

# Direct Action

IN THIS ISSUE

The Postal  
Dispute p2

Apartheid in Australia  
Westminster Council

The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism Nº 45 December/January 1987/8 25p

## Poll Tax:

If you live here...  
**WHOOPEE!**



or here...  
**TOUGH!**

# A Subsidy for **THE RICH**

See Report on  
Page 3

Paper of the Direct Action Movement - International Workers Association



# The Best Christmas Present!

On November 17th postal workers voted by a majority of 73,000 (55%) to 58,000 (45%) for industrial action to reduce the working week by 3 hours. Postal workers work the longest week of any industry - 43 hours - and there has been no reduction since 1965. Most workers have had a 40 hour week for decades and at a time when many look towards a 35 hour week we are only just beginning to take action for a 40 hour week.

Postal workers work long unsocial hours including compulsory Saturdays and deliveries have to be made in all weathers. The PO last year made a profit of £170 million and is the most profitable PO in the Western World. This is probably due to our lower pay and long hours - yet all the PO has offered is 1 hour less with all sorts of unreasonable strings attached such as loss of night allowance, reduction in overtime rates, and so on.

## CHOPPING BLOCK

Over recent months it has become obvious that postal workers are next in line for the chopping block. We are 1 of the few groups of organised workers not to be attacked and defeated by the Tories. Recently there have been over 100 wildcat strikes - mainly in London and south east England. The union, Union of Communication Workers (UCW), rarely backs strikes and has tried to sabotage recent ones by telling workers to get back to work while the bureaucrats stitch something up with management. Most strikes have been against the introduction of casual workers which undermines our wages and weakens our organisation against management. Many of the strikes have been successful and these offices are in a mood to fight anything management throws at them.

It appears management are slowly trying to attack work conditions, wages and union organisation. But the present dispute is over much more than just reducing the working week. It is over management's attempt to introduce a tougher regime and a wholesale attack on everything we

ly after the small majority for a strike. It'll probably prefer a campaign of one-day strikes, regional strikes, overtime bans or other token actions. It is obvious this won't. The Tories, who are clearly pulling the strings will only listen to all-out militant action. The recent civil servants' dispute shows this. Hopefully the token actions can escalate into an all out strike.

The last all-out strike in the PO, in Jan/Feb '71, lasted 7 weeks and was a complete disaster. It was run and lost by the union, was called at the wrong time of year and it received little solidarity



The 1971 Strike: We must learn from our mistakes.

have fought for and won over the decades. This is probably part of gearing the PO up for privatisation. If the fight hadn't come over reducing hours it would have come over something else. It is a dispute we must win! However the UCW is unlikely to call for an all out strike - especial-

from other workers. Many postal workers are reluctant to go on strike because of the memories of this.

Earlier this year a number of postal workers got together and formed the Communication Workers Group which puts out a regular bulletin -

Communication Worker. This has proved popular with postal workers and the circulation is gradually increasing with each issue. The CWG is a rank and file organisation promoting rank and file militancy. If we leave the running of this dispute to the UCW then it will fail. The CWG has been encouraging postal workers to take control of the strike out of the union's hands and into the rank and file's.

## ESCALATE

It is essential that we come out over Christmas as this is the best time to hit the PO. Letting the union drag negotiations into the new year will only lose the dispute. We must build effective mass pickets to maintain a solid strike that will escalate from the token actions advocated by the union. The strike must be controlled and organised by the rank and file through mass assemblies at each workplace and election of accountable strike committees. We must also get solidarity from other workers who may be used to help break the strike like railway workers. By by-passing union bureaucrats and going straight to rank and file workers this will more likely be achieved. Recently a number of firms have begun challenging PO's monopoly on parcel deliveries, most importantly TNT, whose workers have recently voted 2 to 1 for industrial action to increase wages, holidays and reduce hours. If TNT workers strike at the same time as postal workers we stand a better chance. We must picket out such groups of workers who are likely to break our strike.

With effective picketting, control of the strike by the

rank and file and solidarity from other workers we can win this dispute. It will be encouraging for all workers to reduce the working week and fight for better conditions. A successful strike is the best Xmas present any of us could get!

DAM Postal Workers

**THE SUNDAY TIMES** "news-paper" recently launched a vicious attack on post office workers. In a "news" story with much in common with its stable mate, the **Sun**, they accused postal workers of being lazy, deceitful and dishonest. It might be thought this "public spirited" gesture was only intended to build up public hostility in the run up to the postal workers' strike over Christmas but Murdoch has other fish to fry. TNT, the transport firm part-owned by him, and part-owned by the mafia, has launched a plan to develop its own postal service to compete with the post office. So TNT, famous for transporting Murdoch's papers in this country and heroin in the US, might soon be delivering our post - not if we have anything to do with it!



## Pay Cut Fiddle

WHEN IS A pay rise not a pay rise? Yes you guessed it: when it's a pay cut. Management of Yorkshire Rider Buses (West Yorks) recently offered bus workers a pay cut of between 11% and 14% - and then had the gall to call it a pay increase!

TGWU officials expected "a substantial pay increase on the hourly rate" as well as a reduction in sickness, holiday pay and pensions. When they threatened a series of 1-day strikes management responded by issuing misleading statements. The pay cut was in fact an increase (a clever statistical fiddle involving a £3000 lump sum helped them justify this). Bus workers have pointed out that management recently gave themselves a salary upgrade and company directors have got new Rover cars as their "old" Granadas "weren't good enough."

Angry workers took their grievances to the council's Passenger Transport Authority



but had little joy. Labour councillor, Michael Simmons, PTA chair, justified them cuts using private competition as an excuse. This is ridiculous as anyone in Leeds knows there simply isn't any appreciable competition from private bus firms. Talks were held right up until the first threatened strike (on November 13th) which was averted. But considering Leeds Labour council's anti-worker policies, how long will it be before bus workers need to take action again?

## GUILTY WITHOUT TRIAL!

RAILWAY GUARDS at Lime St, Liverpool, members of the NUR, are to ballot for industrial action. The proposed action is to take the form of one day strikes, boycott of work normally done by the 9 guards at the centre of the dispute, and refusal of all guards to issue tickets.

The dispute arose in October when several guards and ticket collectors were arrested for fraud after allegedly re-selling used tickets. At first those involved were suspended on full pay pending the trial result which could take up to 3 months. British Rail realised that not only would they be short of staff but also that it would cost a fortune to keep men and women on full pay to just sit at home. Previously BR has sacked individuals involved in court cases before the trial on the grounds that, in their opinion, they were guilty. This "right" was upheld by an industrial tribunal when the NUR fought the case of a

person who was sacked but later found not guilty. The tribunal stated it was only necessary for BR to feel a person was guilty "beyond reasonable doubt" at the time of sacking.

## HESITANT

In the Liverpool workers' case it is believed that because of the large number involved BR were hesitant to sack them on the spot. Instead they gave them 3 months notice of sacking, thus solving the staff shortage and pay problems. Of course this broke all national agreements and caused so much anger that all guards at Lime Street took an unofficial 24 hour strike and demanded a ballot for further action.

If the guards are to defeat this attack it's important they take control themselves. Already, elements in the union bureaucracy are arguing that an instruction to boycott work normally done at Lime Street shouldn't be sent

to other depots. They say it would be calling for secondary action without a ballot. It is important that guards fight this as management may take the hard line they took in the so-called driver-only dispute when Glasgow guards were sacked; and in a local dispute in Manchester where again guards threatened a 24 hour strike but management told them if it went ahead they'd be in breach of contract and would be sacked.

Guards at Lime Street must organise and take their case for support directly to workers at other depots. If they are threatened with the sack they must send out pickets to spread the strike. It's no good waiting for the NUR to do it on their behalf as the Glasgow guards did. As ordinary workers they themselves must control strike from the outset, seize the initiative and spread support as wide as possible. It's the only way to defeat an aggressive and over-confident management.



# FIGHT THE POLL TAX

Scottish libertarians, including Scottish DAM held a conference in Glasgow on November 14th to plan a response to the poll tax. The tax will be introduced in Scotland on April 1st, 1989, and in Wales in 1990. Since the conference the government has announced its introduction in England, also in 1990 - except for "high spending" councils, for example in London.

The morning session dealt with what the poll tax means for the working class. There will be 3 types - the personal poll tax, set by local councils, is the one most of us will pay; the standard poll tax for secondary homes will be lower than for first homes but only affects those rich enough to own 2nd homes; the collective poll tax is for homeless hostels and so on. Everyone over 18 must pay except prisoners, residents of old peoples' homes, the handicapped and long term hospital patients.

There will be an 80% rebate for pensioners and those on housing benefit and income supplement (IS replaces supplementary benefit on April 1st, 1988). The rebate will be part of housing benefit, leaving 20% to be paid out of income supplement. From April 1988 people receiving benefit in England and Wales, as well as Scotland, must pay 20% of rates and will get £1.87 extra a week based on the national average. The 20% poll tax rebate is also to be based on the national average so those in areas where the poll tax is higher will have to find the money elsewhere.

