

# *Direct* **Action**

No.8 autumn 1998 £1.50

## **PersonaLife** **-how's yours?**



**- young property - political parenting**

## **laddism - queer among equals?**

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**W**hile 'community' is talked about less and less by politicians and the media, issues around the 'family' and 'personal identity' are still very much on the agendas of moralists and vote-catchers alike. New Labour, torchbearers of new moralism, think the family needs re-stating and re-defining. Specifically, the message seems to be that single parents should work. And, preferably, they should not be single - or not be parents.

We are familiar with the backward looking, right wing moralists, with their latent homophobia and sad, insecure banter on the sicknesses of society - sex, ungodliness and so on. While they are undoubtedly dangerous, at least they are well-defined and out in the open. By contrast, New Labour's moral doctrine lurks in the shadows. Not only is it difficult to see, it is so highly spun, oiled and polished that it is nigh impossible to grasp. It is only in flashes, like when Jack Straw darts out of the shadows and says he wants to lock up all young people after 9pm, that you get a clear idea of how dodgy and dangerous Tony's cronies really are - and what new weapons they are working on.

In these pages, we take some less flattering snapshots of family and identity in our New Labour society, with the specific intent of exposing some of the 'anti-personal' weapons our current brand of media and government is training on us. Along the way, we explore methods of self-defence and fighting back.

At the centre of the battle for PersonalLife is ownership and possession. This is what governs patriarchy, domination and hierarchy. We are no longer people, but objects to be used by those in control for their own ends. We have no 'personal' worth. Our value as property and possessions is all that remains - we are units of money, labour, consumption, pleasure, etc.

Take houses. The essential reason why more people have no home while more homes lie empty, gathering dust, is that it's not profitable for landlords to let people in them who are poor,

deemed ineligible for benefit by caring New Labour, or whatever.

And 'property rights' crop up elsewhere in our bright, brave, new, globally warmed world. A father of 3 young kids got massive capitalist media sympathy recently when, following marital strife, he killed all 'his' kids in cold blood, and then himself. Now, I don't know the facts, nor do I care to, but I know kids are young human beings and no human beings should belong to anyone.

Young people are being increasingly hassled by New Labour, and their parents are increasingly held responsible for them, apparently as a 'solution' to delinquency. But with this responsibility comes property - parents 'owning' their children and trading, using and abusing them at will. The same "property, leading to possession and power" relationships apply to the treatment of animals, adults (as wage slaves, etc.) and the environment. Ownership means possession, means exploitation, means abuse. 'Property rights' are actually 'property wrongs' when you strip away the rhetoric and get to the real meaning.

On the subject of rhetoric, I wish to refute claims that British manufacturing industry has been on the decline for decades. True, we no longer make many things. But the job of New Labour spin doctors is to manufacture our ongoing consent and compliance with 'property wrongs'. This particular branch of manufacturing is a massive 'growth' area. Manufacturing millions of glossy trash magazines, for one.

And frankly, I don't care whether the nasty rash of lads mags has manufactured laddism, or whether laddism is a response to rapidly rising alienation, insecurity, detachment and voyeurism in our fake-spectacular millenium-dome-world. My concern is simply this; laddism, like ages of consent, and like the New Labour family, is crass, shallow and meaningless.

Getting a real life means looking beyond the mainstream media. Not easy, since New Labour Media Inc. is always ready with new and more 'advanced' ways of getting us not to see what's in front of us. But that is for the next issue of DA. This is the here and now, and PersonalLife. 

## About DA

Views stated within these pages are not necessarily those of the Direct Action Collective or the Solidarity Federation. Contributions come from various places, and DA has a policy of not crediting these personally. If you want to know about authors or sources, write to the DA Collective. On any other issue, readers' views are welcome, whether opinions, additional information or letters responding to articles or raising issues of interest. If you want to help out with DA, or would like to know more about the Solidarity Federation, contact us. Do not expect high pressure sales, paper-selling quotas or demands for this or that; do expect a reasonably prompt reply.

## Notes for Contributors

If you would like to contribute more than brief opinions, we request you send articles (between 500 and 1500 words if possible) in hardcopy and on disk in either Word for Windows PC version not greater than 7 or ASCII format. Contact us for electronic mail addresses or alternative formats. Failing that, any decent typewritten script will do, or even neat handwriting, if necessary. While unsolicited articles are welcome, they can only be returned if a SAE is enclosed.

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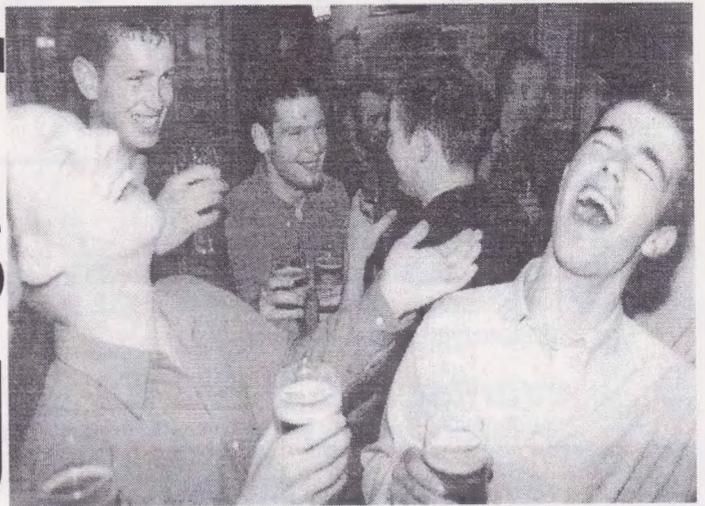
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# Atosser in lads clothing



Marketing directors dream of connecting with 'youth culture'. Isn't this a dream come true?

The *new lad* has escaped from the pages of the weekend broadsheet style supplements. He has become a reality from a newspaper myth. His creators would claim he is a redefined British male. More likely a repackaged bundle of old sexist prejudices. Yes, the new lad is here, and yes, the new lad is a shallow, inane, rehashed 90's product.

The prime newspaper myth was that there was anything remotely new about being a lad. Self-obsessed, ego mania with anti-aesthetic (i.e., if it contains subtlety, it's crap) is familiar to anyone who has ever been near teenage boys. What the latest mythical incarnation of the *new lad* has done is mix this traditional potion with other ingredients. Namely, with the worst strains of machismo posturing of working class blokes down the pub, and some confused pseudo-irony.

Worse still, the *new lad* proponents have sought to justify it all, and have packaged and sold it to middle class media bores who have taken to coke and designer beer and the smart casual look of the 90's football hooligan. Obviously, if they really wanted to adopt working class culture, they should have gone for angling, and spent hours sitting by the side of a canal in an industrial estate.

*...it remains acceptable to use naked women to sell a car (as long as it is with a wink) or a magazine or newspaper (wink optional, dribble more likely)*



## wank mags

One bit of irony seemingly lost on the whole laddist milieu is that the main gain of the *new lad* media grope-in has been to generate a series of wank mags for those who were always too hypocritical to take their hands out of their pockets long enough to reach the top shelf. A whole new series of soft pornography has ensued, which objectifies the female form even more than the traditional top shelf mattress bolsters.

It is the alleged 'knowingness', the self proclaimed sense of irony, which really is the worst aspect of this phenomenon...the sense of 'we know it's a bit dodgy, but hey it's only in fun', and 'we know women are people too, honest'.. This is what allows jokes about men beating up their girlfriends to be met with cheers from a TV audience. Really, it is not ironic, it is not 'knowing'; it is crass misogyny.

## sex attached

To really redefine our relationship to sex and fun, and to celebrate both, we need to counter the detachment and exclusion. This cannot be done by glossing over the real but unacceptable view of the heterosexual male as leering moron. The way to redefine masculinity is not through a servile wretch, always apologising for itself. Neither is it remotely fruitful to retreat into puerile jokes and hide behind a bottle of beer. It is to celebrate sex and the

human form - and let's not pretend that this is remotely what the current breed of men's magazines are doing. Nor is it what all these 'clever' adverts are doing. We still live in a society were it remains acceptable to use naked women to sell a car (as long as it is with a wink) or a magazine or newspaper (wink optional, dribble more likely) but you can't show an erect penis, even in a serious drama.

What anarcho-syndicalists argue for is free expression, in all its aspects. I am not seeking a new Puritanism, I am seeking out a new celebration of life, of fun and of each other. Eroticism and erotic materials - including stuff generally termed 'pornographic', is part of this fun.

At the same time, to pursue the freedom to enjoy, we have to collectively think up and make a new society. This means, among other things, going to lots of dull meetings and very non-sexy marches in the duller bits of London. In between, we are having fun in clubs and pubs, fancying people, forming and maintaining relationships. We are about living life (well, in between work and writing this for DA..).

*New Laddism* is all about a retreat from life, to the glossy safe and sanitised reality of the new wank mags. *New Laddism* is where all of life is available in edited highlights and without all the toil, the work, the responsibility, and the need to think. You cannot celebrate life by hiding from it in advertising soft focus wet dreams. 



# Testosterone not guilty

**A**ggressive loutish lads are often considered to be 'testosterone fuelled'. More testosterone means increased, unfocused aggression; less of it means calm and controlled behaviour. Or does it?

(well, not quite)

The link between aggressive behaviour and the group of hormones commonly referred to as testosterone is more tenuous and certainly more complex than many scientists would have you think.

## castration?

Undoubtedly, there does appear to be a link between aggression and testosterone, and indeed, if the source of the latter is removed (say by castration), levels of the former are often seen to drop. But increase levels, and initially there is no observable change. In fact, it takes a massive increase to more than double normal levels to effect any noticeable response.

Most importantly, even when aggression levels are increased, it is not random and flying out wildly, but channelled down the socially prescribed paths that are available. In a hierarchical primate society, a male primate with suddenly massively increased levels of testosterone coursing through its body would not go on a random attack, it would still treat higher ranking primates with due

respect, but would become a complete sod to lower ranking primates.

Basically, testosterone facilitates increased levels of brain activity, but not that associated with aggressive behaviour. The cause of aggression is not simply the presence of testosterone, but its interaction with other biological processes, and particularly, the social environment.

## loutish females?

In spotted hyenas in Kenya, females apparently have a lot more of a testosterone related hormone than males. Females are larger, with greater musculature, and tend to be socially dominant. In a colony that has been transplanted to California, the physically identical females have similarly high levels of the hormone and are similarly larger and more muscular than their male counterparts. However, the level of social domination has been considerably delayed in the captive, controlled, California colony. A large element of the learnt 'wild' behaviour was lost.

*Aggressive behaviour is shaped by a flawed social system, such as this one we live in*

## social insecurity

There are clear signs, then, that there is a balance between the environment and biology. Certainly, it is not a straightforward case of biological determinism (the idea that 'physical biology explains all').

Dodgy scientists, money grabbers and politicians can be relied on to bend the truth to suit their own perverse ends. But however much 'socio-biology', 'neurology' and 'genetics' research is done, there is little chance of a fresh outbreak of the biological determinist picture they try to paint.

In reality, biology (through the existence of life) provides potential, and the environment shapes this potential. Aggressive behaviour is shaped by a flawed social system, such as this one we live in. Creating a better environment, physical and social, is the only way to fundamentally alter this cycle of aggression.

And by the way, you only get research into ethically dubious areas when you live in an ethically dubious society. 



**T**he Birmingham Northern Relief Road is part of a £1.2 billion road building plan for the English West Midlands. This includes widening sections of the M1, M6 and M42 motorways, in addition to the BNRR expressway itself. The builders are Midland Expressway Limited (MEL), a partnership between a Norwegian-based firm and an Italian toll-road operator.

This new road for the rich (the tolls will mean only the well-off can afford to travel regularly on it) involves massive destruction of the natural environment, yet there has been little national media coverage. This isn't Twyford Down; some people have even argued that the local countryside is ugly and mainly agricultural and, therefore, no loss! Consequently, there are no media celebs hanging around getting their mugs on the box.

In addition to the effects of tarmac on green fields, there are severe consequences in store for local people. BNRR will be 27 miles of expressway, up to 24 lanes wide at one point (where it passes the edge of a school playground). The increased traffic will mean increased stress, noise and air pollution. And it's not just the local environment that will suffer. The road will inevitably bring increased car use regionally, and yet more exhaust emissions. The notorious M6 traffic jams will then appear on this new road. Then what? A BNRR bypass?

Meanwhile, calls for an improvement to the woefully inadequate public transport system in the West Midlands have been ignored. Local people are angry that no-one seems to be listening to their concerns, saying the Public Enquiry was designed to intimidate and belittle

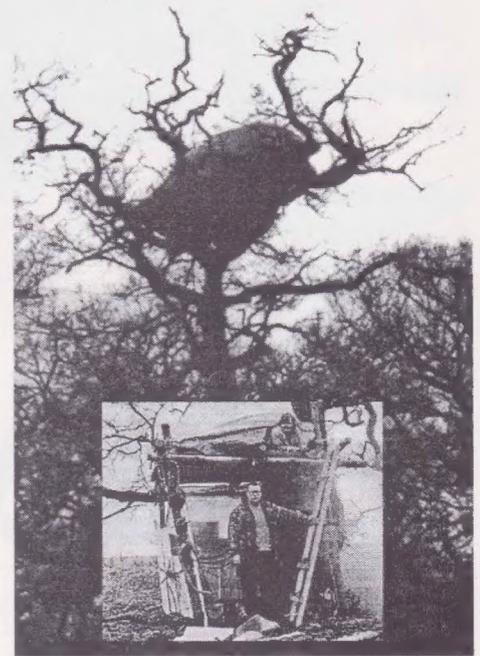
them, and that the outcome had already been decided. They are angry that the Labour Party promised to scrap the project when in opposition, yet pushed it through once in power. Sounds familiar? Worse still, BNRR is a testbed - if Labour decide it is a 'success', it may be the first of many such toll road projects.

Some locals never did put their faith in politicians or appeals to authority, instead they set up protest camps to confront the builders. One such camp is at Green Wood, near Sutton Coldfield. Here, tunnels are being dug and plans are being made to meet the bulldozers head on.

While construction is not due to start until January 1999, the battle to evict the protesters is already underway. The Police and the Highways Authority showed themselves at their worst back in April. A group of activists were squatting a derelict cottage near the A38 in Sutton. On the morning of Sunday, April 12, 'Sorted' Dave - a veteran protester - was found dead in a sleeping bag.

