...IT WON'T FALL MEETING THURSDAY 12th February at 8.00 at 36 Kenilworth Terrace, Portland Rd., Canning Circus, Nottingham. Phone either 600337 or 602510 for more details. Discussion of policy etc.
If you won't something putting in, please phone up.

THIS ISSUE cost £1.50 to produce. Please send contributions.