## FINES

There will be fines for not paying. For a 1st offence of not paying for 3 months it will be £50; for the 2nd it will be £200. Bailiffs will be sent to remove furniture from your home if you can't pay a fine - non-payment of fines means imprisonment. For further information on the poll tax, see DA 43.

In the question and answer session that followed several points were thrown up: The poll tax will give tax relief to industry. Firms will contribute to local costs but it will be collected nationally then re-distributed by central government. Parliament will set the rate leading to centralised control of local authority money. The greater part of local authority funds now comes from rates paid by industry. A 10-20% increase in local authority spending could mean an increase of up to 50% in the poll tax partly because money from industry won't increase. The aim is to make high spending authorities unpopular. Central government will be able to force authorities to stick to a minimum level. Local authorities will be seen to want to increase the poll tax and central government to favour low taxes.

Tory councils will need less money for services as they are already privatising many of them. The poll tax will force privatisation of local services as councils won't be able to raise the money to finance them. People will have to pay much more for these services as they'll be run for profit. This will lead in the long term to a reduction in the poll tax but an increase overall in how much you pay for services.

If you're working, unpaid poll tax can be deducted from your wage at source by court order. As yet there is no power to deduct from benefits but this is likely as the machinery exists now - eg de-

ductions for overdue electricity, rent payments, etc. If you don't register voluntarily your details can be gained from any existing files on you except police and social work files. Currently you can be fined for not being on the electoral register. Though no one has yet, they may start to do so from April 1988.

Estimates vary all the time but each district will have a different rate. It may be anywhere from £200 to £700 according to BBC News, Edin-

burgh and Glasgow will be between £300 and £400. The difference between the poll tax and other attacks on us is it affects everyone at once instead of divide and rule.

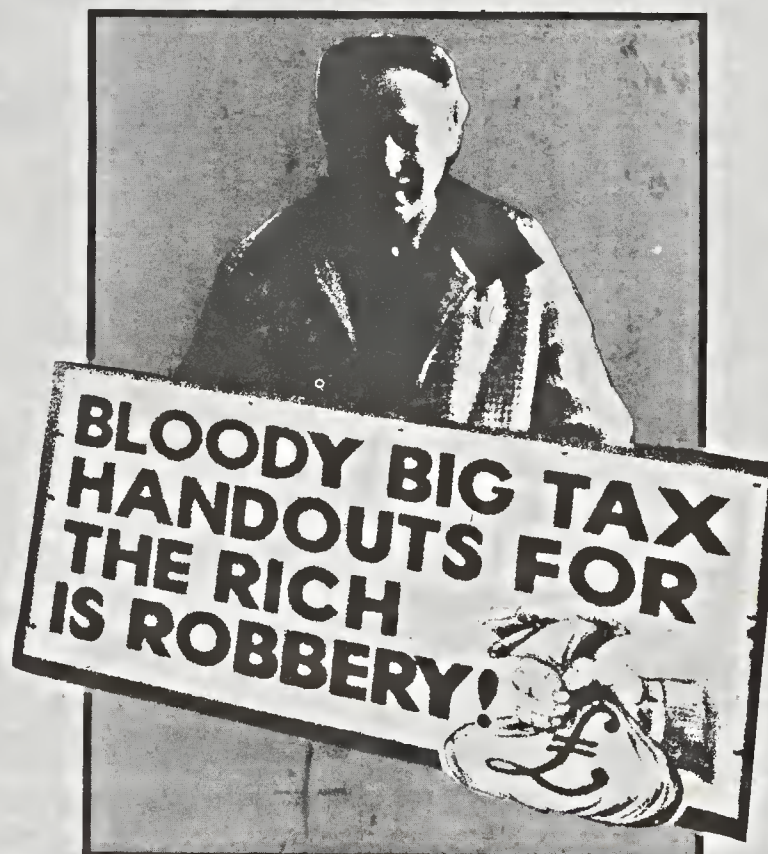
After discussion of these ideas the meeting felt that those there along with their contacts should take the initiative rather than staying on the edge of things. People favoured selecting a few areas to begin with, where a number of interested people live, or where there is already a strong local network of activity such as community newsletters, residents groups and so on. The plan would be

to canvass door to door to build up further interest and then call a public meeting in the area leading to the formation of a local anti-poll tax group. Such groups would then be used as a catalyst to form groups in other areas where contacts don't exist at present.

## COLLECTIVE REFUSAL

Alongside this it is proposed to run a publicity campaign aimed at encouraging collective refusal to pay the poll tax taking care not to lose this message in screeds of information. Although refusing to register and driving canvassers out, if done collectively would raise public feeling, it has to be pointed out that this will not avoid you being registered. As far as occupations go it was felt that these are useless without a groundswell of support having been built up beforehand through basic legwork. It is important to counter the SNP and Labour Party. To resist the poll tax the law will have to be broken and the more people that do this the easier fines and imprisonments can be resisted.

It is important that councillors' promises not to enforce fines and so on should not become a focus otherwise they will be seen as leaders of the campaign. Ordinary working class people must be encouraged to take their own actions. Councilors who refused to prosecute will be surcharged and, being interested in building their own cosy careers, there is no point in trying to "persuade" them. The need to link this campaign up with the interests of council workers who are fighting privatisation, rent de-registration and attacks on their own jobs and wages. Furthermore, those of us south of the border must watch and learn from the campaign in Scotland and start preparing now to oppose the poll tax's introduction here.



The rest of the day was spent in discussing ideas for opposing the introduction of the poll tax. There was a number of suggestions including simultaneous occupations of the regional collection

burgh and Glasgow will be between £300 and £400. The difference between the poll tax and other attacks on us is it affects everyone at once instead of divide and rule.

## STATE INJUSTICE

In DA 41 we described the brutal treatment of Martin Foran when he was in Long Lartin prison. He has since been transferred to Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight. In late October Martin threatened to go on hunger strike because, in Martin's own words: "One, I am innocent; two, about my illness; three, in protest at the governor withholding my letters and stopping leaflets about my case". However, his wife persuaded him to postpone his hunger strike.

Martin Foran has been imprisoned for several years for an armed robbery he insists he didn't do. He was sent down on the false testimony of a policeman uncorroborated by the victim of the robbery. The main flaws in the State's case are that the robbery was committed by three West Indian youths with Birmingham accents. Martin is a 44 year old white Irishman with a strong Irish accent, so he in no way fits the description.

The victim of the robbery, Frank Cloves of "The Trident" pub, said that Martin was not one of them, and even today complains about the three black youths who robbed him. Paul Addison, one of the youths, said in court: "What's the old man doing here?" referring to Martin. The statements of Paul Addison and the other burglar, Andrew Mackenzie, are both full of contradictions. Also, the police told the jury that Martin had previously done

ten years for kneecapping someone. He hadn't, yet this would have obviously influenced the jury's decision.

Since his imprisonment he has staged a rooftop protest and has "taken hostage" a screw to try and get medical attention (he had been refused this) due to serious health problems. He was eventually rushed to an external hospital where he had a colostomy but on return to prison he was faced with solitary confinement and beatings from the screws. This abuse by the screws has caused his colostomy to become severely infected with running sores across his stomach and the infection travelling into his leg. His health had deteriorated to the point where his life was in danger.

The prison governor is withholding letters to Martin



on the grounds that it would "threaten the good order" of his prison. However, despite this, letters of support should still be sent to him (Martin Foran, C51796) at Parkhurst. Letters of protest should be sent to:

The Governor,  
H.M. Prison Parkhurst,  
Newport,  
Isle of Wight,  
PO30 5NX.

and also to:

Home Office Prison Dept.,  
Cleveland House,  
Page St.,  
London SW1.  
(Phone: 01-211-3000)

Members of the Direct Action Movement in London will be picketting the Home Office and comrades elsewhere are urged to organise protest actions including contacting the media. Bristol DAM are producing a pamphlet on the Martin Foran case which will include information from legal documents concerning his frame-up by West Midlands Police.

The demands we wish to stress are that Martin gets immediate medical treatment and that there should be a retrial. Martin's life is at risk so we can't just sit back - we must act!



# For How Much Longer...?

On Sunday 8th November a bomb exploded at the Remembrance Day service in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, killing eleven people. Was it an accident, a product of IRA incompetence, or set off by British electronic counter measures? We will probably never know. It was, however, not an IRA attack on a civilian target. As long as the war goes on in the 6 counties anti-imperialists will be forced to point out that it is a war, against a barrage of state propaganda, and in wars there are tragedies. The only solution is to bring about peace.

The republican movement admitted that IRA volunteers planted the bomb, but stated that they had not detonated it. They expressed their deep regret, and left it at that. Coverage in An Phoblacht/Republican News was confined to these statements and comment on coverage in the British press: "In the present climate nothing we can say in explanation can be given the attention which the truth deserves, nor will it compensate the feelings of the injured or bereaved".