The Police announced that he had died of natural causes but asked the squatters to move out for a while so that they could 'complete their enquiries'. Returning the next morning, the activists, still in shock over losing their close friend, found their home demolished, their belongings dumped in bin liners at the side of the road and a six foot fence around the remains of the cottage - guarded by private security guards.

Following this episode, the police started a propaganda campaign, accusing protesters of leaving booby traps around the site. They also instructed the local Fire Brigade not to answer calls to the area as 'they may be hoaxes'. Not



surprisingly, this blatant attempt to endanger the lives of protesters by withdrawing emergency fire cover was met with indignation by the Fire Service.

Such police dirty tactics have only served to increase local anger and determination. The camp at Greenwood has been getting more visitors than ever. Local people bring food, tools and practical support of all kinds.

Direct action by protesters gave MEL representatives a rough ride recently as they attended the local Chamber of Commerce, and were confronted by people and banners asking "MEL's wealth or our health?".

But this is still not enough. To seriously challenge the money grabbing fat-cats, the material support has to increase. More than anything else, what is needed are more people prepared to participate in direct action to stop this massive destruction of our countryside. The campaign needs to be open and democratic. Important lessons from other protests need to be learned and disseminated.

For more information visit Green Wood, next to Arc Quarry, A38 north of Sutton Coldfield, or phone 0797 0301978.

## Weights Farm still full of heavies

**T**he live exports campaign is still being waged weekly at Weights Farm. Sheep are brought here from all over England, before being loaded into trucks and taken to Dover, for the ferry crossing to mainland Europe.

The weekly Thursday night pickets are still well attended, after 18 months of sustained regular actions. Police presence is predictably completely out of proportion with the demonstration, with vans lining up bulging with busy coppers intent on upholding the public right

of way for the live animal trucks. Or is it the regular overtime pay?

More people are always welcome on the pickets. In addition to the regular Thursday outings, there are others on some Sundays, and occasional national demo's.

To get involved or show support, contact: Midlands Solidarity Federation, PO Box 6705, Redditch, Worcs. B97 6SQ.



# A Walk on the Tameside

**I**n 1990, the elderly care homes in Tameside were transferred from the Council to Tameside Enterprises Ltd (TEL). In 1992, due to financial problems borne out of incompetence by management, the workers were forced to take a pay cut or see TEL go bankrupt. Then came the current owners, TCG; and now the care workers are on strike.

Tameside Care Group (TCG) proposed new wage rates on 30<sup>th</sup> January this year. The notices issued to staff said that the current contracts would be ended, and more pay cuts, less holidays, and a no sick-pay scheme would be introduced. The strike started on 30<sup>th</sup> March, and the workers were subsequently sacked for their refusal to agree to the new contracts.

The workers have had a lot of support locally, but very little from their union, Unison, either nationally or regionally. A national demonstration was organised, but this attracted little national support outside the left and the Solidarity Federation. On the demo, one care worker was heard to say that it had only been able to attract a couple of hundred more people

outside the Tameside area. At present, the sacked care workers are getting strike pay from Unison. The local Unison branch has raised/received around £60,000 for the strike fund to date (August), from the Tameside area, and union branches and other groups nationally.

The Unison bureaucrats will probably try to come up with some sort of deal with TCG management, Tameside Council, and Labour Party sleaze merchants, all of whom are covertly involved with this scandal. All the trustees of the TCG board are Labour members, including Andrew Bennett, one of the local Labour MPs and Jack Thornley, a GMB Union solicitor (whose office was occupied recently to focus attention on his role).

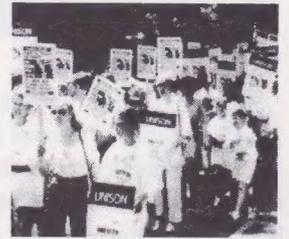
Disputes are not won by financial solidarity alone - as the Liverpool Dockers' experience showed. Money, though welcome and needed, is no substitute for militant direct action.

In spite of high unemployment in the Tameside area, TCG has had difficulty in recruiting scabs, despite using local employment agencies to do their dirty work. This attempt by TCG has met with opposition, and the offices of

l o c a l employment agencies and Council offices have been occupied. And it has got personal; Alan Firth (MD

of TCG) has had his house picketed and his neighbours leafleted. Posters have appeared attacking Roy Olham, Leader of the Council. Such actions have resulted in APEX and Taylors pulling out of the scab supply network. Effective direct action such as this is the way forward if this dispute is to be won. If the supply of scabs can be stopped, TCG will be in real difficulty until they re-employ the sacked care workers. Already the homes are understaffed, resulting in poorer care of the residents, with rumours of neglect and residents being denied their rights.

Send money for the strike fund or offers of help to: Unison, 29 Booth St, Ashton-U-Lyne, OL6 7LB (cheques to UNISON Tameside), or: Solidarity Federation, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW or Tel. 0161 232 7889. 



## GE Crops

# Monsanto - turning food into bullshit

**R**esistance against genetically Engineered (GE) crops has stepped up in Britain over the last few months. Field trial crops have been pulled up from Aberdeen to Norfolk, following on from similar actions in Germany.

In Norfolk, a prolonged action saw a field of GM sugar beet uprooted and the land squatted and turned over to permaculture plots. Indeed, Norfolk has been the venue for many actions - it contains 141 of the 300 British GE release sites.

The Government, who have recently decided to ban GE foods from menus in the House of Commons because of doubts about their safety, remain adamant that it is OK for the rest of us to be used as guinea pigs in a massive experiment to find out if GE foods are safe or

not. An estimated 60% of foods in our supermarkets now contain GE ingredients and, despite the introduction of limited labelling, it is still virtually impossible to tell whether any given unlabelled product contains GE ingredients or not. Since 'blending' of GE and non-GE raw foodstuffs takes place in the factory, manufacturers cannot even obtain guaranteed non-GE supplies of soya, corn products, etc.

While eminent scientists, business leaders and supermarkets jockey for position to voice their concerns, the rise of GE foods continues apace. Even some farmers are now having second thoughts and deciding not to allow field trials of GE crops on their land. However, a combination of seed pricing and yield/market price ratios will soon mean almost farmers will be compelled to use GE seed.

Monsanto, one of the top GE crop companies, has embarked on a sustained misinformation campaign to persuade us to swallow this nice little earner for them. Because

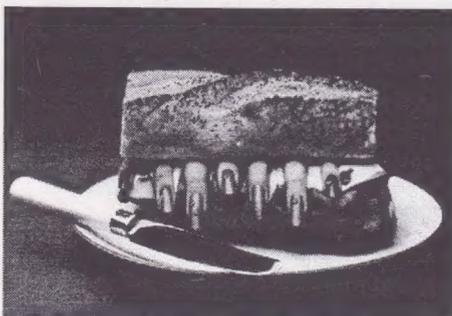
of the intricacies of patenting, they stand to establish a monopoly position in the GE seed market, with untold billions of profits at stake. Not surprisingly, their info-line is not particularly unbiased, but why not give them a ring? It's at their expense so whenever you have a free moment pick their brains on 0800 0920401.

For some pointers on likely difficult questions, one of the key issues is labelling. If labelling of all GE products was compulsory, the profits would collapse as consumers avoided the products - all surveys, including referenda in Norway and Austria, are showing that the vast majority of consumers do not want GE food and will avoid it given the choice. Without labelling, consumer choice is less effective, and the GE companies can fix the market so farmers are forced to grow GE crops.

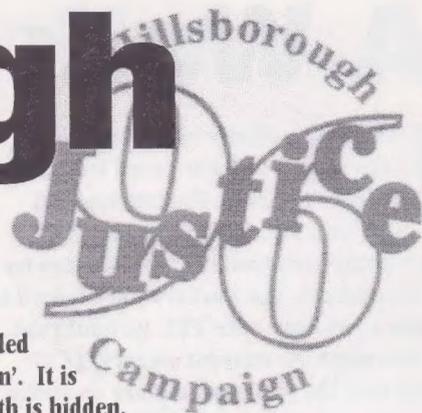
Direct action is necessary. So after phoning Monsanto a few times, why not label foods in the supermarket yourself, or do some crop picking?

For details, contact: GENetwork, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY, phone 0181 3749516, email genetics@gn.apc.org. GE actions: <http://www.dmac.co.uk/gen.html>.

We will publish Monsanto's most entertaining answers to tricky questions you pose - so get phoning them on 0800 092 0401 and mail the results to 



# Hillsborough



**O**n April 15th 1989, 96 people died in and after being crushed in the pens designed to control them, at Hillsborough football ground. The Hillsborough families have searched for the truth about Hillsborough for nine years now, only to find that each time they get near to it, someone has been there first and hidden it inside the legal framework. After a debate in the House of Commons on May 8th, Home Secretary Jack Straw decided to end the matter by blocking any more moves to get to the truth through the public 'justice system'. It is now time to shine a light into the murky corners of the tragedy ourselves, and find where that truth is hidden.



"One furious policeman who witnessed Saturday's carnage stormed.... 'As we struggled in appalling conditions to save lives...'"

Extract from the 'Sun Newspaper' dated Wednesday, 19th April, 1989.

George Howarth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, said during the Hillsborough Debate; **"Lord Justice Stewart-Smith makes it clear that there was an attempt to cover up what happened"**

Jack Straw, Home Secretary, told the Hillsborough families when he invited them to the House of Commons; **The South Yorkshire Police were guilty of "gross negligence", had told "despicable lies" and that "police statements should not have been altered"**

At the precise moment this picture was taken, 15.32 on the afternoon of April 15th 1989, 96 people lay dead or dying at the Hillsborough football ground. At the precise moment this picture was taken, over 400 other human beings were injured, some seriously, some permanently, at the same football ground. At the precise moment this picture was taken, at the very height of the disaster, 18 police officers, some with their hands in their pockets, some with their arms folded, can be seen standing around doing absolutely nothing'. Who is telling the truth, the Sun and the Police, or the survivors?

In spite of the fact that 42 fully equipped ambulances, with 84 skilled personnel, were within 300 metres of the disaster scene, the family of the young man being carried on a hoarding by fans, to this day, nine years on, still do not know how, when or where he died. Was it in Pen 3? Was it on the pitch? Or was it in a body bag? Police inaction, and their refusal to allow those ambulances on to the pitch, denied this young man medical attention - and denied him his life.

This young man's family may not know how, when or where he died but, like all the other 95 families who lost loved ones, they have no doubt who was responsible - the South Yorkshire Police.

Maria Eagles, MP for Liverpool Garston, said during the Hillsborough Debate; **"From my practical experience as a solicitor, I investigated the facts and concluded that the police orchestrated a black propaganda campaign, which aimed to deflect the blame for what had happened on to anyone other than themselves ..and.. I discovered that there was a 'Liaison Unit' consisting of six senior police officers . The role of the Liaison Unit appears to have been to orchestrate that campaign.. ..evidence shows that obviously someone at South Yorkshire Police is still conducting the same campaign"**

From: 'The Truth', written by a Hillsborough survivor.  
For further information, contact: Hillsborough Survivors, Relatives & Supporters for Justice Campaign, 134 Oakfield Road, Liverpool. Tel. 0151 260 5262. 

## Body Shop slips

Body Shop worldwide sales are dropping, and still Anita Roddick doesn't think 'her' workers need unions.

As the Solidarity Federation and London Greenpeace parallel campaigns continue against the Body Shop's anti-trade union policy, there are increasing signs of stress at head office. Letters from them in response to 'concerned' SolFed members cite their own social audit and head of Stakeholder Development, 'whose role is to ensure we recognise the needs of all our stakeholders, including employees..' in their defence. But we have their social audit report for 1997. It states that respect for company directors is plummeting amongst workers (p.59), and 30% of staff want union representation (p.60). Numerous other interesting figures are available.

For more info. and to join the Body Shop picketing, contact SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW. 

## BOSSES WELCOME WORKS COUNCILS

Only weeks after workers in France showed their recognition of the meaningless nature of Works Councils with abstentions at 65%+, a poll of British employers has shown their preferences.

Only 28% of employers in Britain would be against compulsory Works Councils for firms with over 50 employees, and only 17% would be opposed if they were to apply to all firms with over 250 employees. The legislation on Works Councils that will come into force next year in this country will only affect the largest firms, with employees in more than one European country.

The increasing acceptance of Works Councils by employers reflects the role they play in side-tracking unions.

The new Solidarity Federation booklet -

**"Out of the Frying Pan: a critical look at Works Councils"**, contains a detailed analysis of how they work, the experience of workers in France of Works Councils, and an alternative to the Works Councils model.

Price £1.50 from SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.

**Quote "DA Special Offer" and send only a pound!**

(cheques/POs to 'Solidarity Federation' - sorry, offer doesn't apply overseas due to postal rates)

## Solidarity Federation Events & Resources

(see below for addresses and telephone numbers)

### Casualisation of Employment in the Education Sector

Speakers and discussion covering schools, colleges (RE and HE) and universities. Organised by Education Workers Network, Norfolk & Norwich branch. 7pm, Monday, 28th September, 1998 at Norwich Solidarity Centre. Free admission.

### MacDonalds Workers' Solidarity Day - 12th October

Various actions are being organised across London on the 9th and 10th October. Contact North & East London SF for further details.

### Works Councils Open Meeting

Blair's plans for the unions, and the alternatives, including an introduction to how Works Councils function, the experiences of workers in France of Works Councils, and discussion of alternatives to management control of unions. October, 1998 (final date to be confirmed). Venue and contact; Norwich Solidarity Centre. Free admission.

### Africa Solidarity Group

New initiative supporting struggle in Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Sierra Leone and elsewhere. More people welcome - contact SE London SF.

### Health and Safety at Work: an anarcho-syndicalist approach.

New booklet with sections on health and safety "rights", gathering information, an effective direct action approach, case studies, recommended tactics and strategy, useful publications and helpful organisations, and a critical look at trades unions' record on taking action on health and safety. £1 (cheques to Solidarity Federation) from Solidarity Federation Contact Point.

### Norwich Solidarity Centre BOOKSHOP

For pamphlets, books, magazines, newspapers on: Workplace law - anarcho-syndicalism - health & safety info - anarchism - anti-fascism. Open every Saturday, 12 noon - 2pm.

## Solidarity Federation Addresses

**SF Contact Point: SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester, M15 5HW. Tel. 0161 232 7889**

### Networks - make contact with others in your type of work -

Transport Workers' Network, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR.  
Education Workers' Network, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.  
Public Service Workers' Network, PO Box 1681, London N8 7DN.  
Communication Workers' Network, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.