Coverage in the British press was in marked contrast for, as the Daily Telegraph remarked the day after, if they can pin the blame on the IRA it "...might even remove Irish objections to an extradition treaty..." Having accused republicans of hypocrisy in expressing regret, Britain's "free" press indulged in an orgy of gloating and hysteria, shamelessly exploiting the human tragedy to sell papers and stir up hat-

red. By such methods has the British press always supported imperialism and fostered ignorance and prejudice.

## FAILURE

Once again the "cutting edge" of armed struggle has been shown to cut both ways. The Provisional IRA grew from the need for defence of anti-unionist areas and resistance to British and Orange state repression. However, although not desperate and on their last legs as Britain's propaganda machine has trumpeted for 18 years, the republicans have been forced to rely too much on armed struggle because of a failure to successfully develop any other strategy. This has meant a very high level of activity with casualties to match and, inevitably, Enniskillen.

In 1921 Britain was kicked out of the 26 of Ireland's 32 counties by the IRA's very successful guerilla campaign. Today is different - the armed struggle is only really



The aftermath of Enniskillen

relevant to northern anti-unionists and has acceptance, but limited support, among them. For an all-Ireland solution it is necessary to involve and mobilise the workers of the 26 counties. Sinn Féin has rejected a radical working class-based anti-imperialist movement relevant to all the workers of Ireland in favour of a broad populist nationalism. While armed resistance is an inevitable result of British occupation it offers no solutions, leaving it up to the British anti-imperialists to build pressure for British withdrawal.

Enniskillen is only the

latest of countless tragedies to shatter lives since 1969, and throughout the history of British imperialism worldwide. Ultimate responsibility for it lies with Britain. The war in Ireland is a product of repression, discrimination, the denial of basic human rights, and of naked violence. The guarantor of the Orange statelet of Northern Ireland was Britain - since direct rule repression and sectarianism have only been strengthened by Britain. The only way to reach a solution is if Britain withdraws politically and militarily. No more Enniskillens - troops out now!

## Another in the Teeth for Anderton

JAMES ANDERTON, chief constable of Greater Manchester Police, and the Labour Manchester City Council connived to ban the annual Manchester Martyrs march held on Sunday November 22nd for the first time in its 120 year history. However, about 200 people, including DAM members met beforehand and arrived in a convoy of vans at the assembly point. We outnumbered the police and others arrived to make a total of between 300 and 400.

About 50 noisy fascists and loyalists made fools of themselves across the road, shouting their pathetic slogans. Although we didn't march we held a rally which was lived up by the H-Block Republican Flute Band. The police moved in with the stated intention of arresting the band but were so outnumbered that they withdrew. The rally dispersed in good order after about 2 hours with no arrests reported.

This is the first major event to be banned since the Public Order Act was passed in January, so the fact that it went ahead must be seen as a success. Tough luck Anderton!

## More Problems For Fascists

The National Fronts' Remembrance Day march in London was banned for the first time this year. The 2 Fronts were scheduled to march within 15 minutes of each other but could not agree who should march first. Martin Wingfield and 10 others were arrested, and the rest were swamped by riot police and escorted out of the area. This is no real victory against fascism but if the ban continues it will complete a process which has been initiated by the fascists themselves.

Remembrance Day the last 2 years has seen big demonstrations by nationalists under the NF banner. This year only 5-600 turned up (more than capable of trashing the opposition). The development of the NF since the 1979 defection to the Tories of the middle class racists who were its backbone in the '70's has been a search for direction. The direction taken has been to turn the NF membership into "political soldiers". The split which has produced 2 groups espousing this new creed and both now calling themselves the National Front seems to be over interpretations. It's difficult to establish the degree to which the split has divided followers of the factions but Searchlight's theory that it's all a con trick is too pat. The 2 leaderships distrust and hate each other so much to pull off such a conspiracy.

The division seems to be over whether the "political soldiers" are to be upwardly-mobile hooligans, or Italian-

style terrorists. In a British context racial terrorism and organised international football violence substantially overlap, which makes the split much less bitter for many nazis. What it's definitely done is alienate the NF from its previous base of



support amongst white working class youth. Today's NF-er is committed to politics, not merely to racism. Nazi football gangs can afford the time off work and the cost to travel abroad and have a fanaticism and desire to inflict serious injuries with knives and ammonia sprays. This is not the working class hooliganism of the past, it is a creed for those in well paid jobs who are upwardly mobile. It is to such a hungry class that the 3rd Position - rejection of the established working class and organised labour - appeals, not to workers. Remembrance Day was one of the last links the NF had with a mass base.

After the Anti-Fascist Action march a group made up of largely working class supporters of AFA (chiefly Red Action), DAM members, other anarchists and squatters returned to Trafalgar Square, anticipating fascist attacks on the Non-Stop Picket at South Africa House. The opposition turned out to be the Chelsea football firm plus small skinhead groups. One of the latter, believing his own propaganda that anti-racists are all middle class, mistook the anti-fascists for his own side, and paid for the mistake! A DAM member narrowly escaped serious injury when a fascist sprayed ammonia in his face. The anti-fascists took the initiative and dispersed groups of fascists until dusk. No real victory can

## Lest We Forget

On Remembrance Day in central London anti-fascists marched to the Cenotaph and laid a wreath to the victims of racism and fascism. The irony of laying such a wreath on a memorial to the casualties of Britain's imperialist wars, from 1914-18 to the Malvinas/Falklands and Ireland, is staggering. Although DAM members marched we did so to express our uncompromising opposition to fascism, and to strengthen the militant anti-fascists upon whom defence of the march would have fallen in the event of attack.

It's impossible to separate fascism from capitalism, racism from imperialism. That the 1939-45 war was fought by 2 blocs of states, one espousing fascist and militarist ideologies, is incidental. Are Britain's treatment of German Jewish refugees and Italian anti-fascists as "enemy aliens"; France's return to Indo-China to re-establish control after the Japanese surrender; the aid to Franco spearheaded by the Midland Bank and the owners of Texaco forgotten? Has no one read the eye-witness accounts of fascism in the British army and the officially encouraged racism by British troops in India during WW2 in Pete

be claimed but it serves to show that real opposition to fascism comes not from trendy anti-racists, or from "revolutionary" left parties but from working class people committed to social change. That opposition needs to be extended and strengthened.

Grafton's "You! You! And You!"? And what of the well-documented fascist sympathies of British troops in Ireland whose dead, in their defence of the sectarian statelet are commemorated at the Cenotaph?

Forgotten also are Spanish workers who fought capitalism in fascist guise with social revolution. The very same workers who were the core of the active French resistance before 1944 returned to Spain to fight and organise for 30 years against Franco and reform their CNT-AIT. Anarchist partisans were also prominent in the anti-fascist resistance in Northern Italy after the Allied invasion. The Polish syndicalist organisations fought in their own resistance not just against fascism but for our class. They were crushed and written out of history by Soviet imperialism but their heritage lives on in the rank and file militants of underground Solidarnosc. The social demo-



# CAPITALISM IS MURDER

Jim Merry, a housing activist on Woodberry Down estate in North London, died at the end of October. He'd been investigating fellow tenants' fears about chemicals given out and used by Hackney council. His symptoms were those of chemical poisoning - a severe rash causing skin to flake off and difficulty in breathing. Although the council denies the connection with chemicals used by them, dizziness, nausea and headaches have been common complaints on the estate.

The chemicals are PCP, TBTO and Lindane, used to treat timber and sold by Rentokil. Fourteen members of UCATT used them in Wales and the survivors are now engaged in a High Court action to get redress from their employers for deaths and serious injuries. Two men died from stomach cancer, 1 has a withered leg and 8 others have severe

health problems as a result of using the chemicals, which are banned or severely restricted in the USA, Sweden and Japan.

The London Hazards Centre has a dossier on cases where timber treatments - mainly fungicides, have caused irreparable damage to health. The latest is that of Sue Mathis

and her 2 sons, also on Woodberry Down estate. The boys have suffered from rashes and allergies. Sue was given an aerosol, marked "absolutely safe, non-toxic, non-corrosive, non-staining, with a strong clinical smell". It contained halophen, which is approved for use only by professional personnel under rigorous safety conditions. It mustn't be sold to or used by the public and puts children at high risk of developing cancer. The council says it is investigating the handing out of the chemical which probably means more harassment of workers in the housing department.

## DIRECT ACTION

Jim Merry was involved in exposing this and in squatting empty flats a few years ago to provide homes for the families in bed & breakfast hotels around Finsbury Park. He believed in direct action methods such as this and the occupation of a housing district office by tenants to get working class people what we need from the bureaucrats. The council hated him, calling him a "disruptive anarchist". As part of re-habilitating the estate all tiles were removed and replaced by new ones by a hire contractor. The old tiles were so sound that a huge profit was made by selling them to yuppies, which Jim exposed. Due to bureaucracy, replacement of heating in some flats last year got as far as taking out the old system, then stopped. Tenants faced last winter without heating and are liable to face another. Since many are elderly this is even more criminal.

Hackney is involved in a lot of battles with squatters. Council meetings have been disrupted by squatters and tenants occupying the council chamber and holding their own meetings - real democracy! They claim they must evict squatters to find homes for homeless families. But this means evicted prop-

erties lying empty while they are supposed to be done up, something the council cannot afford (because they waste so much money on evictions and boarding up empty property). Only 1200 of the 4000 empty properties are squatted, making the evictions even more pointless.

There are far more homeless than empty properties so the housing problem cannot be

trol by those who live in it. State control over housing means supporting bureaucrats, profits for private contractors and corruption. It also means no accountability leaving abuses such as the Woodberry Down chemical poisonings to happen. Environmental health departments are controlled by councils and the Health and Safety Executive by central government. These provide, at best, information and advice. At work, only strong workplace organisation and experienced union safety reps with access to relevant information and resources can maintain a good safety level.

It is because such things can only be come through strong, independent workplace organisation that anarcho-syndicalism is vital. It is precisely such organisation that bureaucratic unions are abandoning in their endless search for industrial peace and optimum membership figures. Pro-Labour sympathies also undermine the independence of unions. In Hackney, housing workers opposed to evictions have no union forum for that opposition due to manipulation by right wingers and bolsheviks alike, all of whom believe in state control and want a passive working class that conforms to their distorted view of us.

Although revolution is the prerequisite of lasting, secure benefits for our class, we cannot ignore the thousands of working class lives ended or wrecked each year in Britain by the capitalists' and state class' irresponsibility. We despise those who believe in politicking and in spontaneous revolution by an idealised "working class" and who will not get their hands dirty with "reforms". What we need is rank and file organisation capable of taking independent action, committed to workers' control of our own lives, which challenges union bureaucracy and state control, not merely opposes them. Join us so we can fight effectively.



Danny And Trevor Mathis

cratic myth of popular frontism and state war against fascism must be destroyed.

As our comrade, CNT metal worker, Buenaventura Durruti said in 1936: "No government in the world fights fascism to the death...the present government might yet need these rebellious forces (the nationalists) to crush the workers' movement...We syndicalists, we are fighting for the revolution...We are setting an example to the German and Italian working class how to deal with fascism." We see

the destruction of fascism in the destruction of centralised power, capitalism and the state. We need to reclaim our history, the role of independent workers' movements committed to direct action and liberation through social revolution in world history. That history is part of our identity and culture. It vindicates the ideas and principles - giving them an added strength - with which we, as a class, must organise for social revolution to liberate ourselves. Long live anarchy! No war but the class war!



British soldiers' fascist tendencies - Magazine St Barracks, Derry

## "The Killing Floor"

Film by Bill Duke, US, 1984 - 115 minutes

THE KILLING FLOOR is a film that has recently been showing in independent cinemas in London. The film is too good and deals with so many important issues that it would be a pity for any DAM member or class struggle anarchist to miss seeing if they have the chance.

Set before World War 2 it tells the story of a black American from the south who comes up north and finds work in the meat packing houses of Chicago.

Because of the union's inability to gain a contract with slaughter house owners; exploitation and bad working conditions ensured a bitterly divided workforce. The film is remarkable in that it shows the difficulty of union organising and how the bosses use one section of workers against another either by



means of race, nationality and so on. The same divide and rule goes on today.

Watch out for the credits at the end; they show how the union leaders went off and became more entrenched in the status quo and the rank and file, the real heroes, disappeared after these incidents. Great film! Don't miss it!

THE DAILY STAR, the London Evening Standard, The Sun, The Daily Mirror and Today all ran stories on the fact that Tom Watt (Eastenders' "Lofty") was interviewed in October's DA. All 5 tabloids distorted what Tom Watt actually said. These days, of course, most people expect distortions and lies from Fleet Street journalists but the Sun has a particular grudge against Tom because he regularly picketed them during the Wapping dispute.

PAUL BEAUMONT serving a 4 month sentence for his anti-fascist activities at Rudgate Prison, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, would welcome messages of support and solidarity.





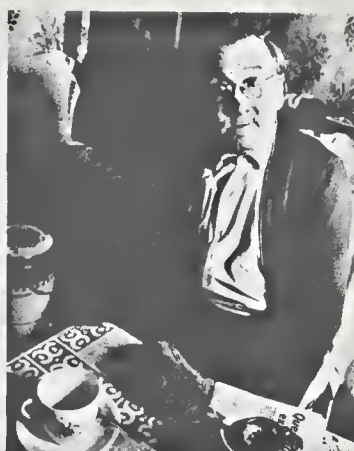
# Capitalism's Scrapheap

Winter: the season of snow and Santa Claus, when Bing Crosby breaks the broadcasting monopoly laws and Noel Edmonds spoils your appetite or turns your hangover into a major crisis. It's the season when the queen shows us family snaps and expresses concern about poverty and the News At Ten tries to make us feel guilty about famine in Africa as if we were in some way responsible.

What they forget to mention is the annual winter-time tragedy that hits our own land. In the winter of 1985-6 some 173,000 old age pensioners died. Most sweated long hours in munitions factories on low wages; watched their brothers, husbands and friends fight and die in capitalist wars; and gave their best years rotting in some factory. The price for the sacrifice many gave (in our eyes unwisely) almost 50 years ago is now a cold and

senseless death.

There's no starker indictment of capitalism's moral and economic bankruptcy than the unnecessary deaths of hundreds and thousands of people who have spent their lives filling the pockets of the rich and idle. The logic of capitalism is that if you are unprofitable - be you young, unemployed or retired - then you're not worth feeding. And as capitalism sees labour as just another factor



Old people are facing hypothermia again this winter

in the productive chain then people too, once they cease to be profitable can go the way of outdated machinery. The capitalists, through the

divide and rule tactic, have succeeded to some extent in making us accept the problem of old age as something separate from the other problems affecting the working class. This must be combatted. The old don't die because they're old but because the necessities of life - warmth, food, shelter - are kept from them by the state, and because they are working class and unprofitable - a fatal mix.

The problem is one that is indivisible from those affecting the working class as a whole - that is, we're all denied access to, and control of, the technology that would ensure real peace and prosperity for all. Only workers' control of society can ensure that. The need for united action in pursuit of that free socialist society will become all the more pressing as Britain's decline continues to accelerate.

## Apartheid in Australia

For native people the 1988 White Australian Bicentenary is the most salt the state can find to pour into their 200 year old wounds of oppression and near genocide. Two hundred years ago the British state terrorised the tribal people of the world besides the working class of England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales. As jails overflowed "transportation" to Australia and America to dump convicts was used. For "crimes" like poaching and forming unions the poor were sent in chains to the new colonies. The American Revolution ended the transportation there, though not slavery for another 50 years. Shipments to Australia continued for decades.

The land in Australia was taken by force - poison was put into water holes, alcohol and flour. Natives were hunted like foxes by red-coated, horse-mounted thugs. As many as 100 at a time were rounded up and put in cattle corrals to receive "rations" - in reality murdered in cold blood! Repression, deprivation, rape torture and castration were widespread. Testicle bags became tobacco pouches for the "settlers". By 1869, in Tasmania, south of the mainland, only 1 tribal woman - Truganini - was left alive from an original 200 tribes. Islanders from off the north east (Queensland) coast were kidnapped into slavery for farmers and the sugar cane industry as there weren't enough convicts and Aboriginal locals for the bosses' expanding empires. Unlike other former British colonies like Canada, USA and New Zealand, Australia has never legally recognised that the indigenous people had prior ownership of the land.

### APARTHEID

White Australians learn little if any of this history as the only publicised version was written by the colonising "victors". There were many decades of resistance, guerrilla combat in places, fighting down to the last member of the tribe. Just as religion sanctified slavery and transportation so it ignored or blessed the pogroms against black people in Australia. Children were taken by force from parents and extended tribal families and

beaten into the Christian/private property value system. They grew up under religious tyrants on "missions" and then became servants or unwaged slaves on farms.



Land not suited to British style farms became "reserves" but such fenced in land often had mineral wealth - state evictions for mining companies continue today. The South African "pass laws" were modelled on those in Australia to keep Aboriginal people on reserves. You were only able to leave a reserve with a pass from its white director (often a religious and racist

dictator). Being caught without a pass, for example in a town, meant a flogging, days in a cell and then being thrown back on the reserve for further punishment. You were denied freedom of movement and speech, decent education, housing, work, proper sanitation and health care. You couldn't even marry whom you wanted to!

Australia's labour movement was always racist. The only exception being the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. They welcomed any enemy of the state and bosses - be they black, Asian or female - in contrast to the authoritarian bureaucratic unions. Alas the IWW was smashed and criminal-

ised, its militants harassed and jailed in the patriotic slaughterhouse of World War One. Despite the officials some workers supported black struggles but they were exceptional. The black workers themselves took on the bosses through individual sabotage and collective acts of resistance.

The British Vestey land-

owning empire which sells its meat through Dewhurst butchers in British high streets today still employs black workers. After a long bitter strike in the 1960's these station (farm) workers won wages and amenities such as



housing, toilets, clothing, food and an end to child labour, compulsory prostitution of women and the poverty that trapped them to the bosses.