### Locals - get involved locally in regular meetings and action -

North & East London SF, PO Box 1681, London N8 7DN. Tel. 0181 374 5027  
South East London SF (Red & Black Club), PO Box 17773, London SE2 4WX. Tel. 0171 358 1854  
South Herts SF, PO Box 493, St Albans AL1 5TW.  
West Midlands SF, PO Box 6705, Redditch, Worcs. B97 6SQ  
Norfolk & Norwich SF (Norwich Solidarity Centre), Rm 13, Muspole Workshops, Muspole St, Norwich NR3 1QD.  
Manchester SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester, M15 511W. Tel. 0161 232 7889.  
Sheffield SF, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR.

To make contact with groups and individuals in the following areas get in touch through the SF Contact Point: Preston, Liverpool, Dover, Middlesborough, Chester-le-Street, Edinburgh, Bristol, Brighton, Glasgow, Somerset, Cardiff, Aberystwyth, Cambridge.

## Manchester SolFed

### Support and Advice Sessions

Victimised at work?  
Poor working conditions?  
Low wages? No union?  
Drop in -

First Tuesday of the month, 7-9pm, at:  
The Brow House, 1 Mabfield Road, Fallowfield,  
Manchester, or ring 0161 232 7889.

Also at the Brow House:

### Discussion Meetings

9pm First Tuesday of the month.

Manchester SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO,  
Manchester M15 5HW. ☎ 0161 232 7889

## North & East London

### Socials

Last Thursday of the month, 8pm.  
Near Camden Tube - details -

**SF, PO Box 1681, London N8 7DN**  
**Tel. 0181 374 5027**

We also hold advice surgeries and have regular discussion meetings. Drop us a line for details of times and places.

### Self-Ed Correspondence Course

New for autumn '98, course on History of Anarcho-syndicalism. Final closing date for 1998-99 year is October 16th. Costs £18 for 24 Unit course, or only £9 for DA Supporting Subscribers (cheques to 'Solidarity Federation'). Self-Ed, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR.

### Astrix Workers Co-operative

Vegan/veggie workers co-op needs a new worker with basic cooking skills. Start November 1998. Co-op housing available. Tel. (Birmingham) 0121 507 1200.

### POSTAL WORKERS

Victimised or bullied at work?  
CWN-SF are collecting information for their anti-bullying campaign. Contact them via the SF Contact Point (see main listing).

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(Issue No.s 4-7 will be sent unless you state otherwise)

# Minimum Wage Maximum Misery

**T**he Tameside care workers' dispute has been going on since March 1998 (see p.7 of this DA). It is tied up closely with the introduction of the minimum wage, which will have a major impact on everyone connected with the care home and domiciliary care sector.

Wages represent about 50% of the cost of running a care home. Some owners are alleged to have said they would like to pay care workers more, but their hands are tied, limited by the fees local authorities are willing to pay.

According to pay sector consultants Liang and Buisson, the minimum wage will add some £90m to the wage bills of private and voluntary care homes. It will, on average, add an extra £5-6 per week on fees. There will be big problems in north and north-east England, Scotland and Wales, where wages are currently the lowest. Nursing homes, which provide nursing care, (as opposed to care homes, which primarily provide help and support) tend to already pay above the minimum wage rate. Research for the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) has shown that in the East Midlands the average pay was £2.30 per hour for care workers. Similar figures were produced by research at the University of Kent. In fact, taking an approximate current national average care worker wage of £2.80, the total cost to the care

sector could easily exceed £100m per year. Local Councils, who generally pay the fees, hope to get extra money from central government to cover this extra cost. Representations have already been made by the ADSS and the Local Government Association to the Dept of Health and Dept of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR).

Any call for greater efficiency in care homes will lead to pressure on wages. All pressure on wages will lead to a reduction in the quality of service to the residents. The temptation of care homes to employ more young workers will become more or less irresistible because it will be possible to pay them less than the minimum wage. Some commentators would argue that this is unlikely, because 'young people could be earning more doing more glamorous jobs', however, a combination of market forces and tightening benefit regulations for young people may do just that. Already, many young people who want to go into nursing, but don't have the necessary qualifications, work in care homes to get experience and Non-Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

For care services still in the control of Local Authorities, there will be ever-increasing pressure. William Liang (of Liang and Buisson) argues that local authorities are paying over the odds for in-house services. He predicts that 'if

they can't make efficiency savings, they will have to look at reducing the number of placements to homes' (see; Liang, W, 'A Fair Price For Care?', Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1998).

There are stormy days ahead in the residential care sector. The Tameside Care Workers dispute is the first sign of the struggle to come. We can expect further disputes in the near future over the same issues. And it is not just a question of the care workers' wages. It is also a question of QUALITY of care. If so-called internal market forces are allowed to rage unchecked, we will have a system of elder care more reminiscent of the battery farming of poultry - totally abhorrent as this is. A system in which feeding, watering and toileting will be the sum total of care, with no regard for recipients' quality of life. The care workers will again become the 'custodians of the orifices', not care workers who are caring for human beings. What is in prospect, is thousands of care workers continuing to earn starvation wages for a demanding and undervalued job. We have been warned - and we must not let it happen.

Support the Tameside Care Workers (see p.7 for contact details). Oppose the undermining of public services. Contact Public Service Workers' Network, PO Box 29, SWPDO, Manchester M15 5HW. 



# A Dome too far?

**I**t has become great sport to use the new millennium dome to trash the Labour party. The Government's attempt to use the dome as a marketing tool in its mission to turn Britain into "cool Britannia" has met with a chorus of derision. Even before Labour's obnoxious marketing people were bought in, the Dome was a bad joke. Having no real use and a life span of only 25 years, in many ways it represents all that is wrong with modern consumerism.

The problem is that once we get past the Labour baiting, much of the criticism of the dome tends to be based on the negative of being weary of anything modern or new. The epitome of this bias is Prince Charles's populist "carbuncle" approach to architecture. His unwavering attachment to traditional design and building methods would have Britain become a working museum. This approach has finally come to fruition in the Prince's attempt to build a complete village based on traditional lines - where no doubt peace and harmony will reign, crime will be eliminated and people will pass their leisure time sipping warm beer while watching cricket. Just as it was in the good old days.

This tradition of romanticising the past has deep roots in British society, dating back to the 18th and 19th Centuries, when revulsion at the horrors of

industrialisation led many cultural figures to seek refuge in a nostalgic vision of the past glories of rural life. Even "progressive" developments like William Morris's Art and Craft movement were firmly rooted in the past, mourning the loss of some mythical golden era when "man" and the beauties of nature were at one. Most 19th Century English landscape paintings are little more than excessive tributes to the wonders of nature, devoid of any human presence. But then, why spoil nature's bounty by blotting the landscape with depictions of half starved agricultural labourers?

It is curious that, while the horrors of the industrial revolution are well documented in Britain, the horrors of the feudal system remain obscured and romanticised. This is not the case in many other countries. In France, rural life is portrayed much as it really was; desperate peasants, struggling against the elements in order to keep body and soul together.

This love of the traditional became firmly rooted in English culture during the Edwardian period, when the burgeoning middle classes made use of the growing mass transit system to escape the city in search of the wonders of the English countryside. It was during this era that the chocolate box view of rural life was created. The image still has much appeal today - almost a thousand people a week are

moving from the city in search of a better life in the country. English village life is in danger of being turned into little more than a theme park to fit the expectations of urban middle class commuters.

The tradition of progressive movements adopting a backward looking approach is also still very much with us. Some of those on the cutting edge of the environmental struggle, in their rush to get back to the Garden of Eden, have almost reached the point where technology is bad per se. It is odd that the 19th Century socialists and revolutionaries, who were capable of looking past the immediate horrors of capitalism to see that the technology capitalism has created could be used for human good, would today be seen as reactionary in many progressive circles.

While abhorring the waste and damage caused by production, we should be wary of looking back through rose-tinted glasses for solutions. While arguing that the Dome is a waste of money, let us do so on the grounds that it has no long-term function rather than a backlash against modernity. A truly progressive viewpoint is one that acknowledges that, in an alternative future society, modern materials and building methods will have their place in producing buildings designed to meet the needs of the user, while also being able to excite rather than merely reassure. 

## The Campsfield 9 Fiasco

**T**he prosecution on charges of riot of asylum-seekers at the privately run Campsfield detention centre/prison near Oxford has spectacularly collapsed. The prison is run by Group 4 Security, and is part of Home Secretary Jack Straw's drive to run prisons with the lowest paid labour possible and the minimum tolerable living standards. During the trial, it became apparent that Group 4 employees were enthusiastically implementing New Labour's policies. The conditions inside Campsfield were revealed as the dismal detention dungeons they are.

Though the life forced on detainees in Campsfield is clearly unfit for anyone, whatever their 'crime', it should be noted that the Campsfield 9 had done no wrong. In fact, they were done wrong to - hence they were seeking asylum.

From the word go, the trial was obviously an exercise in punishing those who are already victims of injustice. The detainees are Nigerian, who have fled the brutal military dictatorship in their country. Nonetheless, the riot charges were pushed all the way by senior members of the Labour government.

Fortunately, the high security, high-tech nature of the prison meant that all events were recorded on video camera. Following each piece of 'evidence' by Group 4 employees, their words could be measured against the appropriate video recordings. When the prosecution and Group 4 witnesses claimed the detainees had smashed telephones, a video recording revealed an officer smashing a telephone; when it was claimed detainees had attacked officers, video recordings revealed officers attacking detainees. At this point

the trial was stopped, before allegations that detainees had smashed the women's toilets could be disproved with recordings proving that Group 4 officers' boots had caused the destruction.

No company has made more from prison privatisation in Britain than Group 4, which already runs four prisons, two immigration detention centres and four prison escort services. It has now snapped up the prize of another of Jack Straw's pioneering Labour policies: child jails. The first children's jail opened in April, with staff for 40 children - and two 'offenders'.

Strangely, there appears to be no move to prosecute Group 4 for riot or vandalism. The determination of Labour to pursue justice is as great and as little as that of any other self-serving government. 

# Russia joins the soup queue

*...that's global capitalism!*

**S**ince the last major report in DA5, wage arrears in Russia's ten main sectors of the economy totalled R69,971 billion by July 1, up 4.6% from June.

Even when wages are paid, living standards are falling and poverty increasing. Russians' incomes have decreased by almost 7% this year. In the first quarter of 1998, 32 million people in Russia (21.8% of the population) had incomes below the official subsistence wage of 423 roubles a month. Meanwhile, Moscow has more BMW's and Mercedes Benz per capita than any other city in this planet, and casinos abound in the midst of general poverty and a declining life expectancy.

## Strikes and protests

The situation is critical for working people. State wages remain unpaid. Miners and their supporters picket the seat of government. Workers throughout the country block railway lines in a re-run of April's "Rail-War". Others block roads and highways. Mines and factories are occupied, with miners staying underground refusing to return to the surface. Anger spills over and, occasionally, groups of workers take employer, local politicians or political functionaries hostage. Marches and demonstrations take place throughout the country. Russia is grinding to a halt and this time demands are not only for wage arrears to be paid. Workers and trade unions are calling for the resignation of the government and above all the resignation of the President, Boris Yeltsin.

Trade unions are gearing up for a new massive Day of Action for October 7, 1998. Workers and their trade unions have finally run out of patience. Following the "Rail Wars" of April, the trade unions and the government set up a crisis headquarters and an agreement was made between them establishing a timetable for the elimination of the wage debt throughout the economy. The agreement expired on July 1,

1998. Wage debts have not been reduced. In fact, since the beginning of 1998, the debt has registered a 20-per-cent increase, reaching R70bn (11.2bn dollars) by July.

Coal miners have again been at the forefront of action. Together with frequent action by electric power workers, the result is that, by the end of July, coal stocks at Russian power stations had fallen to a "critical" point at 20% below normal levels.

## Case Study: Sakhalin

Power engineers on Russia's Pacific island of Sakhalin are preparing to provide electricity only to hospitals and water pumps because of the blockade of the main power station by striking miners. The head of Sakhalin's main utility, Sakhalinenergo, has stated that all devices with the exception of those maintaining human life would be switched off for the first time in the history of the island, famous for its severe climate.

Hundreds of Sakhalin coal miners, protesting against unpaid wages, have been blocking deliveries of fuel by rail to the island's main power station. Already, many of the island's 720,000 residents are without power for as much as 14 hours a day. Talks between miners and the local administration have again failed and the blockade continues. The miners are demanding wage arrears totalling 100 million roubles (16 million USD).

Deputies of the Sakhalin Region legislature, who gathered for an emergency session on August 3, 1998, described the striking miners' demands as fair. They said, however, that the blockade of the railway used for supplying fuel to the Sakhalin power plant was unacceptable. The deputies voted unanimously against any use of force against the striking miners and said that the conflict must be settled through talks.



They urged President Yeltsin to take urgent measures to settle the federal debts to Sakhalin Region. The Federal budget and the budgets of the municipal units of Sakhalin Region are said to owe about 800 million roubles to the Sakhalin power-industry. However, the deputy governor, Ivan Malakhov, said he would not permit stoppages at Sakhalin's key energy facility and would take any steps to lift the blockade. Miners viewed the declaration as a threat of force.

By August, criminal proceedings had been started against miners blocking the approaches to the Sakhalin power plant with organisers of the action being officially notified of the launch of the criminal proceedings. Enterprises of the fish processing industry and other structures said to be suffering colossal losses are said to have filed lawsuits, claiming damages estimated at around 600 million roubles.

It is now mid-August, and the miners continue to fully blockade the sidings leading to the Vakhrushevo power station. 70 rail cars carrying more than 4,000 tons of coal sit idle, just yards outside the entrance to the power generating station. 60 wagons of fuel have accumulated at Sakhalin's three railway stations and in the port town of Kholmsk. The Regional administration has sent a letter to Prime Minister Sergey Kiriyenko, asking him to arrange for an immediate payment of the federal debt of more than R180m to Sakhalinenergo, the island's power company. 

## Puerto Rico

After forty days on strike, several *paros* (one-day stoppages) in various government agencies and a two-day general strike, Puerto Rico's telephone workers have returned to work without attaining their objective: forcing the government to break its agreement to sell the state-owned Puerto Rico Telephone Company (PRTC) to a group of investors led by GTE.

The strike began last June 18 and, from the very beginning, it was evident that the government was intent on breaking it through a brutal show of force.

Labour came out of the corner it had been in for decades with the call for a general strike, and it discovered that it enjoys the sympathies of the overwhelming majority of the population.

Thousands of stickers in cars state that the phone workers strike is also *la huelga del pueblo* (the strike of the people).