Eighteen year old Eddie West was the 15th young black to die in police custody this year. There are under 500,000 Aborigines in Australia's 16 million population yet the jails hold many more than that ratio. Besides deaths in custody there are many suicides, deaths caused by alcohol and drugs, road deaths, murders in the home, a high infant mortality rate and lower life expectancy. Black Australians are much more likely than any others to be sick, unemployed, uneducated, poor, imprisoned or dead. The national Labour government wants to defuse protests over deaths in custody and keep up the good image of the Bicentennial by holding a Royal Commission inquiry and promising a new deal, a treaty. Most people think this is a whitewash. No real change has ever come "from above", only through struggle. Previous broken promises remain that.

### STRUGGLE CONTINUES

The Aboriginal "industry" in government departments and Aboriginal professionals, university graduates, artists, sports heroes, political and religious leaders are a comfortable minority while the vast majority are devastated. The present wave of activists fight for land rights, economic independence and to improve living conditions. The

## Underhand Expulsions

FOR SOME WEEKS Moroccan miners have been picketting the north Pas-de-Calais coalfields in France. They form 60% of the workforce and are fighting for their rights and livelihoods. The miners have mobilised over the government's "Pache" plan which seeks to axe 4000 miners' jobs. As well as enforcing redundancies and encouraging early retirement it offers a "bonus" of 130,000 francs (£1300) to "return to the country of origin". This constitutes an underhand expulsion of the immigrant workforce. Aware that the "bonus" won't be sufficient to survive in Morocco - what with finding a job, housing and so on; aware that leaving the National Coalfield means losing their medical and social security cover; aware of all this, more than 400 miners met at the Douai coalfield to demonstrate for the right to work in their industry. Since then the pickets have spread.

IN EARLY NOVEMBER fire-fighters in Madrid filled up one of the main plazas with foam in a dispute over pay and conditions. Good luck to them and to hell with the traffic jams!

Internal system in the communities is collective ownership but when dealing with the outside capitalist world it is as registered enterprises. Examples are the Aboriginal Legal Services, and Aboriginal Medical Services Co-operative. Tribally owned and co-operatively run farms and other services are emerging as have regional Land Councils federating groups to push for land ownership and the National Aboriginal and Islanders Health Organisation. Youths have had to physically defend their communities from racist attacks and police harassment.

Having survived near-genocide, then apartheid, then assimilation (cultural genocide) the present Aboriginal people are turning to self management and real control of their own struggle. Politicians, religious parasites, racists and liberals, they've seen them all. They are no longer isolated with national and international understanding of their situation and desire for social liberty and justice. In the USA that bicentenary was a national day of mourning for American Indians: "It was like having a party and the people who provided the presents were not even invited...still in nearly 500 years we have brought the white man a long way from a futile search for mythical cities of gold and fountains of youth to the simple recognition that land is essential for human existence!" (Bill Means of the American Indian movement).



# Divide and Rule-

## NEW YORK'S "DISAPPEARING" WORKING CLASS

Every time I return to New York I'm struck by the extent to which whole neighbourhoods have been cleared of their inhabitants and replaced by newcomers. The newcomers are rarely native to New York, are usually white (although Harlem is being taken over by the black middle class) and are always wealthy. "Yuppification" has reached an extent which makes the same process in London seem minimal.

Where do all the people go? They literally seem to disappear. The neighbourhood I was brought up in was largely black and Latino, a working class community with its laundromats, candy stores and Mom and Pop corner markets. Now, wherever you look there are bistros, novelty shops and designer sweatshirt stores. As Mayor Koch said several years ago soon you'll need to make \$80,000 a year minimum to live in New York City. The working class has been pushed out of Manhattan and into outlying areas.

### HOMELESSNESS

In the process most people find themselves homeless. The Coalition For The Homeless estimates that 60,000-80,000 are homeless in New York (not including the thousands who squat, double up in apartments or sleep in shifts). Of these 35-40% are homeless due to job loss; 33% are Vietnam veterans; 68% are black; 27% are Hispanic and 22% of homeless youths are from foster homes. These figures comprise a head-count of those in private, city and state shelters added to an estimate of those who sleep rough, a number almost impossible to calculate. No one knows how many sleep in subways, foyers, alleys or parks or in cardboard boxes on the street. Also, you must add a percentage of those who are in jail due to vagrancy or other "crimes" caused by homelessness. Finally there are thousands of people in psychiatric homes labelled "mentally incompetent" due to their homeless status. What then is the final figure? - 150,000?, 200,000? - in New York City alone.

Living in a shelter is no free ride as the self-appointed self-satisfied "experts" on the homeless crisis would have us believe. In September I visited a men's shelter in the South Bronx. The men told me it was like jail. They have to go through a metal detector on entering the building and are subject to a long list of rules enforced, often arbitrarily, by the guards. Anyone caught actively organising for better conditions is beaten up and moved to another shelter. Be-

### DIGNITY

At the shelter I went to a meeting on squatting. The men wanted me to tell them about squatting in Britain. For them and for others I spoke to squatting seemed the only alternative to the regimentation and wage-slavery of the shelters. But squatting in New York is far more difficult than here. Getting into a building means sledge hammering the bricks blocking windows and door. Squatting means building floor boards, internal electricity or heating and plumbing consists of a series of buckets and a stand-pipe on the street. With temperatures below freezing for several months, the constant threat of arson, and harassment by junkies, squatters face a very difficult life. However the men unanimously agreed nothing could be worse than the shelters,

live in other parts of the state despite an estimated 100,000 empties owned by the city. In the early 1980's mayor Koch okayed huge tax abatements for developers to clear houses of residents and turn these suddenly desirable properties into yuppie homes. Many people were sent to the suburbs via "Mobility Plans", a national government plan to clear inner cities of "undesirables". Mobility plans are part of the ominous "spatial de-concentration" programme, dating back to the aftermath of the riots in the late '60's when the ruling class began to worry about the strength of inner city populations. Spatial de-concentration was formulated by key businessmen, politicians and military strategists who know strength lies in numbers and who never want to see "no-go" areas for state forces in the cities. People received cash

the racism of some communities. Like London, New York has recently seen a vicious wave of race attacks, some perpetrated by youths, some by police. Last October an elderly black woman was shot by police when she resisted eviction from her home in the Bronx. Her killer was acquitted. Last December a gang of white youths chased a black man on to a highway in Queens where they ran him over and killed him. In September 3 black youths were attacked in Brooklyn by 20 whites brandishing baseball bats.

### RICH PLAYGROUND

Clearly the American government knows how racism divides the working class and how it thrives in an atmosphere of housing shortages and unemployment. Local government in New York City is ruthlessly taking people's homes from under them paving the way for the city to become a playground solely for the rich and workers commute to the outskirts to fight amongst themselves for jobs and housing. When the workers become unmanageable or their numbers too large they are shipped off to other parts of the country as under the "mobility plans" of "spatial de-concentration".

The British government has also learned these lessons. Yuppification is no less a threat here than in the US; and racism is as handy a tool to our rulers as to any others. I have yet to hear of "spatial de-concentration" in this country, but as one government tends to learn the lessons of others it wouldn't be surprising if detention centres were soon to be geared toward a similar programme. If the governments of this world can learn from one another then surely the working class can share its own experiences across national boundaries and unite to fight its common enemy.



sides, occupants of shelters receive no welfare. The state assumes that as bed and board are provided no one could have further needs. Instead, you must work for your "pocket money". Work Experience Programs (WEP) are compulsory and you can be thrown out if you refuse to accept this form of slavery. On a WEP you work 20 hours a week (mainly cleaning subways and public toilets) and receives \$12.50 (roughly £8). And that's it.

and by squatting not only would they get their welfare payments but also regain some of the dignity that comes with making your own life.

I earlier mentioned the apparent disappearance of New York City's working class. Shelters, jails, mental institutions and the street are only some of the places the homeless find themselves in. Thousands of people have been bribed to leave the city and

grants and subsidies to leave their homes and then spread out through the suburbs.