About 200,000 workers took part in the general strike, mainly in the public sector. San Juan's International Airport was paralysed by a massive highway blockade by thousands of unionists, while all government offices, public transport, campuses of the University of Puerto Rico, and banks were closed.

The general strike was a huge success. The degree of activism, the palpable fighting spirit of hundreds of demonstrators on the street, and the repeated battles with the police meant that the Banco Popular and the main shopping malls were closed.

Despite police brutality and the obstacles created by union leaders, the struggle against the privatisation of the PRTC generated the widest social mobilisation in Puerto Rico since

the 1930's. As a result, the labour movement appears on the verge of a major realignment, which may open opportunities for the more progressive and militant sectors within it. Moreover, the strike has demonstrated that

there is a considerable sector of Puerto Rican society that is willing to join militant struggles, to the extent that they provide a real living alternative to the "politics as usual" of the three traditional electoral parties. In fact, on the very first day of work after the strike, it became evident that the struggle is not over: five minutes after the first shift started, hundreds of workers and their supporters were again on the streets, protesting repressive measures taken by management. Union officials immediately opposed these protests. That,

however, did not prevent the workers ignoring them and insisting on their demands. 



## Korea

In July, nearly 10,000 workers held a protest strike at the Hyundai Motors Ulsan plant despite temporary factory closure by the company. Workers, their families, and even city councillors rallied around the 100 metre tall smokestack, where three former union presidents held out in a sit-in protest.

The protest strike, with over 5,000 workers maintaining overnight vigil, began when the management officials went door-to-door to hand deliver notice of termination to some 2,500 workers over the weekend. On July 20, the management declared a temporary closure to prevent workers turning up to work in anger. Workers then reported to work to begin the protest action. 

## Kosova

Kosova, also known as Kosovo, is the disputed region between Kosova's Albanian majority and Serbia. Once an autonomous federal unit of Yugoslavia, it has been stripped of autonomy by the Serbian government. The Serbian authorities have closed schools in the Albanian language, dismissed Albanians from state-owned enterprises, and suspended Kosova's legal parliament and government. Systematic oppression of the Albanian population in Kosova by the Serbian government has continued unabated for several years, and has reached new heights with the latest military onslaught against both the Kosova Liberation Front and the local civilian population.

The Albanians of Kosova voted for an independent Kosova in the 1991 referendum, and the Kosova parliament duly declared the independence of Kosova, first from Serbia, then from the Yugoslav federation, after its disintegration. They have formed a parallel government, have found means of continuing Albanian-language education outside of occupied premises and providing health care (most Albanian doctors were dismissed from state-owned hospitals by Serb installed authorities).

In addition to organising themselves, the Kosovan people have been taking direct action against the Serbian aggression, since the spring. Turnouts of over 50,000 people on mass demonstrations are not uncommon and, following a period in March when the Serbian security forces held back for political reasons, such large gatherings are now met with brutal force as before. 

Serbian police approach a gathering in Kosova



## Anti-nuclear direct actions

**Belgium:** At the beginning of August, European antinuclear activists from Denmark, Belgium, Germany and Australia staged a protest action in Antwerp against the ship 'Arunbank', carrying 15 containers of yellowcake from ERA's Ranger uranium mine.

When the Arunbank loaded the uranium in Darwin a month ago, an activist locked himself onto a crane, four people swam in front of the ship in an attempt to prevent it from docking, and some others tried to lie in front of the trucks carrying the yellowcake but were violently removed by police.

The protest action had been started by 3 people, who offered the captain of the Arunbank a 'yellow cake'. As the cake was opened, people fell down as if dead.

**Russia:** The Kola anti-nuclear camp was established on 19<sup>th</sup> July, only 3,5 km from the Kola nuclear power plant (KNPP) that is currently in operation and 10 km from the site of the new MOX fuelled plant the authorities want to construct. The camp is formed by around 150 activists from Russia and other former Soviet republics, as well as from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, France and Germany. They demand:

- the closure of the old, dangerous and expensive Kola nuclear plant reactors;
- the rejection of the plan for construction of the new nuclear reactors that would be loaded with MOX fuel;
- the development and implementation of a regional program for the development of renewable energy sources.

Actions carried out by the campers during the last few weeks include leafleting campaigns and talks in cities near the KNPP; climbing training sessions; music concerts and a festival of environmental video-films. 

## Italy

On 5<sup>th</sup> March 1998, the Italian police arrested 3 anarchists on serious charges of "subversive association for the purpose of constituting an armed gang". They were accused of various direct actions linked to the popular struggle against the construction of the high-speed railway through the Val di Susa in Piemonte. Now only 1 of the 3 arrested anarchists remains alive. Edoardo Massari, a 38-year-old anarchist from Ivrea, died in the Vallette prison in Turin on 28 March. The authorities said he had hanged himself with a bed sheet. Maria Soledad Rosas, 22 years old and from Argentina, hanged herself on 11 July - choosing the same day and time to die as her companion Edoardo. At the time, she was under house arrest, forced to live in a residential home in the countryside near Turin. The surviving prisoner, Silvano Pelissero, undertook a month long hunger strike before he was transferred from the maximum-security prison of Novara to house arrest.

The anarchist and grass roots opposition movements have reacted to the deaths angrily and forcefully. There was a several thousand strong national demo in Turin on 4 April, following Edoardo's death, and a street blockade in Turin the day after Maria's death. On 18 July, demonstrators picketed Novara prison to demand the release of Silvano. Solidarity actions in Athens, Greece, on 28 July saw 10 cars go up in flames at the Italian embassy and at agencies belonging to Fiat and Alfa Romeo.

Info from:  
Umanita Nova, Corso Palermo 46, 10152  
Torino, Italy  
Tel/Fax 0039 11 857850  
E-mail [fat@inrete.it](mailto:fat@inrete.it) (weekly paper of the  
Italian Anarchist Federation)  
El Paso Occupato, Via Passo Buole 47,  
10127 Torino, Italy  
Tel 0039 11 317 41 07 (self-managed  
squatted social centre)  
For support and correspondence with  
imprisoned anarchists in Italy, contact  
CAAA, CP 67, 66010 Ari-Chieti, Italy. 

## US

**San Francisco:** When the fences went up around the grassy area at United Nations Plaza in San Francisco last November, Food Not Bombs volunteers had a pretty good idea of what they were for. When a volunteer from Food Not Bombs called the Department of Public Works, those suspicions were confirmed. The fences, he was told, were put up to keep the homeless off the grass. Such fencing-off of public space to keep "undesirables" out is nothing new, nor is it unique to San Francisco. FNB confronts these attacks on public access to public space with direct-action, by serving free vegetarian food and distributing literature in and around these spaces, and by speaking out and holding demonstrations.

And so, on July 14<sup>th</sup>, demonstrators converged on UN Plaza. Then the fences came down. At the end of the day, around thirty people had been arrested and charged with refusing to leave the scene of a riot and resisting arrest. A week later, on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, the fences around the grassy areas at UN Plaza were taken down. In time-honoured fashion, direct action gets the goods!

**Oregon:** In the early hours of August 2<sup>nd</sup>, following a performance by the revolutionary percussion collective "Tchkung!", activists tore down a fence surrounding the construction site of a new NIKE store. Signs and windows were defaced in and around the NIKE site. Police in riot gear responded but were unable to mobilise sufficient forces before the uprising dispersed. The NIKE 6000 square foot retail outlet continues to be a focus for local anger... 

## Germany

On June 13, around 150 anti-fascists demonstrated in Bad Segeberg, Germany, against Nazi activist Thekla Kosche. Kosche operates the far-right electronic mailbox system 'Asgard-BBS', a local branch of 'Nordland-Netz', which is an offshoot of the fascist computer network 'Thule-Netz'. Around 300 riot police were deployed during the demonstration. According to the police, the demo proceeded peacefully. Kosche and 20 other fascists were briefly detained when they turned up near the sight of the march.

The 'Thule-Netz', a network of 14 far-right electronic "mailboxes", has existed since the spring of 1993. In contrast to the open Internet, technophilic neo-Nazis can exchange their messages in this closed network with relative security, safe from intrusions. 



# Struggle under a midnight sun



**S**ince 1992, the creation of 200,000 new jobs has brought almost zero unemployment. Why? Because Norway is an 'investor's dream' - it gives one of the world's best rates of return. But all is not well for the vast majority of people who work for a living. Here, we review recent developments within the Norwegian labour movement in response to current economic trends - and examine the possibilities for real change.

Foreign investments in Norway give a 7.9% profit, compared to the "mere" 5.9% earned by Norwegian investments abroad. The oil industry, in particular, gives a very attractive 13% return. Last year, for instance, foreign capitalists took £4 billion in profit out of Norway.

A few other figures generated by the Norwegian economy include over £8 billion held abroad - not bad for a population of 4.5 million - while Norwegian capitalists invested more than £3.5 billion abroad. Despite the piles of cash, cuts in welfare have continued under the name of modernisation. The health sector is mainly financed by local and regional municipal bodies, which struggle to get state money. There is now a health crisis despite the rosy economic figures. The state and the capitalists claim that investing profits in Norway would only cause inflation. This is naturally an excuse to keep workers' living standards down, to hide the profits robbed by the rich, and to promote

Norwegian imperialism. We need only mention expanding companies like Hydro, Statoil, Orkla and Kværner.

While the official unions are increasingly in the pocket of capitalism and the Norwegian state, breakaway tendencies are emerging in response to the union bosses' machinations. We also look at our IWA comrades, the NSF, their activities within the labour movement, and their possibilities in the current climate.

At present, more than 55% of Norwegian workers, including part-time workers, are organised. There are 800,000 members in LO, and there are also 2 smaller union blocs, AF and YS. Like the TUC, LO is firmly in the grip of social democracy. However, it has the close links to the state which John Monks et al would dearly love to see here in Britain.

Every two years, LO sits down with the bosses to negotiate the national agreement. Although LO doesn't represent all workers (nor are all bosses represented), their agreement covers the whole workforce. In Norway, the three "social partners" - LO, the employers and the state - have long co-operated in classic corporatist style, for almost as long as LO has existed. The aim is to better control industrial relations and so limit industrial unrest.

## potted history

The LO was formed in 1899 and soon hitched itself to the Labour Party. By the start of World War I, a strong semi-syndicalist tendency, Fagoppositionen, had appeared within its ranks to oppose the reformist leadership. This was successful

in that it took over LO but, in many ways, it continued the reformist work of the previous leadership. In 1916, several local and independent unions were founded. These differed from existing labour organisations, as their members were mostly Swedes and were linked to the Swedish syndicalist organisation, SAC, rather than LO. When they started recruiting Norwegians and organising their own strikes, conflict with LO was inevitable.

A meeting between LO, SAC, Fagoppositionen and the local unions couldn't solve the conflict, so at the end of 1916, the local unions founded the Norwegian Syndicalist Federation, NSF. In the next few years, NSF tried to become the leading labour organisation, to enable the working class to destroy capitalism and build a socialist society. Such a project challenged both the establishment and forces that were already pursuing their own paths towards social change.

The government, employers and LO, despite conflicting interests, established a teetering system of industrial relations. Negotiations between the employers and LO were regulated, as were the means through which workers' organisations could fight disputes. In NSF's eyes, such rules were aimed at preventing revolution, and they fought back. The establishment responded by arresting and deporting more than 1,000 foreign syndicalists from Norway during 1917-18. Just after World War I and during the 1920's, NSF was involved in many local strikes, some won, some lost. But in the 1930's, NSF was crushed, and it virtually disappeared during

World War II and the fascist occupation of Norway. After this point, LO established itself as the only union bloc in Norway and indeed, since 1935, it has negotiated national agreements with the bosses.

## the militant 90s

The basis of the Norwegian union system is the club, the local organisation in a workplace. A club organises all workers with similar jobs. The next level is a local, which is linked directly to a union. During disputes, actions are organised by the club, but the "right" to organise strikes formally belongs to the union. However, even a national union cannot take workers out on strike before LO says so. The central board of LO consists of leaders of the different national unions, and it is they who decide if a union has the right to strike. In practice, therefore, it is only when the two-yearly negotiations between LO and the employers fail that workers have a right to strike at all. All other strikes in Norway are illegal!

The period 1992-96 can be better understood in the knowledge that in 1986 the Labour government began transforming Norway using rising unemployment as a tool to fight inflation and to discipline the unions. LO actively participated in this process through its 'social partnership' arrangements with the employers and the state. Plans made in the late 1980's have been tried out in the 1990's so, like other countries, Norway has seen many struggles against 'flexibilisation of the labour market'.

The first of these involved the electricians in Oslo. They took action in 1991 against short term contracts and, in 1993, they blockaded a motorway tunnel south of Oslo to stop 'flexible' work. During the winter of 1992, workers at Tollpost (a transport firm) took unofficial action and opened many people's eyes to the serious problems caused by the casualisation of labour. The official transport strike in 1994 over the national agreement showed that the Tollpost struggle was more than a flash in the pan. Later in 1992, lift engineers in Bergen went on unofficial strike for the right to share jobs by rotation rather than some individuals being completely laid off. In 1994 they were fined for that strike, but their use of direct action had already won them the right to share jobs, a right established in the national agreement. Since then, both the electricians and lift engineers have been involved in a number of struggles and, during 1994, their local union's delegates

Transport workers on strike ⇒

Transport on strike ↓



were excluded by their national union.

The transport workers, electricians and lift engineers formed a support group for SAS-Hotel workers in Oslo. Their fight, which still continues, started in 1991, since when SAS has used all possible means to destroy the union. The victories of the SAS-Hotel workers so far are also a result of the anti-authoritarian tradition of their union. Their methods have included building a safe environment among the workers (regardless of skills, colour and sex), high local activity, a direct action attitude to solving problems, no full-time shop stewards and an efficient use of the media. An important victory was won last March, when the company decided not to appeal in the case of 18 sacked workers. This move was seen as an attempt by SAS to calm the conflict down before it sold its hotel arm earlier this year. So far, we have learnt of no conflicts with the new bosses.

1998 has seen major strikes in the transport and brewing sectors, among others. In May, a successful and widespread bus and lorry drivers' strike for a modest pay rise saw LO and YS co-operating for the first time on a local level. The strike's success came in spite of warnings from Norwegian postal service bosses to sue transport workers for all losses during the strike. The post wasn't directly involved,



but a blockade of railway stations meant that mail containers couldn't be collected. Also in May, the national agreement in the brewing industry was overturned after the threat of industrial action. Given this threat to the 40% of their annual sales, which are made around National Day (May 17th) and the short summer, the brewery bosses quickly gave in.

## LO lumbers on

The involvement of LO in the corporatist system in partnership with the employers and the government has widened the gap between the members and the leadership. The wage negotiations in 1992, 1994 and 1996 saw a high number of strikes, in comparison with the 1980's, against deals negotiated by LO unions. LO has become an organisation that offers services and welfare, an organisation that has less to do with workers' interests. Central to this strategy of "becoming one big bureaucratic union" is the need to crush independent and militant unions.

LO, along with the employers, have proposed that only unions with over 100,000 members should have the right to negotiate and to strike. This has already split the militant oilworkers federation (OFS), with the majority leaving LO to join YS. Last year, LO agreed the Principal Act

with the employers. This means workers and shop stewards who are disloyal to the company by "misusing sensitive information" are now liable to fines of up to £30,000. SAS-Hotel workers would have faced six-figure fines due to the use they made of the media. Another change they want to bring in is to limit the number of organisations in a workplace to one. Having more than one, it seems, creates "trouble and confusion" among the bosses. Yet another of LO's aims are new workplace representation rules so that, to be recognised in a workplace, a union would need 10% of the workforce and, if an organisation already exists there, this rises to 30%. Additionally, the Norwegian parliament has been discussing a proposal which would mean that, as in Britain, unions would be required to give advance warning of strikes.

Such legal restrictions on the freedom to organise, the right to negotiate and the right to strike can only centralise negotiations into the hands of LO's leadership, and link the right to strike to the right to negotiate only. So no more local rights to strike. Against this trend, we have already seen that, throughout the 1990's, groups of workers have been increasingly prepared to take action illegally, unofficially and independently. This is a situation which looks set to continue, with the advent of virtual full employment. It is also a situation that has seen an increasing audience for anarcho-syndicalist ideas.



## the NSF in the 90s

As LO, along with their so-called social partners, have tried to put plans for "flexibilisation of the labour market" into practice during the 1990's, the NSF has been central in predicting and describing the resulting attacks on the Norwegian working class. Our material has been widely circulated and local unions have helped us out with this work.

NSF members have taken part in disputes and actively supported strikes. The various conflicts of the SAS-Hotel workers in Oslo have been the main focus of our activity. However, we have also supported other unions such as the electricians, transport workers, lift engineers and oil workers. Internationally, the NSF has supported an illegal and unofficial bus drivers' strike in Esbjerg, Denmark, and refuse workers in Århus, also in Denmark. We have also backed various IWA initiatives, sending money to Chilean miners, car workers in Northern Ireland and faxes to Mexico, Tenerife, Colombia and Chile.

In 1994, we organised two successful conferences with union activists who NSF members work with. One proposal which arose from these was to spread the anarcho-syndicalist approach to solving problems to other parts of Norway besides Oslo. As a result, we organised a conference in 1995 in the town of Moss. We are continuing to prioritise the building of new local

federations.

In April 1996, we held our most successful conference so far. There were speakers from various Norwegian unions, the CNT from Spain and the Liverpool dockers. We exchanged experiences of direct action and discussed the meaning of the slogan "the emancipation of the working class must be the task of the workers themselves".

## Liverpool Dockers

The presence of Liverpool dockers led directly to widespread support work in Norway. Within a few weeks, the Local Transport Workers Union of Oslo started to co-ordinate support work. This increased rapidly after two dockers toured Norwegian unions and workplace organisations. One local rail organisation at Linjegods in Oslo sent £11,000; the Congress of the Transport Workers Federation sent £25,000; even LO's Congress, in spite of leadership opposition, voted to send £10,000. In addition, thousands of pounds came from many local unions and branches. The NSF also collected money, and two comrades visited Liverpool last summer.

## May days & prospects

The NSF and the anarchist organisation Folkemakt have organised 2 successful May Day events. Last year there was a speaker from the Liverpool dockers; the film Flickering Flame (directed by Ken Loach) was shown; there were contributions by two Spanish women living in Oslo about anarcho-syndicalism and the CNT, and by comrades from the Swedish Syndicalist Youth Federation (SUF) and the Swedish anarchist magazine, *Brand*; there was a thank you from the SAS-Hotel workers for all the support they were given.

This year's film was about the conflicts in Telemark county (southern Norway) throughout the existence of the NSF, and there was an appeal for support for dockers in Australia.

The near future will see new NSF groupings in the education and postal sectors. We have contacts with other militant workers who are considering breaking with the increasingly dangerous LO, and we continue to co-operate with the anarchists of Folkemakt. While the NSF remains relatively small, we are growing substantially, both in number and in the general influence of our ideas. The result? We have more confidence and optimism about our future than we have had for many years. 

## TORJUS BERGLAND 1932-1997

Torjus was born in southern Norway in 1932 and began trade union work at an early age. By the age of 26, he had to apply for jobs in Sweden after being black-listed for forming a local workplace organisation at a shipyard. He even worked for some years in Germany before returning to Norway. He became known as a militant and well-respected metal worker and came into contact with the NSF in the late 1970's. He very actively participated in the NSF support work for comrades in Chile and elsewhere in Latin America. Torjus very strongly identified with the fate of the Chilean comrades and they did not forget him. In the early 1980's, Torjus helped organise a foreign workers' union commission against increased racism and in support of immigrant workers and refugees. He always agitated for the NSF and anarcho-syndicalism. He had a principled, but not "sectarian" attitude. He was an enemy of the capitalist system! Torjus left us last year after a one year fight against cancer. We have asked ourselves if it was the 40 years of welding in shipyards or the last 5 years on oil rigs that made him ill, but mourning does not help. We know we have lost a comrade that we can't get back, but we'll continue where he left off - for the self-emancipation of the workers!

# Political Parenting

A woman's right to choose? New Labour plays happy families...

**The nuclear family is in decline. Social change is rapid throughout the 'developed' world. The signs are clear; rising divorce rates, falling birth rates, more women entering the workplace, more lone parents, gay couples living open lives, and so on. While many people have good reason for huge sighs of relief at the passing of the nuclear family, New Labour is planning the next move...**

The post-war ideal of the family in which the father goes out to work while the dependent mother stays at home to mind the children no longer matches social reality.

In America, this social change has led to a right wing backlash, with the steady growth of a highly-organised pro-family movement which is socially conservative, overtly anti-feminist and anti-homosexual. To get their reactionary message over, this pro-family movement has focused in on the growing number of fatherless families, claiming that they are the cause of much of society's woes, from rising crime to lower educational aspirations, to increasing incidents of child abuse. They see the 'solution' in a host of regressive legislation, including stricter divorce laws and savage welfare cuts. They even advocate laws to make sperm banks and fertility services strictly only available to heterosexual married couples. Mothers attempting to raise children without the presence of a man are the cause of the downfall of civilisation as the conservative right

*the fact that Labour's attitude is couched in feminist language should not lull women into a false sense of security*

knows it.

In Britain, the pro-family lobby remains in its infancy compared to the US. The strongest indication of its influence occurred in the early 1990's, when an ideological onslaught by the Tories was launched against lone parents. This reached a peak in 1993, with Tory ministers lining up to castigate lone parent mothers as welfare scroungers, the cause of moral decline, rising crime and Britain's growing "dependency culture." The 'popular' press supported these attacks, with numerous articles attacking lone mothers - the headlines "Single Parents Cripple Lives", in the Telegraph, and "Wedded to Welfare" and "Do They Want to Marry a Man or the State", in the Express, are typical examples.

Unfortunately for the Tories, these attacks did not go down too well with voters in general and women in particular. As the election approached, with their support among women plunging alarmingly, the Tories panicked and began to stress their commitment to lone parents and working mothers. However, this dramatic policy shift came too late, only serving to portray the Tories as confused on the issue of the family.

## new saviours

New Labour sought to cash in on the Tory's lone parent fiasco, portraying the Tories as a sexist, backward-looking and male-dominated party, while portraying themselves as the party of women's equality and cultural diversity. Central to this theme was the idea that work empowered women, so it must be encouraged by the Labour Party,

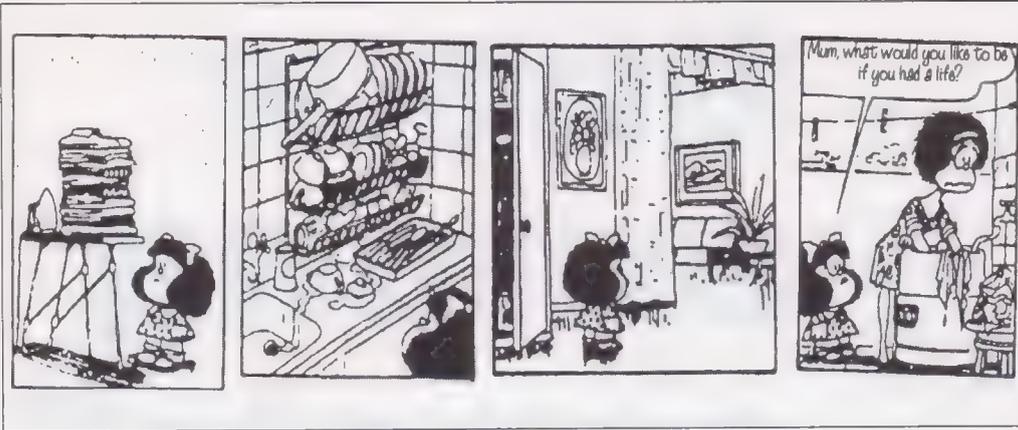
through the introduction of greater state provision of child care. Great play was also made of the fact that they had acted to ensure a greater number of women MPs entered Parliament. These new women MPs were going to end the culture of confrontation that had characterised the male-dominated British political scene for so long. New Labour would govern based on 'women's' values of care and cooperation.

Behind all this gloss, New Labour's commitment to the two-parent family was little different to that of the Tories. They too saw lone parent families, not as a different yet equally valid way of raising children, but as a problem to be solved. A pre-election document produced by Labour on parenting is full of the same bigoted stereotypes that had typified the Tory attacks on lone parents. The section entitled "Children living with lone parents" demonstrated its contempt with such 'positive' sections as "Parenting Problem Areas", "Children in Public Care" and "Children with 'Attention-Deficit' Disorders".

## the new reality

One real difference between New Labour and the old Tories' approach, was that they recognised that lone mothers could not be driven into marriage. They accepted that lone-parent families were a social reality, and they have now brought forward policies designed to mitigate the 'problems' that lone parenting supposedly created.

The centrepiece of New Labour's new policy is the idea of forcing lone-parents, particularly women, into paid employment. This has a number of



had a section entitled "Our Flexible Friends", which dispels any illusions about the free market attitude to women.

## new patriarchy

While the dangers of the pro-family movement in America are reviled by many in Britain, there is little discussion of the dangers and implications of Labour's policies on the family and the role of women. This is understandable, given the Labour smooth talk about empowering women and women's equality. Hardly a word is mentioned of how, having 'empowered' women into the workplace, they intend to tackle the greater exploitation and inequality women face when they get there. Nor do we hear much from Labour about the social inequality women suffer, which means many have to accept low paid temporary work in the growing service sector. Such structural sexism can only worsen as more women are forced into the (still) male-dominated world of paid work. Meanwhile, unpaid work in the home is still done by women - despite talk of 'new men'. Research repeatedly shows that the burden of raising children and running the household remains overwhelmingly the task of women.

The current reality is that the only way women can gain even the very limited economic independence gained from paid employment is by finding ways of combining housework with paid work. Little wonder then that the only way this can be achieved is by accepting 'flexible' hours and part-time working.

Patriarchy and capitalism combining to exploit women is hardly new. What is new is that this is being dressed in the language of feminism. No one should be fooled by this ploy. Labour's policy towards the family differs from the Tories only in that Labour is tailoring the family to meet capitalist needs for an increase in the number of women workers. In this respect, as in many others, Labour is in tune with modern capitalist thinking. Though we may find the ranting of the American new right obnoxious, in the long term it may be Labour's ideas that prove to be the more dangerous. 

attractions. Firstly, it will save money by cutting welfare payments. Secondly, the plan is that lone-parent women and their children can be weaned off their current 'dependency' on welfare. The main mechanism to be used is the stick of cutting benefit and introducing a harsher welfare regime for lone parents. If there is a carrot involved, it is in encouraging lone parents into work by providing tax breaks and more childcare.

Accompanying the general economic blackmail of single parents, Labour plans to introduce some form of direct state control over 'wayward' children and 'bad' parents. The notion of 'problem families' is to be taken seriously, and these families are to be forced into line. As yet, they appear unsure of just how state intervention can be made to work in this area. Watch this space.

## new families?

Labour's approach to lone parenting forms part of its wider approach to women and the family, which is based on vague words about equality within the household and women's right to paid employment. Labour argues that, in order for the family to survive, it must become a democratic institution, with women having an equal say and the opportunity to pursue a career. This differs clearly with the American New Right, that argues for the woman's place in the home as a child raiser (and by implication, against any other role for women).

However, the fact that Labour's attitude is couched in feminist language should not lull women into a false sense of security. Labour's

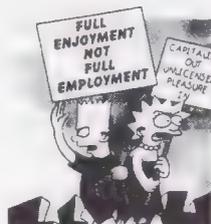
thinking is completely in tune with free market orthodoxy, and modern capitalism has no intention of driving women back into the home. On the contrary, a modern service-based economy requires increasing numbers of women to join the workforce. But capitalism's requirement for more women workers has little to do with women's rights and everything to do with the greater exploitation of women.

## new slavery

Just how in tune the Labour's approach is with market capitalism can be gauged from the pages of 'The Economist'. In a recent in-depth special survey on working women, the magazine stressed its feminist commitment by welcoming the growing number of women workers and rallying against workplace inequality. In distancing themselves from new right thinking, the authors made it clear that, even if the increased number of women workers is undermining the 'traditional family', this is no reason to "drive women back to the stove". They also proposed avoiding the problem of falling birth rates leading to a future shortage of (cheap) labour, by increasing state support for working mothers and liberalising immigration laws.

The Economist's free market feminists went on to point out that "women workers have been a godsend to the booming US economy...they usually cost less to employ, are more prepared to be flexible and less inclined to kick up a fuss if working conditions are poor...with far fewer of them in unions." Part of the survey

*capitalism's requirement for more women workers has little to do with women's rights and everything to do with the greater exploitation of women*



While the establishment is ever intent on fanning the flames of social stigma, people seek real and effective ways of fighting back.