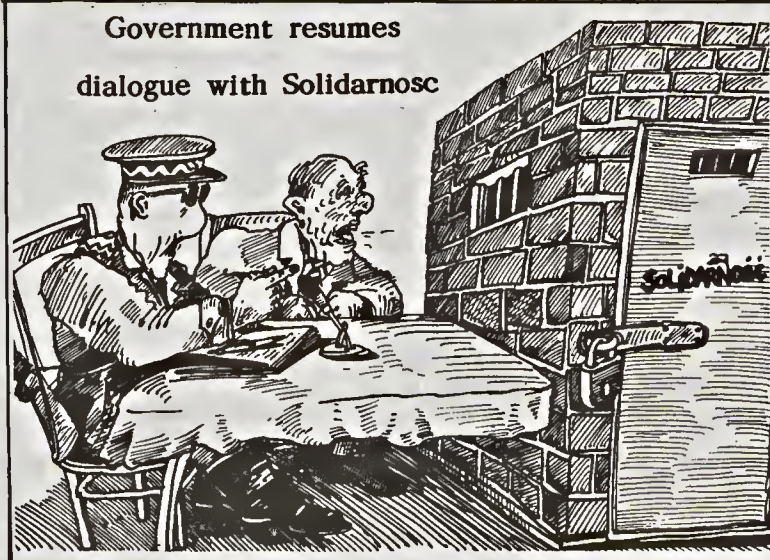
Planners counted on racism to divide newcomers (mainly black) from their new neighbours (mainly white). Neighbourhoods became divided by race, not by class, and the possibility of united dissatisfaction with government policies has been lost for the time being. Tensions over homes and jobs has fuelled

## TIES STRENGTHENED

FOLLOWING ON FROM DA 44 when we interviewed Arne Borg of Solitaritet Norge-Polen co-operation between Polish & Norwegian workers has taken a step further. "Oslo Transport Workers Federation and NSZZ "Solidarnosc" of the Commercial Seaport of Gdansk... recognising the natural and inalienable right of employees to organise independently of the state authority and the employers' trade unions, resolve to enter into close co-operation in all spheres of union activity" is the preamble to a recent agreement signed by the unions. This co-operation includes:

1. Contacts between members of the 2 unions and their families.
2. Reciprocal information on:
  - a) living conditions of union members and their families;
  - b) cargo-handling techniques,

### Government resumes dialogue with Solidarnosc



- work safety, labour laws and regulations governing ...ports and shipping;
- c) all matters relevant to the functioning of trade unions;

- d) hazards to the natural environment.
3. Exchange of experience on dealing with all matters listed in point 2.
- 4a) undertaking joint action

- in cases of union liberties or human rights violation in Poland or Norway.
- b) undertaking joint action in cases union liberties or human rights violations in other countries, subject to prior co-ordination.
5. undertaking joint action on cases of serious hazards to the natural environment.
6. until the authorities of the Polish People's Republic withdraw the ban on the activity of NSZZ "Solidarnosc", Oslo Transportarbejdere forbund binds itself to undertake protest and publicity campaigns and other appropriate actions to ensure moral and material support for the activists of the NSZZ "Solidarnosc" of... Gdansk and other NSZZ "Solidarnosc" activists.

7. Information on the activities of the 2 unions shall be published in union bulletins, and in case of repression, in any other available and effective manner.

This forging of links between working class people in western and eastern Europe is an important initiative. With the recent increases in food prices and the continuing repression of the working class it is essential that when the class war erupts again in Poland (or elsewhere in Eastern Europe) we in the west are in a position to offer our solidarity. Internationalism is a basic principle for anarcho-syndicalists as the working class everywhere has more or less the same struggle to fight to gain control of our own lives and environments.



# NO PROGRESS

"Solidarity" Conference - Leeds, November 7-8th, 1987.

The conference saw a turn out of some 70-100 delegates and must be seen as a disappointment for the organisers who had (according to reports) originally expected in the region of 500. Both Peter Heathfield and Dennis Skinner - who were invited and programmed to speak - failed to attend so the opening speeches were by 4 rank and file trade unionists. The first speaker was Tony Richardson who spoke of the Oxford Support Group's work, firstly in the steel workers' strike and then during the miners' and print workers' strikes.

Mike Grindley, a trade unionist at GCHQ Cheltenham, was the only speaker from any current dispute. He gave a graphic account of the conditions faced by the remaining 26 trade unionists out of a workforce of 7000. They don't get various allowances given to other workers which amount to between £800 and £2000 a year for each of them. Also those who originally accepted government compensation for leaving the union have been fined £1296 each. The government has resorted to desperation tactics in trying to reduce the number of trade unionists still at GCHQ. Recently, a 26 year old member was offered early retirement and there has been a new threat of dismissals.

The third speaker was John Lang, a sacked print worker from Fleet St/Wapping, explained he had only been asked to speak by the organisers as he arrived to register. He told how he and other sacked print workers were extremely critical of the union leaders' boycott campaign, as active rank and file union members (who the campaign was largely aimed at) were not likely to buy such anti-working class papers as the Sun and the Times. He also told the conference that after the Wapping dispute he personally had found employment reasonably quickly and was encouraged by SOGAT to actively promote the union at his new firm. But after two and a half months he was sacked for

union activities and received no support from SOGAT.

Ray Buckley, chair of the NUR shop stewards' committee at Coalville, Leicestershire, was the final speaker. He spoke of their experiences in a 49 week dispute during, and resulting directly from, the miners' strike and the refusal by NUR members at Coal-

ville. This contrasted directly with support received from rank and file trade unionists throughout Britain and from abroad. This, he said, left him and others at Coalville feeling a great personal debt to other rank and file trade unionists in struggle.

During the afternoon series of workshops there seemed



little enthusiasm among delegates and the average number attending workshops was about 10/15. This was largely due to the nature and topics of workshops which failed to

cover any aspect of forming a national organisation of support groups nor the relationship between those groups. Although the conference is unlikely to form any lasting national organisation of support groups the need for such an organisation among rank and file unionists remains.

A move by existing support groups to federate nationally along with rank and file groups was already begun earlier this year in Manchester when a larger conference was held. This decided to form a support network with regular national delegate meetings while each group will remain autonomous and all political groups prohibited from applying. Genuine attempts of rank and file activists to increase solidarity and mutual aid amongst workers deserve our support. One of the principal obstacles workers on strike face is the vertical nature of British unions which allows the bureaucracy to control and strangle grass roots initiatives. Regaining the day to day running of union work remains one of the fundamental goals for rank and file activists essential in improving conditions for working class people.

## ters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Let

Dear Comrades,

The letter in issue 43 of Direct Action entitled "Fascism At Work" makes a serious error in confusing the various strands of authoritarian communism with fascism. Stalin's Russia bore many resemblances to Nazi Germany, both in terms of the totalitarian terror which was exercised and the cult of the leader, and in terms of the ideology that women were baby machines whilst men were war machines whose honour it was to die for "the fatherland".

However, Stalin's Russia was the result of a combination of the vanguardist approach of the Bolsheviks and the isolation of the Russian Revolution. The Leninist parties of today make the same tactical and theoretical mistakes which the Bolsheviks made, and yet Bolshevism is an entirely different phenomenon to fascism.

Fascism and Nazism arose in Italy and Germany as the last desperate response of a ruling class who saw capitalism on the verge of collapse. Fascism provided the capitalists with the tools they needed to save themselves from the crisis i.e. an iron heel to smash the working class and a drive towards war which would regenerate the economy.

Organisations like the NF make use of the ideology and tactics of fascism, but these are entirely different to those of the Bolshevik left, whose stated aim is working class power, not white power and a strong nation state.

Authoritarianism is something which transcends the boundaries of most political ideologies other than anarchism; it is not therefore, synonymous with fascism.

The comrade was right to object to reactionary graffiti being allowed to remain in his workplace. But as far as Bolshevism is concerned, it is the job of anarchists to provide a clear analysis of why it is a method which will not lead to socialism, rather than to take the far sinister path of labelling it "Red Fascism".

In solidarity,

CH.

Amwyl gymrodyr,

The Direct Action Movement has always claimed to be anti-racist. After a letter in DA 43, I now doubt that, as it made reference to a works supervisor who was both a Communist and Welsh.

If he had been a Communist and Irish or black would DAM have published this uncritically? Of course not, but it seems OK to attack a minority who have to face the racism of the Brit state and the ignorance and chauvinism of the English left.

As a Welsh socialist, I'm for international workers' unity and against narrow nationalism. However, you can't have workers' liberty when minorities or nations do not have equal rights. It sounds obvious but it's got to be said time and time again for English revolution-

aries to understand that liberty begins at home. Until anarchists within the British state face up to the reality that England's ruling class has constructed a British nation (so beloved of such progressives as the NF and CPGB) which must be smashed, then you remain part of the problem. National liberation for Wales remains part (one part) of the solution.

Yn frawdgarol,

M V Jones.

Dear Direct Action,

The article in the October DA on the Keetons strike in Sheffield ("The Long Strike") got me thinking. Anarcho-syndicalists and other militant workers have, since the miners' strike, been involved in supporting a whole series of long-running strikes sold out and kept isolated by the unions involved (News International, Addenbrookes, Sil-entnight, to name a few). These strikes have often gone on for 6, 12, 18 months only to be defeated.

Supporters raised thousands and thousands of pounds to keep these strikes going (particularly when unions refused strike pay), but the question has to be asked, how do we win strikes rather than allowing a drawn out defeat? We have to be blunt: isolated strikes that go on for month after month are never going to win. There has to be an alternative, because if there isn't we can't blame, for example, people I work with at Addenbrookes Hospital (Cambridge) who saw

the defeat of a nearly two year-long domestics' strike and have drawn the conclusion that they're never going to go on strike.

Strikes win when they're controlled, from Day One, by the strikers themselves, through mass assemblies and recallable strike committees, not union bureaucrats, and strikes win through international solidarity. Workers everywhere, in all areas and all industries, are under attack from the capitalist class and we should be fighting back together.