# Queer among equals?

**T**here has been a frenzy on lesbian and gay law reform lately.

**In fact, ever since President-elect Blair spoke in favour of 16 in the Age of Consent debate in 1994, murmurings about equal opportunities have continued.**

**Meanwhile, in the real world, anti-discrimination is a pressing issue both in and outside the workplace.**

Being queer, I feel strongly about the need for anti-discrimination measures. However, as an anarcho-syndicalist, I am opposed to the structures within which such measures would be applied. This is not purism - I've actually been involved in challenging an act of discrimination through these very structures. Experience tells me it won't deliver.

Many businesses and service providers boast of being Equal Opportunity Employers. Lisa Grant's case against South-West Trains has shown such boasts both to be hollow when it comes to costing money or challenging management diktat, and to

be legally worthless. After three and a half years fighting to get her employer to include her partner Jill Percey in spouses' company benefits, the case was finally lost in June. The High Court rejected her appeal against a ruling that she can not sue her employer for breach of contract over failing to comply with its own Equal Opportunities Policy.

Even if an Equal Opportunities Policy was a legally-enforceable part of a contract of employment, that would guarantee nothing. Such organisations have become expert in disguising discrimination, focusing on the means of victimisation, not the context which reveals its discriminatory character. Human Resources Consultants (personnel advisers to you) specialise in advising managers how to deal with those of us picked out for victimisation without giving legal grounds for discrimination suits.

This already happens in race, sex and disability discrimination cases where there is legal "protection". Similar measures would be used to get round any Sexual Orientation Discrimination legislation, should it manage to overcome the "family-oriented" (read "right wing") Christians who dominate the government. The heart of the problem lies in facing the boss, or the law, as an individual case. This happens both in law and in workplace Grievance Procedures.

## individual cases

If you are lucky enough to work where there is still a functioning recognised trade union, you are likely to get sucked into the latter. Once again,

the focus is on technicalities, not realities. Legal implications are paramount because Grievance Procedures are there to avoid potentially embarrassing and costly compensation cases. In an atmosphere where workplace organisation, let alone industrial action, is seen as ultra-left posturing, the role trade unions are claiming for themselves as "social partners" is as the safety net for the bosses.

Without a trade union representative pursuing a point, complacency is likely to set in. Image conscious bosses, such as Local Authorities, value the role conventional unions play in identifying the cracks in their image before anyone else notices. The latter also serve to channel collective anger and expressions of solidarity with a workmate discriminated against or harassed into a forum where the damage can be limited, the details made confidential, and the individual isolated from the support which forced the bosses to address the issue.

Trade unions did not deliberately seek out this role. They have, however, consciously adopted it in order to find a role which will justify membership. Their over-riding financial priorities - pension funds, banks, investments, etc. - made the Tories' anti-union laws, supported by a Labour Party which has undergone its own parallel change of role, effective. The sequestration of funds due to supporting, or not suppressing, effective industrial action, would pose a real threat to the corporate survival of the existing unions.



The attacks on unions which culminated in the defeat of the miners in 1984-85, and of the print unions a year later, destroyed the credibility of industrial action as a means of defending jobs, pay and conditions. In Local Government, where much of the impetus for Equal Opportunities had been built up, this was followed up by the destruction of "municipal socialism" through Rate Capping and the Poll Tax. The Labour Party shifted rightwards under this onslaught - Blair did not fall from the sky.

## enter SolFed

Contrary to popular myths, anarcho-syndicalism is not simply trade unionism by anarchists, subject to the same critique as the conventional unions. Anarcho-syndicalism is itself a critique of the existing unions, both theoretically and, where we are organised in the workplace, in practice. Since our organised presence in recent times has been almost exclusively within the European Union, that critique has been focused on opposition to participation in Works Councils and other union elections.

Solidarity Federation, however, has its origins in a critique of the existing unions' approach to industrial relations in Britain, based on our own experiences. We refer to this system as "social democracy". It is based on the idea of the employer's and employees' representatives sitting together on Joint Committees to resolve disputes without resort to industrial action. This used to be called Corporatism, a system borrowed from (Italian) fascism, and based on the idea that the state was a third partner, an honest broker.

Nowadays, overt state intervention is not on the agenda, even for social democrats. Hence 'Social Partnership' - a new name for New Britain. The state's role is restricted to providing a legal framework which forces the unions to seek "partnership" with the bosses, who are under no real pressure to play ball, and are consequently less enthusiastic about the idea.

Anarcho-syndicalism starts from the basic premise that the exploitation and oppression of working people is fundamental to the functioning of capitalism. Social democracy is also opposed to exploitation and oppression, but not to capitalism, believing that

capitalism is the goose that lays the golden egg.

Rather than kill the goose, social democrats believe that exploitation and oppression can be minimised by regulation, and seek the role of regulators. While many of them would love to be more militant, and understand the usefulness of industrial action, they are committed to playing by whatever rules are laid down for them. Debates among social democrats are about the rules, not the game.

## change the game

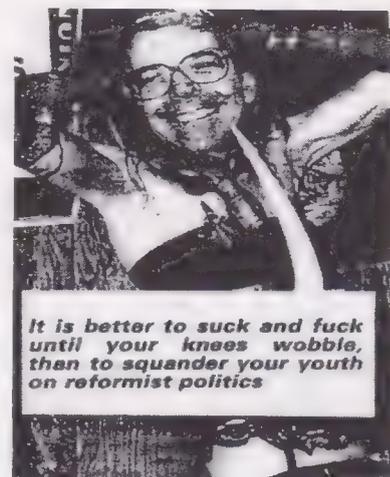
For anarcho-syndicalists, the goal of getting rid of capitalism in order to end our exploitation and oppression determines our approach to "industrial relations". We are forced to play the game, but we must work to change it, not just the rules. A fully-fledged anarcho-syndicalist union with a mass membership and an organised workplace presence would be playing a different game, and boycotting Joint Committees and individually-based Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures. Its very existence must challenge the legitimacy of the boss and seek to undermine capitalist social relations.

The individual or small group of anarcho-syndicalists has the task both of playing the game and of trying to change it, not just the rules. The way to change the game is to play it on terrain favourable to the workers, rather than on the existing field determined with agreement from the bosses. That field favours those discriminating against you. The only way to drag the fight onto terrain favourable to us is through collective action.

## direct action

Real direct action, as opposed to protests, is about forcing the police, the government or the boss to concede your demands without getting sucked into individual cases. The latter involve discarding the initial anger at injustice and enthusiasm for fighting it, and dragging out a process which stifles or limits the scope for gains. It also supports the armies of lawyers, trade union officials and politicians who make a living from mediating conflict.

Not that direct action is 100% effective in all cases, but not only is it more likely to get results, it will bring wider benefits. The advantage, or catch,



Well John, I agree - but the important thing is to do this at the same time as direct action - REVOLUTIONARY politics...

for those of us confronting heterosexism is that it requires people to be open about who they are and what they are fighting for to get their workmates, neighbours and friends to fight alongside them. Tricky if you're not confident of their support and commitment - although often it's your only real option. And even if you're not successful, you may gain a greater measure of acceptance from the fight. Winning in individual cases will only bring a grudging tolerance with no relevance to the people you live and work with. Direct action forces people to confront the issues and to overcome their own fears and prejudices, because they have no-one to leave "the politics" to. Fighting for something together heightens both confidence and political consciousness.

For those who believe that 'straights' cannot be trusted, here are a couple of examples which have shaped my perspective. First of all, was it Hackney Council's status as an "Equal Opportunity Employer" which saved lesbian Headteacher Jane Brown from Education Director Gus John's high profile campaign to sack her? Or was it the support for her from parents and governors at her school? Jane Brown's crime was not being a lesbian as such, but challenging the educational value of a play "exclusively about heterosexual love". This is officially regarded as putting your "personal interests" before those of the children in your charge.

Similarly, a gay man got sacked from a school for failing to disclose a Caution (not a conviction, mind) for

(cont'd on page 33..)

# letters

Send letters to: DA-SF (letters), PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR. ALL letters are welcome. Make yours incisive, brief and questioning if you want it printed.

## Which way Ireland?

Dear DA

With regards to the 'Which Way Ireland?' article in DA7, comments made against those opposing The (Good Friday) Agreement suggest Organise! have been 'sucked in' to a pro-capitalist/sectarian stance, sadly, along with a sizeable proportion of the island's working class. I might add that all have effectively been pushed by the British and Irish ruling class media into the belief that the country will be plunged towards a war the likes of which has never been seen before. The Agreement, however, offers 'peace', with huge multinational inward investment, creating thousands of 'peace jobs'. Basically, this means low-waged, non-unionised slave labour, not forgetting the continuation of sectarianism in the day to day lives of our class.

To ignore the realities of the ongoing dominance of the British Government and the Loyal Orange Order, by 'going with the flow' of things in this so-called 'transitional period', sends the wrong messages to the IWA, the anarchist movement in general and to your readers.

I would agree that there is a groundswell of desire for change on the island of Ireland. This is understandable, given the situation we live under, in both States. That desire has affected greatly the mindsets of those involved in armed action and their political parties, even the groups on the republican side opposed to The Agreement. Still, they have damn-all to offer to our class. That's why they're engaged in the fatally flawed, pro-capitalist peace process, isn't it?

The article states Organise! 'cannot predict what the peace process will be' for our class, and that 'The Agreement does, after all, institutionalise sectarianism'. Such contradictions leave our anarchist politics ineffectual to our class. Of course, the nature of sectarian politics in the 6 Counties does make our job all the more difficult. But to say we have no alternative to this or any other Government-backed 'Tom foolery' initiatives is utter nonsense.

The article also fails to make sense of The Agreement; 'just maybe this peace agreement will take the guns out of northern Irish politics, or at least limit their impact'. To put it simply, it won't.

So what can the anarchist movement do to forward the class struggle in northern Ireland? My answer would be to build our alternative to the sectarian politics that already exist and not to add to it!

In solidarity, JB

I am sure Organise! don't feel they have all the answers, or one, coherent, 'right and correct' view of the situation in the north of Ireland. Equally, I am sure they do agree with your aims, and will continue to help build the alternative to sectarian politics that is so badly needed. (see reviews - Rebel Worker, and Closer Look, p.31, for more on Ireland in this DA) - ed.

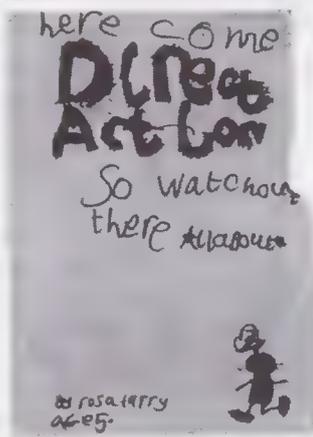
## Batistuta

Dear DA,

As a follow-up to the DA7 Nationalism theme, I thought you may be interested in a piece I saw about the more human side of the recent World Cup. Batistuta, interviewed by an Italian journalist, explained that he was 12 years old at the time of the Falklands war. They were victims of propaganda, he recalled. "I think it was the same with Saddam and the Iraqi people in the Gulf War. They told us about great victories, then suddenly we got the lists of the dead." The journalist pressed him on the Falklands, and he continued, "no-one really won. In war, the only trophies are the dead." It wasn't just English newspapers that used football to revive the conflict, some Argentinian newspapers did the same. "But people in sport have different values. Whether they're veterans like Shearer and me, or youngsters like Owen and Ortega, we all absorb certain values and we can use sport to display them. Sport can express peace and real values, not false ones."

I'm not sure the performance of various other players entirely supports Batistuta's claim, but it is a nice thought.

TL



Is Rosa DA's youngest supporter? She is certainly our youngest contributor ..so far.

Dear DA

I like the libertarian and class basis to DA, but what I'm not sure about is where you stand on psychiatry. Do you believe in psychiatrist unions? Because I don't. There are some decent people within mental health services who have a right to be in a union, but psychiatrists, on the whole, are not a respectable profession because they control political dissent. What about the responses and protests of the 'patients/prisoners', and where do our jobs and unions fit into this? I am on psychiatric benefit for a 'psychiatric illness', and to dispel the myth that people like me are parasites (because we do suffer from extreme mental distress), one reason I don't work is because I've never been prepared to put up with the abusiveness of authority in a work situation. I've always believed that pompous people should be taken down a peg or two. And I treat everyone the same, hopefully with mutual respect.

I read one article in DA by a person saying that direct action was better than Prozac, which I can believe, but I'd like to read more on anti-psychiatric issues, and especially on children's rights, which is a very marginalised issue/struggle. I know you've

## Food fads

Dear DA,

DM (letters, DA7) is right to say that the culprit in the food production industry is capitalism. It has ensured we got BSE, are getting GM food disorders (my prediction) and we will continue to get similar disasters and worse, as long as it continues. However, it is utter nonsense for DM to say that our 12,000 year history of 'fairly stable and sustainable' MIXED farming practices is a reasonable argument for favouring mixed as opposed to vegetable-based farming methods.

Any competent organic gardener will tell you that, as long as you use all available garden compost and kitchen waste, animal manure and other animal by-products are totally unnecessary. Since we are on a smallish island, it is also often possible to use seaweed manure, which is nutritionally much better than the animal variety. Furthermore, non-intensive farmers regularly "green manure" crops, growing, say, lupins and then ploughing them in before they reach the flowering stage (so providing nitrogen and other sustenance).

Those who hark back to the need for horse shit have really been misguided by either the deliberate focus of intensive farming away from real efficiency in closing so-called 'energy circles', or have got stuck in some misconceived glorification of the past. On the latter, it is no secret to agro-historians that huge environmental problems caused by farming methods apparently led to or assisted many of the great emigrations of the last few thousand years - it's just that now, we are running out of places to emigrate to.

And if you really do need animal faeces so much to make your particular garden grow, recycling of human waste has barely been explored in this connection. And this is a HUGE energy and nutrient loop still to be connected.

PC

done some bits about the effects and causes of child abuse, and I'd like to see more on central children's rights, i.e. children's rights as separate from that of adults in relation to them. I find a lot of liberal-socialists have a very mentalist, pathological, and disorientated view of children's minds, which they see in absurd and regressive terms. Children often act absurd when they are being absurdified in situations, given only negative choices, and put in a no-win position. Children are often portrayed by the media as isolated individuals incapable of understanding social struggles. This is a false view. Children's minds are often very lucid. I heard recently that children were marching in Albania against the use of children as 'soldiers' in civil war. Children's minds are important, and should be seen in progressive, and not regressive terms.

PD

Thanks for the comments - timely, as there are several pieces on issues around young people and their treatment by adults in this DA (see reviews - Empty Cradles, Endpiece etc.). Hopefully, we'll get some more stuff in DA on psychiatry soon... ed.

## Discrimination:

Discriminating against someone according to their gender, sexuality, age, race, ability or disability, is prejudice. It is a vehicle used by leaders to divide and rule. We want to see a society without prejudice or divisions, where we can celebrate and learn from each others' differences. This can only happen in a world without leaders. meanwhile, we must encourage diversity without division to effectively counter discrimination.

## Why are 'equal opportunities' impossible in today's capitalist society?

Invariably, when we go to work, we leave some of our dignity and humanity outside. With 'increased flexibility' of working conditions, the bargaining position of workers is further deteriorating, so that the gains of a century of class struggle are being lost. A quick look at the enormous disparity of power and wealth between the capitalist class and the working class shows that the benefits of the "agreements" entered into between the two sides are far from equal. Walter Block makes clear the differences in power and benefits when discussing sexual harassment in the workplace:

"Consider the sexual harassment which continually occurs between a secretary and a boss.. while objectionable to many women, [it] is not a coercive action. It is rather part of a package deal in which the secretary agrees to all aspects of the job when she agrees to accept the job, and especially when she agrees to keep the job. The office is, after all, private property. The secretary does not have to remain if the 'coercion' is objectionable."

In capitalism, you are "free" to do anything you are permitted to do by your masters, which amounts to "freedom" with a collar and leash.

## Sex & consent:

### Why is sexual freedom important, at any age?

Self-reliance, self-confidence, democracy and sexual pleasure are rejected by our political leaders, in favour of mass-submissiveness, docility, dependence, helplessness, and respect for authority - traits that perpetuate the hierarchies on which ruling-class power and privileges depend. Sexual freedom is basic and self-empowering, and so the establishment opposes it. Thus it is crucially important to address every aspect of sexual suppression. And this means affirming the right of adolescents to an unrestricted sex life.

There are numerous arguments for teenage sexual liberation. For example, many teen suicides could be prevented by removing the restrictions on adolescent sexuality, as demonstrated by comparisons with sexually unrepressive "primitive" peoples. Teenage sexual repression is also



# the PersonalLife FAQs

## Personal Anarcho-syndicalism



closely connected with crime. Teenage gangs' typical obsession with the promiscuous, pornographic, sadistic, and other "dark" aspects of sex shows that, by the time children reach

this age, they have already developed unhealthy secondary drives due to the generally sex-negative and repressive environment in which they have grown up. Teenage (and adult) liberation will only be possible through healthy sexual freedom in childhood and adolescence.

## Children & education:

### How can personal development in children be assisted rather than infringed?

To raise a child in freedom does not mean letting him or her walk all over you; it does not mean never saying no. Children should not be subjected to punishment, irrational authority, or moralistic admonitions, but neither should they be "free" to violate the rights of others. As A.S. Neill, a pioneer of libertarian education, puts it, "in the disciplined home, the children have no rights. In the spoiled home, they have all the rights. The proper home is one in which children and adults have equal rights." Or again, "To let a child have his own way or do what he wants to at another's expense, is bad for the child. It creates a spoiled child, and the spoiled child is a bad citizen." There will inevitably be conflicts of will between parents and children, and the healthy way to resolve them is to come to some sort of a compromise agreement. The unhealthy ways are either to resort to authoritarian discipline or to spoil the child by allowing it to have all the social rights. Libertarian psychologists argue that no harm is done to children by insisting on one's individual rights; the harm comes from moralism, i.e. when one introduces the concepts of right and wrong or words like "naughty," "bad," or "dirty", which produce guilt.

### Is education about being taught to fail or learning to live?

Crucial years for our personal development, our childhoods which could be filled with the pleasure of discovery about the world, are wasted in schools where our minds are stifled by discipline and we're taught that we're failures in most subjects. Schools turn out either people without skills, resigned to lifetimes of exploitation in low paid service industry or assembly line jobs - if they get jobs at all - or people with the narrow outlook which suits them for life only as bureaucrats, managers or technicians. Because education fails to give us skills with which we can make our lives better, and frustrates our desires for innovation and change, it produces constant demands for more education spending and retraining. Blame for failure is placed on teachers and children, so the state imposes an ever more narrow, restrictive curriculum, more exams and more exclusions of the resentful children who are its own most embarrassing failures. We can transform schools and colleges into resources open to the whole community around them, where we can all learn skills, discover whatever we want to know - permanent resources to support us in carrying out all the other changes we want to bring about.

### Isn't mutual respect in the family and the freedom to pursue our personal identity simply 'pie in the sky'?

No. Hundreds of thousands of anarcho-syndicalists practised it during the Spanish revolution (1936-8): "Respecting children and educating them well was vitally important to the process of revolutionary change. Ignorance made people particularly vulnerable to oppression and suffering. More importantly, education prepared people for social life. Authoritarian schools (or families), based upon fear, prepared people to be submissive to an authoritarian government (or within a capitalist workplace). Different schools and families were necessary to prepare people to live in a society without domination." [Free Women of Spain, p.133].

FAQs adapted from various sources, including Sheffield Red&Black Centre Statement and Constitution & the FAQ at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1931/> For ref.s or more info. write to DA.



# Death Dealers

Britain is now second only to the US in producing instruments of torture and death. British weapons are killing more and more people for healthier profits than ever before. Spin that if you can, Tony.

July saw Labour set out its thinking on defence with the finding of their "Strategic Defence Review" being announced. Those hoping that the ending of the cold war might result in some form of peace dividend were to be disappointed, with the review recommending only a minor cut to Britain's £22 billion annual defence budget. It turns out the aim of the review was not to look to cut defence spending, but to bring Britain's armed forces in line with the rapidly changing world, brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Under the review, weapons such as armoured division and tornado planes are to be axed,

since they were designed to stop now non-existent Russian tanks sweeping across central Europe. However, the navy are to get to two huge family-size aircraft carriers, and the airforce will get new C-17 military transporters, big enough to fly tanks to any war zone. The army won't be left out of the presents either - it will get an "air cavalry" brigade, complete with US Apache attack helicopters. What all this new hardware has in common is the ability to provide 'rapid response' capabilities. These changes reflect the current military orthodoxy which, with the ending of the cold war, sees "aggressive nationalism and international terrorism" as the main threat to Britain.



To combat this massively overstated threat, it is deemed that Britain needs a mobile peacekeeping force with global reach or, as the Financial Times put it, "a military presence capable of conducting every kind of military operation everywhere in the world". Under New Labour's defence strategy, Britain will become a pocket-sized superpower, acting as an independent but junior partner to the US in providing the world police force.

Perhaps the most glaring omission in New Labour's new

military policy is virtually no mention of greater European military integration. After all, as European integration moves forward, it would seem 'logical' (at least within the general illogic of militarism) to plan for a European armed force, capable of defending the interest of the new European superstate. The truth is that, while Labour is fully committed to European integration, the British arms industry prevents much open talk of integrating Britain's armed forces with those of Europe. To do so would put at risk the British and US military alliance on which the growing success of its arms trade depends. And the scale of this death dealing should not be underestimated. Britain is now the second largest arms dealer to the US, providing a fifth of all global sales.

The rapid growth of Britain's arms trade owes much to the Thatcherite revolution that swept through Britain's defence sector. Contrary to what might be thought, the Thatcher government viewed Britain's arms industry with little short of contempt. As ex-Tory defence minister Allen Clark recalled in his diaries, Thatcher viewed it "as a bastion of corporatism, unionisation, lax industrial relations and inefficient management". Thatcher's desire to see Britain remain a global military power led her to set about rationalising the arms industry, with the aim of freeing it from the trade unions and state

control.

The cosy relationship between the state and arms industry was swept away, along with the ex-servicemen and scientists that dominated the boardrooms of the industry. Out went the notion that military manufacturing was merely an extension of the state defence policy, and in came privatisation. The result was a market-led British arms industry with the sole criteria of making maximum profit from making and selling weapons. Marketing teams, private sector managers and venture capital were all introduced. The result is a string of arms manufacturing companies that resemble civilian high-technology firms rather than the old quasi-government departments.

Following the US - the global market leaders, the revitalised profit-led British arms industry is succeeding in seeking out new overseas markets and employing sophisticated marketing methods to 'create' demand by influencing military and government decision makers. In fact, many British arms firms now export far more abroad than they sell to the British Ministry of Defence. British taxpayers still pour money into the arms industry, but the state acts to support it rather than direct it. The terminology is that the government provides home sales, to ensure 'product validation', and provides credit guarantees, diplomatic 'assistance' and research and development 'assistance'.

Britain may be a big international death dealer now, but it remains small fry alongside the US, which accounts for over 50% of the world's total military spending. The US Joint Fighter Programme, currently the largest arms project in the world, is expected to gross over \$100bn in sales to the US government alone. Still, inroads are being made - some 230 British firms

*the ending of the cold war proved a timely boost to Britain's death dealers, and New Labour wants to boost arms production in Britain still further*

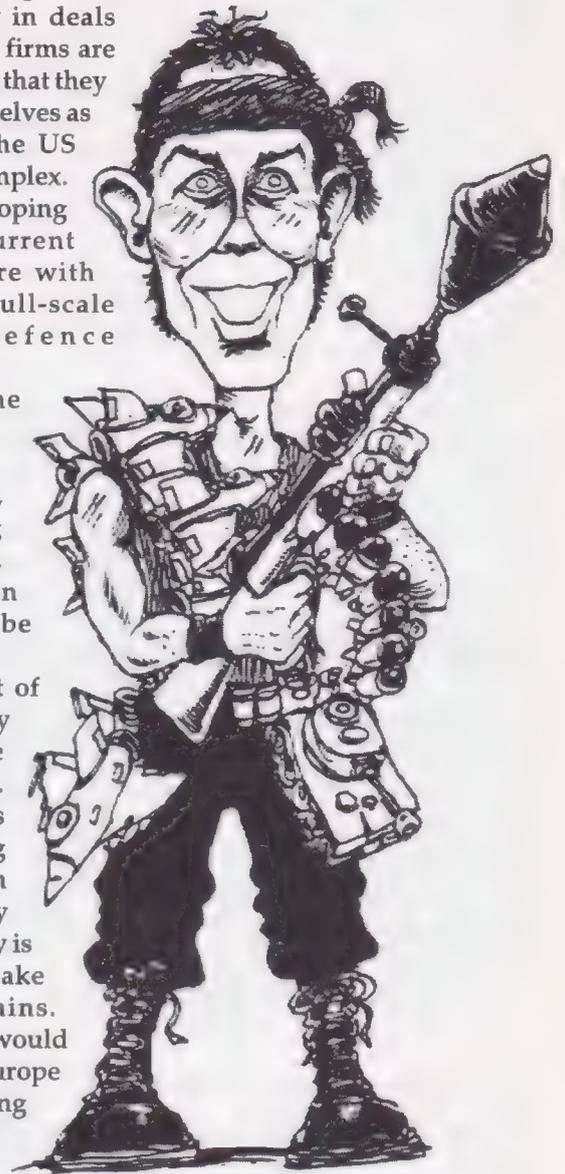
are currently contracting to the US defence industry in deals worth \$2.7bn. British firms are increasingly confident that they are establishing themselves as a de facto part of the US military-industrial complex. British Aerospace is hoping to transform its current collaborative venture with Lockheed into a full-scale transatlantic-defence organisation.

However, if the European Union is to transform itself into a new super state, capable of challenging US world dominance, a powerful European army will have to be established.

On paper, the rest of Europe's arms industry remains unproductive and state-dependent. So, should Europe's military spending begin to rise, then Britain's highly effective arms industry is well positioned to make substantial gains. However, the reality would be different. Even if Europe were capable of breaking with US military dominance, any future European arms programme would likely be based on a state-by-state carve-up, with orders being shared out according to political consideration, rather than being market-led. This is one of the reasons Britain increasingly calls for the European arms trade to be deregulated.

For the time being, then, Britain's arms manufacturers are best served by Britain remaining firmly in the US camp, though all options are being kept open. For example, within months of coming to power, New Labour announced Britain will invest some £200m in the US Joint Strike Fighter, while promising to see the Eurofighter project to completion.

As for all that wishful talk of



the end of the cold war bringing an end to military spending, dream on. The fact is, the ending of the cold war proved a timely boost to Britain's death dealers, and New Labour wants to boost arms production in Britain still further. It is this message that lays at the heart of Labour's Strategic Defence Review. 

Blairbashing? Maybe, but there's a point. Blairdevision is a new slot in DA, aimed at publishing short but well-researched articles which take a critical and incisive look at an aspect of New Labour in government. We are particularly interested in examples of practice which directly oppose any sensible view of 'socialist' values. If you have ideas or contributions, please send them to DA, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR, England.

**'Every Generation Gets the Pop Stars it Deserves' Zero One to Control BEAR - Schadenfreude**

(Vespertine Ves006, 1998, in UK distributed through Cargo)

Straight outta Sheffield, well not quite. Chris Trout was never that in your face - loud, angry and at times aggressive, but never *in yer face*. There is subtlety here, passion, hurt, derision and hope. Chris Trout, main man of BEAR, is bitter. He takes the personal insult that is 'Cool Britannia', Blair's Britain and nationalistic crap of Britpop, and he takes it personally. And he is pissed off.

Schadenfreude is an album of classic pop songs that are not really pop. The same basic formula of oh so many bands - you know guitars, drums, bass and the odd brass bit and keyboards, but he is not retreading the same ground as every canal angler chic chancer who saw an Oasis video. Schadenfreude is an album that attacks the soulless cadaver that is the 90's Britpop:

'How spineless, anodyne and shite before it qualifies as Britpop?  
How many albums down the line you get your job back at the chip shop?  
I've given up, don't give a fuck for your perception of a new thing  
Your brainless hedonism sucks and your favourite groups need shooting. Nicht wahr!  
(Taxi for Lester Bangs)

The album snarls at life in modern Britain:

'For though the people here are kind  
Quietly wild  
Stupid and brave  
We are basically slaves  
And there must be more to life  
Than saving up for Christmas and holidays.'  
(Day Return to nowhere)

But it's not all bile. There are gentle moments, not just repetitive love songs, but there are songs of love and relationships.  
You might be wondering why I am

reviewing this in an anarcho-syndicalist magazine. Whilst there is a political slant to it, it's not 'politics' as such. I have no idea about the band's or Chris Trout's political position. I am reviewing it because it's splendid.