Ultimately our only hope is the destruction of State and Capitalism and the bringing about of Libertarian Communism, putting an end to unemployment and wage-slavery for good. But before we win the class war we've got to win a few battles and we'll do that through workers' solidarity and self-organisation. In the major struggles to come (in the Post Office, Car Industry, Mines, NHS, etc) victory will depend upon this and Anarcho-syndicalists should be saying so.

Paul Connell.

Comrades

I feel I must briefly reply to LG's letter printed in DA No 44. Firstly LG should have known better than to raise internal DAM matters through a public newspaper such as this. The DAM has only recently started to develop towards a mass workers union based on anarcho-syndicalist principles and until we have a solid base it remains internal business.

Secondly, some of us have had more than enough of confronting Trade Union bureaucracy, and losing. The vast majority of Trade Unions are so entrenched and corrupt that they are unreformable.

Sooner or later you realise that enough is enough. If we are serious about changing society we must create our own workers' union controlled by the members based on freedom, equality and mutual aid which can abolish capitalism by using the tactics of solidarity and direct action.

The Spanish CNT (an anarcho-syndicalist union) members were originally in the UGT (Spanish reformist trade union) but decided to go their own way in 1911. We should follow their example.

AW.

**CONSOLIDATED GOLD FIELDS PARTNER IN APARTHEID - Counter Information Services, 48 pages, 95p.**

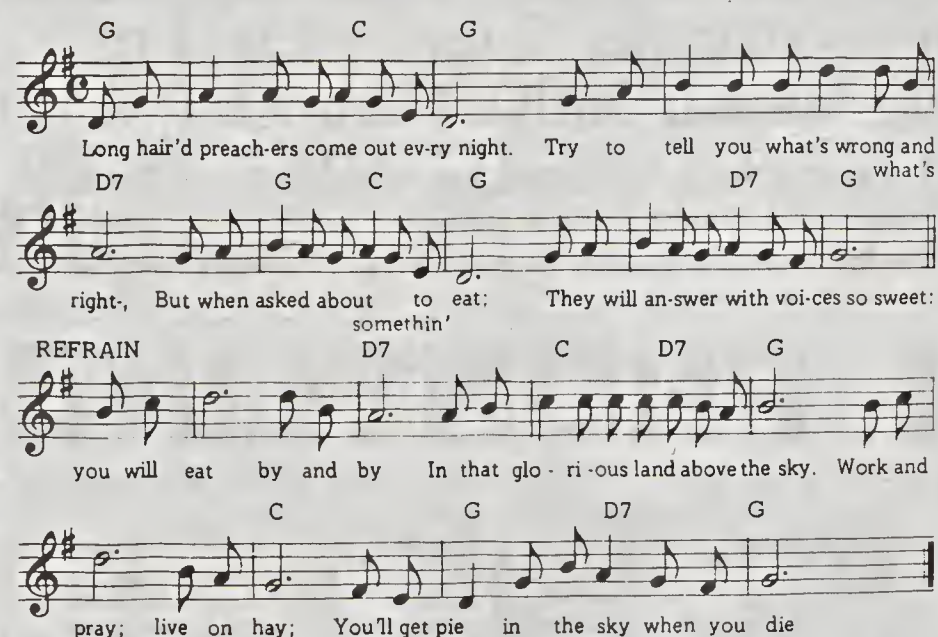
"CONSOLIDATED Gold Fields is one of the largest multinational mining and construction materials groups in the world today. It is the second largest mining finance house in the United Kingdom after Rio Tinto-Zinc, with pre-tax and interest profits of £162 million in 1985."

This pamphlet deals with Consolidated Gold Fields' involvement in the South African economy, its industrial relations record and their defence of apartheid. It can be obtained from: Counter Information Services, 9 Poland Street, London W1V. (Tel: 01-439-3764)



# THE PREACHER AND THE SLAVE

Words: Joe Hill Music: Traditional: Sweet Bye and Bye



And the starvation army they play,  
 And they sing and they clap and they  
 pray.  
 Till they get all your coin on the drum,  
 Then they tell you when you're on the  
 bum;

Chorus

If you fight hard for children and wife -  
 Try to get something good in this life.  
 You're a sinner and bad man, they tell,  
 When you die you will sure go to hell.

Chorus

Working folk of all countries unite,  
 Side by side we for freedom will fight;  
 When the world and its wealth we have  
 gained,  
 To the grafters we'll sing this refrain;

Final chorus:

You will eat, bye and bye;  
 When you've learned how to cook and  
 to fry.  
 Chop some wood, 'twill do you good,  
 And you'll eat in the sweet bye and  
 bye.

JOE HILL arrived in America from Sweden in 1901 and joined the syndicalist union, the IWW in 1911. He spent 3 years as a migrant worker and IWW activist. In 1914 he was framed on a murder charge and sentenced to death. Despite a worldwide campaign the sentence was carried out in November 1915. On the eve of his execution he wrote the famous lines to his fellow workers: "Don't waste time mourning - organise! Hill wrote many songs and once: "A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once; but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over". He believed in the power of songs as tools of struggle. "The Preacher And The Slave" which we reprint below was printed in the 3rd edition of the IWW songbook and is a blast against reactionary religion still relevant today. If you have any songs and music that you would like to see included in this series, please send them to SRR, c/o Doncaster DAM, PO Box 96, Doncaster.



## DAM - IWA

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.
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.

## DAM Contacts

### Midlands

Corby/Kettering: ----- c/o DAM  
 National Secretary, Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir St, Cambridge.

Mansfield & Ashfield ---- 28 Lucknow Dr, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.

### North East

Doncaster ----- PO Box 96, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4.

Huddersfield --- PO Box B20, Huddersfield, HD1.

Leeds ----- Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds, LS2.

Newcastle ----- c/o Tyneside Free Press, 5 Charlotte Square, Newcastle, NE1.

### North West

Bolton ----- c/o Bolton Socialist Club, Wood St., Bolton, Lancs.

Burnley ----- 5 Hollin Hill, Burnley, Lancs.

Crewe ----- c/o National Sec. c/o Cambridge DAM.

Liverpool ----- Box DAM, 82 Lark Lane, Aigburth, Liverpool 17.

Manchester ---- c/o Box DA, Raven, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester.

Tameside ----- c/o 3 Stanhope St, Ashton-u-Lyne, Tameside, OL6.

### Scotland

Bellshill, Lanarkshire ----- Box DAM, c/o Clydeside Press, 37 High Street, Glasgow.

### South East

Brixton ---- c/o 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London, SE24.

Cambridge ----- Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge.

Central/North London ---- c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1.

Deptford ----- 17 Turner's Road, Limehouse, London E3.

East London -- c/o 84b Whitechapel High St., London, E1.

Oxford ----- Box A, EOA. Books, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford.

S.W London ----- c/o 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London, SE24.

Tower Hamlets ---- 17 Turners Rd., Limehouse, London E3.

### Other Groups

Bristol ----- Box DAM, 37 Stokes-croft, Bristol 2.

Norwich ----- Box DAM, The Greenhouse, 48 Bethel Street, Norwich.

For contacts in S. Wales, Midlands, East Anglia, Kent, etc, write to the National Secretary, c/o Cambridge DAM.

### Industrial

DAM Building Workers - c/o East, London DAM, 84b Whitechapel High St, London, E1.

DAM Civil Service Workers - c/o South West London DAM, c/o 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London.

DAM Council Workers -- c/o Central/North London DAM, 84b Whitechapel High St, London E3.

DAM Despatch Riders ---- c/o Deptford DAM, 17 Turners Road, Limehouse, London E3.

DAM Education Workers - c/o Bolton DAM, c/o Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St, Bolton, Lancs.

DAM Health Workers - c/o East, London DAM, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1.

DAM Postal Workers - c/o South West London DAM, c/o 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London SE24.

DAM Railworkers - c/o Manchester DAM, c/o Box DA, Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester.

DAM Unemployed/MSW Workers --- c/o Tower Hamlets DAM, 17 Turners Road, Limehouse, London E3.

### Other Contacts

Ainriall: ----- c/o Just Books, 7 Winetavern St, Smithfield, Belfast 1

Anarcho-Syndicalist Publications (ASP) ----- BM Hurricane, London WC1N. and P.O. Box 96, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4.

Black Flag: ----- BM Hurricane, London, WC1N.

Luton Class War ----- Box CW Europa House, Vicarage Street, Luton 1.

Organise: ----- c/o Just Books, 7 Winetavern St, Smithfield, Belfast 1.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UK AND IRELAND:-  
 6 Issues £2.80 .... 12 Issues .... £5.00

OVERSEAS:-  
 6 Issues £3.80 .... 12 Issues .... £6.60

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Send to Box D.A, c/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester.  
 Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to DAM.

### WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

I would like more information about the Direct Action Movement - International Workers' Association. Please send me information.

Name .....

Address.....

.....

Send to DAM/IWA, c/o Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir St., Cambridge.

Produced and published by Manchester DAM. Printed by Aldgate Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London. Send articles, letters, donations, etc to Direct Action, Box DA, Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester. Please let us know whether or not letters are for publication.

Deadline - Jan 16th



# Direct Action

## Bloody Sunday

Commemoration March, London,  
Saturday Jan 30th. Contact TOM,  
PO Box 353, London, NW5. (01-609  
(Organised by the Committee for British  
Withdrawal from Ireland) 1743)

# PRIVATISATION FRONTLINE

On February 16th, 1987 Westminster City Council put out to "competitive tender" 13 manual services: refuse collection, street cleansing, social services catering, and housing estate porters, etc. Two weeks after the general election, Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley announced the reintroduction of a bill forcing all local authorities to put 6 of their services out to tender. Tory MPs(1) have since amended this adding another 33 services including public libraries and social workers. It's clear that whatever number of services the Tories eventually decide on, this represents a massive attack on jobs, wages and working conditions of at least one million local authority workers and that Westminster is widely seen as the test case.

Westminster also decided on July 8th to seal up 11,000 properties - half its housing stock. A 200-strong special team including estate agents will get a commission on each home sold. Categories supposedly "eligible" to buy include the homeless! and disabled (those who can't or won't) and existing tenants who can already buy their existing homes under "Right to Buy" legislation more cheaply. The real purpose is to sell to yuppies from outside the borough who can and will buy. This comes in the wake of the Tories' much-vaunted election promise, now a forthcoming bill, to break up local council housing provision and bring in private landlords and developers(3). Westminster's existing 800 homeless families in private bed and breakfast accommodation will be moved out of the borough to hotels as far away as Heathrow Airport, or to specially constructed Portacabins in the East End. The current housing waiting list of 10,000 will have even less chance of a local council home. Transfers will be virtually impossible.

### "BEST" DEAL

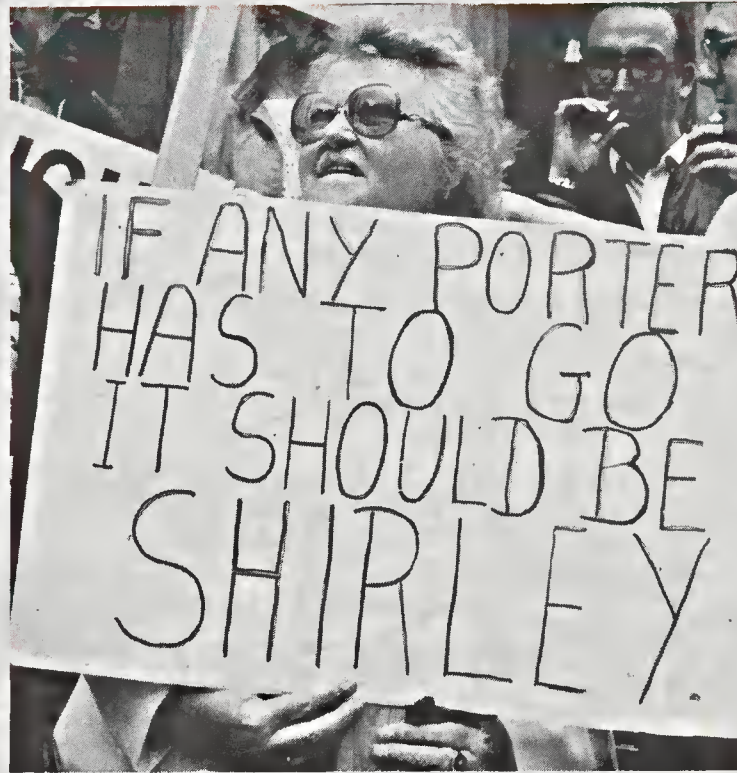
What's been the response to all this? NUPE, representing manual workers, initially reacted to competitive tendering by going for "in house" tenders as the "best" possible deal. Westminster Workers Against Cuts, a group of rank and file NUPE members and shop stewards, has pointed out the contradiction in a union which supposedly represents its members' interests, that negotiates down existing wages and conditions to save some jobs but we have been branded scare mongers. NUPE branch secretaries argue for a "management buy out" of street cleansing and refuse collection by 3 senior managers on the grounds of "better the devil you know..." A similar bid has been put in by

leisure services management, also with branch secretaries' support. Housing estate porters, particularly vulnerable because they live in tied accommodation, haven't even been guaranteed they'll keep their existing flats even if an in-house bid won. No doubt if it's in a "for sale" area they'll be told to move to less desirable areas to make way for the yuppies.

NUPE branch secretaries (there's the farcical situation of 2 branches, 1 north of Oxford St, 1 south) have undermined calls for industrial action and have worked hand in glove with management to attack union members arguing for it. After a one day strike by NALGO members in April against the council's opting out of national wage-bargaining for white collar staff and against privatisation of manual work, which NUPE decided to ignore, one branch secretary wrote to the London Evening Standard to protest at an article which had suggested the strike was supported by dustmen!

Thus management is free to attack and victimise union members known for opposing privatisation and Westminster's policy of "designated" sales of empty council houses. In one case a shop steward was disciplined for attending another disciplinary as a witness. In another, a sweeper's shop steward was given a final written warning for swearing at a supervisor.

Westminster Workers Against Cuts has consistently argued for joint action by NUPE and NALGO members and tenants against various threats facing us. We've argued for mass meetings in all workplaces; and that only all out strike action will protect existing jobs, wages and conditions, and defend existing services. NUPE's sop to the membership was a series of sectional meetings after work during 2



A message to the leader of Westminster Council

weeks in June: the best attended was for street sweepers attracting 14 (out of 300), the one for the refuse collectors 3 (out of 300). The response by tenants to the policy of designated sales has been much more coordinated. The first 2 attempts to hold meetings of a housing sub-committee to rubber stamp the decision were broken up by angry tenants on September 2nd and 4th. Eventually this meeting was held in private.

### £100 "FAIR" RENT

On September 22nd NALGO members held a one day strike to support council tenants, again this was only supported unofficially by odd pockets of NUPE members. Following a demonstration of several hundred NALGO strikers, tenants and rank and file NUPE members, there was a housing committee meeting. The council solicitor admitted that in the new Westminster the Tories want to create council house rents would rise. His idea of "fair" rent was £100 a week! The housing committee chair, councillor Peter Hartley's response to the uproar that followed was to adjourn the meeting and send in the police including members of the Territorial Support Group to clear the gallery. 4 NUPE stewards, 6 Labour councillors and 1 housing activist were arrested. The nature of those arrested - especially the 4 NUPE stewards well known for opposition to the council's policies - clearly shows the police were told by the Tories who to go for.

The Labour Party have, not surprisingly, played this for all they can get. There is some truth in the suspicion that Westminster want to do another Wandsworth(4) - in the May 1986 local elections Labour came within 100 votes in one council ward of taking control. But, good intentions by many Labour activists and a few Labour councillors notwithstanding, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that the issue of destruction of working class communities, which Westminster's housing policies will lead to if they get away with it, is seen first and foremost as a battle for party political survival. Towards the council workforce, with less - if any - constituency of local support to defend, their attitude is more lukewarm which is even less surprising when you consider that, nationally, NUPE now recommends that local unions faced with competitive tendering "minimise" job losses (that is, accept some).

### "ACCOUNTABLE"

Competitive tendering of council services and break up of council housing provision are a serious attack on the working class - on both our living standards and our communities. The issue isn't one of greedy private contractors and developers against "accountable" local authorities. In the short term it's a case of fighting just to keep our heads above water. Whether reductions in jobs and wages and worsening conditions result from outright privatisa-

tion or an "in-house" stitch up between management and local unions makes little difference to those of us at the receiving end. The record of Labour councils as regards their workforce and housing provision is hardly different from the Tories.

### CRAZY SYSTEM

In the short run, only all out action by council workers and unity between council workers and tenants will defeat the attacks on us. In the long run we need to think beyond the whole crazy system where the decisions of local bosses - as with all bosses - play havoc with our jobs, our services, our livelihoods and our communities, which is another story...

A member of Westminster NUPE

(1) Led by Teresa Gorman, new right wing Tory MP for Harvey Proctor's old seat in Billericay, and former Westminster councillor. Guardian report, 23/10/87. She is also at the forefront of moves to break up the Post Office.

(2) That is, points 9-11 of the council's list for eligibility: "persons who have worked within the city council area continuously for the last 3 years"; "persons who live outside Westminster and wish to join a blood relative who has lived within the WCC area continuously for the last 3 years"; "persons who live outside Westminster who have a firm offer of employment or who are already working within the WCC area but for a period of less than 3 years".

(3) This has already happened in Westminster on the Walerton and Elgin estates: in return for doing up houses and flats on the estates, the developer will be paid £3 million by the council plus one tower block of 104 flats which they can sell privately themselves at £78,000 for a bedsit and £89,000 for a one-bedroomed flat. The existing tenants who want to stay, will be re-housed elsewhere.

(4) Battersea, a seat represented by a Communist in the 1920's, and always thought of as a solid Labour seat, went Tory in the recent general election - largely due to Wandsworth council's policy of selling off council housing and letting in the private developers.