Music, like modern capitalist society, is run by cloth-eared myopic cowards - people who's idea of innovation is to take ideas from twenty or thirty years ago, but this time with new words which make no sense at all. At least pop musicians can be excused for talking gibberish as long as it rhymes nicely; what excuse New Labour? There is too much emotionally vacant carp (anagram) out there, and Chris Trout has always been involved in stuff which seems removed from it and which connects. With AC Temple, he helped produce *Belinda Backwards*, a glorious album of guitars and more guitars about spaceships and other things; with Spoonfed Hybrid, he co-creates mellow gentle grooves that should go on for ever; and with BEAR (this and previous releases) he has produced intelligent, articulate pop.

There is so much out there, so much passion, so much joy being had and to be had. There is more to life than saving up for Christmas and holidays. There is more to life than the 'world's scariest police chases, ever, part 48'. There is more than the national lottery. There is more to life than Blair, Ashdown and whatever the Tory's name is. This album makes me remember that. I like this album. 



No Boundaries: new Travellers on the road (outside of England),

Alan Dearing, Enabler, Lyme Regis, 1998  
ISBN 0 9523316 3 2, £9.50

No Boundaries is an instantly attractive coffee table style book which captures real life experiences of travellers in parts of the world other than England. Experience and the joy of travelling as attested in travellers' own accounts, writings and photos make the book a happy, provocative and sad one all at the same time.

Drawing on a very broad group of people, emphasising differences between the people and their motivations, the book creates a common core for the performers, street sellers and people on the move by printing their own personal stories. There is no attempt to assert a particular political commonality but exerting "freedom to roam" is obviously linked to direct action, rave encounters, and green activism. Others are just travelling about with no particular destination or political commitment, for the pleasure of waking up in a new place each day. Of course, all this shows dissatisfaction with the rat race, the city and capitalist consumerism. Perhaps it's not an option open to everyone, and perhaps in itself it doesn't solve the problems of

**Taking Liberties**

Periodical of the Anarchist Black Cross  
May 98. 50p.

The ABC has been around for donkeys years, supporting class struggle prisoners. Within this longevity, there lies a wealth of experience. But reading 'Taking Liberties', you are immediately struck by a freshness of tone and an urgency of purpose more reminiscent of the energy of youth and new projects. What's more, it's readable, current, and accessible - if a little cramped. 'Taking Liberties' has just moved from the London ABC address to one in Sheffield. This latest issue contains all the usual vital information on prison struggles you expect from the ABC. It also includes a couple of real treats: a great article about the 'long hot summer' of 1972, which is a must-read for anyone thinking about organising prisoners. It also has Steve McQueen on the cover (swoon...). No interview with him sadly, but some nice bits about other Great Escapes! For the usual news and cartoons (and a new gossip column!) write to Taking Liberties, c/o PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY. Four issue subscription £5 ( £3 un/waged) - but be patient, the gaps between can be quite big! 

authoritarian society. Still, the basic desire to live and love where we want is intrinsic to our demand for control over our lives and environment. As one traveller writes: "We have no laws and no limits in our search/For freedom of movement/We vow to live for the moment/Total resistance to the alienation".

**'Blood Magic: The anthropology of menstruation'**

Thomas Buckley & Alama Gottlieb (editors)

1988: University of California Press  
ISBN 0-520-06350.

This book has been out a while but I just found it. Anyway, it is as relevant as ever. Through a variety of styles, the place of menstruation is explored in ritual and life of a variety of societies from Australian Aborigines, through West Africa, Borneo, the Yurok women in Northern California, rural Turkey, Portugal and as close to home as South Wales.

The introductory chapter is a thought-provoking and critical appraisal of the theories of menstrual symbolism.

There is also a chapter, 'Pre-menstrual Syndrome: discipline, work and anger in late industrial societies' which places PMS in the context of Western industrialism. Here, we find expressions of rage at women's given roles of routine employment and house work; as worker, mother and spouse, with no let up. It raises many questions, which unfortunately it doesn't answer. In fact, it could be said to represent the book as a whole, which works best as an attempt to re-evaluate the taboo and pollutant views of menstruation common to traditional (male) anthropology - fortunately the contributors are sensible enough not to seek to place menstruation as an opposite - as something with a purely positive symbolism.

Conclusions and suppositions are generally supported with hard evidence, and all is couched in terms of academic study, where polemic needs to be weighed

with some ability to justify comments.

The book works best for me as an example of how ideas and conceptions of things need to be thought about and challenged. The traditional anthropology usually undertaken by men interviewing other men often down played or placed negative values on women and their experiences. This book is a big warning sign against others doing the same, and it applies to politics just as well.

For a piece published a full 7 years after the event, I feel the pamphlet would have benefitted if it had included some new material. It lacked a discussion on wider issues arising from the tram dispute. An example, dear to anarchosyndicalists, would have been the need for workers to break from social democracy and on the tactics that modern anarchosyndicalists need to adopt to help bring that situation



Anarcho-Syndicalist Monthly Issue 2 July '98 20p

**Rebel Worker**

Monthly Periodical of Organise!-IWA  
Issue 2, July 1998, 20p.

'Rebel Worker' is the new monthly from the Irish section of the International Workers Association. It is cheapo-produced and only 4 A4 pages, but is nevertheless packed with essential reading you won't find anywhere else. Apart from that, it costs next to nowt.

The July '98 issue has a leader piece on the troubles, and in particular, the latest marching season and its associated stand-offs and trade-offs between the politicians, and the nationalist and loyalist communities. Also included is an article probing the worthlessness and posturing of the new 'Northern Ireland Assembly'. Other topics include an exposure of New Labour's New Deal and anti-benefit fraud measures, and the minimum wage debate.

Organise! are growing - a direct result of their hard work in raising the profile of real revolutionary ideas on an island which is largely riven by sectarian hatred and backward and bigoted churches. To further this task, they have a Solidarity Appeal for £10,000 to set up a Solidarity Centre in Belfast. Meanwhile, they continue to put out some excellent material, of which Rebel Worker is a part. Donations/subscription details; Organise!-IWA, PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ.

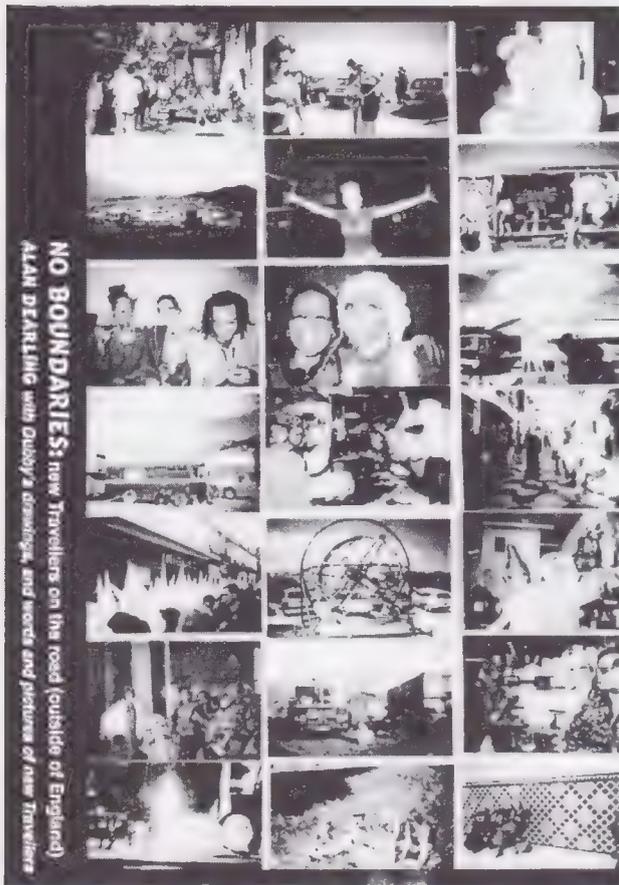
about. The dispute would have provided an excellent backdrop for such an analysis. For me, it's not enough to merely equate militancy and self-organisation, desirable though these are, with "anarcho-syndicalism in practice" and leave it at that.

For your copy contact: Jura Books, PO Box N32, Petersham North, NSW 2049, Australia - tel. +61 2 9550 9931

**anarcho SYNDICALISM in PRACTICE**



**Melbourne Tram Dispute and Lockout**  
January-February 1990



NO BOUNDARIES! new Travellers on the road (outside of England)  
ALAN DEARLING with Quilly's drawings, and words and pictures of new Travellers

**ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM IN PRACTICE**

Melbourne Tram Dispute and Lockout, January-February 1990  
Jura Media Publications, 1997

This 20 page pamphlet tells the story of a dispute which saw tram workers take over their own dispute and occupy their depots, which saw the organisation of passengers' support groups, solidarity actions by other groups of workers and within local communities. It also describes the familiar sell-out story by union officials.

The pamphlet consists of reprints of 2 articles from Rebel Worker, an Australian anarchosyndicalist publication, and of articles from the anarchosyndicalist transport workers' bulletin, Sparks.

**Jargon Watch: a pocket dictionary for the jitterati. Gareth Branwyn.**

Hardwired, 1997, ISBN 1888869062

"If we do not find anything pleasant, at least we shall find something new" (Voltaire-Candide). Wired is the 'journal of the Silicon Age'. Expensive, over-designed to the point of un-readability and filled to bursting with adverts for giant corporations, it then attempts to present itself as radical, even "anarchic". Nonsense of course, but Wired 5 is a world of "Netizens" all happily plugged into something called the "New Economy", where the only threat to ever increasing happiness comes from evil lefty Web-censors like Bill Clinton. Don't get me wrong; I've got nothing against computers. This review is written on one. Producing D.A. without them would be a nightmare (it is *with* them too -ed.). There is a lot of strength to the argument that says the self-managed society we are fighting for is only now possible thanks to high speed Information Technology. However, at the moment we live in a world in which, as Noam Chomsky once pointed out, the great majority live their lives without ever making a phone call. To present the horror that is capitalism, Silicon-based or otherwise, as bringing freedom to the world is to stand reality on its head. 'Hardwired' is the book publishing spin-off from Wired, and Jargon Watch is a collection from the column of the same title which appears regularly in the magazine. This column consists of new words and phrases, sent in by readers and which have been created to cope with the rapidly changing workplace environment most of them inhabit. The first thing to be noted is the bizarre contrast between the high-tech subject matter and the appearance of the book itself, as it comes bound in what looks like hand-made (recycled?) cardboard that looks as un-glossy as Wired is glossy. The question of Americans finally discovering irony is also raised by some of the content. Of course, there is lots of technobabble and 'gosh-wowness', e.g. "Thumb Candy: A fast-action videogame requiring lots of button pushing", and plain straightforward geekdom such as "Bio-break Techie: Euphemism for having to use the toilet". In fact, the way much of this language treats cyberspace as reality and biological and social existence as 'abnormal' is really quite scary. However, amidst all this are quite a few examples showing an awareness of the insanity of state-capitalist organisation: "Adminisphere: The rarefied organizational layers beginning just above the rank and file. Decisions that fall from the adminisphere are often profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were designed to solve."; "Chain Saw Consultants: Outside experts brought in to reduce the employee headcount (leaving the top brass with clean hands)."; "Time Porn: Popular entertainment, such as TV shows like Seinfeld and Friends, in which people never seem to have anything to do except hang out. They tease us with the forbidden leisure we all covet, but can't have." There are even brief celebrations of moments of resistance: "Xerox Subsidy: Euphemism for swiping free photocopies from a workplace." So, while I can't recommend that anyone parts with hard-earned cash for this pocket-sized talking point for bored yuppies, it is nice to know that confusion reigns even at the (artificial) heart of the beast. 



refuse to administer shocks at all, or would only do so at a low level and refuse when the discomfort of the 'learner' became apparent. The reality was that a large number of the 'teachers' continued to administer shocks right up to the maximum level, often under protest and despite the screams and then silence from the 'learner'. These results were repeated even when the 'learner' initially expressed concern about his heart condition.

The experiment was repeated with a number of variations to see if the reason for people's continuation with what they believed to be genuine shocks were because of their own willingness to apply pain or their obedience to the authority of the 'experimenter'. When the orders to continue were given by telephone, people stopped much earlier or they lied about the level of shocks given. When the orders were given by an 'ordinary' person (another actor posing as a volunteer), they refused to continue much earlier. With the learner out of sight, more continued further. When there were two 'experimenters' seemingly in dispute, the 'teachers' often sided with the one who wished to stop the experiment. There was no punishment to those 'teachers' who refused to co-operate; it was made clear at the start that they would receive their standard expenses payment purely for attending.

In interviews and through questionnaires after the experiment, the volunteer 'teachers' repeatedly stated their willingness to continue was because of the authority of the 'experimenter' and how responsibility lay with the 'experimenter'. Whilst many were willing to take some personal responsibility, this was balanced out by the willingness to place the major burden of responsibility on the 'experimenter' as the authority behind their - the 'teacher's' - actions. Volunteers were even willing to apportion blame to the 'learner' for volunteering.

These experiments were carried out over a number of years in different settings and by different people in different countries with similar results.

As anarcho-syndicalists, the questions of obedience to authority are central to our concerns. Whilst it is essential for day to day life to accept some form of authority, to ignore the authority of an electrician or train driver for example could be fatal, but this acceptance that some people in certain circumstances do have some authority needs to be strongly tempered. People have an individual and a collective moral responsibility for their actions. There is no excuse for 'only obeying orders'. The fact that we live in a society where so many people from a broad section of society have been seen to be willing to inflict pain and possibly harm on another complete stranger purely on the say so of a man in a white coat shows how far people are conditioned to do as they are told. In an age where bosses and politicians see fit to take the authority and none of the responsibility, we should start to reclaim both, for ourselves and for each other.

Milgram's book is not a libertarian classic. Its subtleties and the complexities of the experiments cannot be done justice in a short review, but it is something that adds a great deal to our understanding and can hopefully contribute to the ongoing debate of power, hierarchy, authority and moral responsibility. 

**'Obedience to Authority:**

**An experimental view'**

**Stanley Milgram**

1997: Pinter & Martin, London.

Originally published in 1974, this book was a welcome reprint. I had seen odd references to this work in various things and, psychology not being my area of main interest, I never found out more. Then, in late 1997, a large review of this reprint rekindled my interest. A few subtle hints and one birthday later and it was in front of me (after a few delays caused by printing/publishing problems).

Written in Milgram's compassionate, if at times completely patronising, style, this book recounts the tale and results of an experiment designed to examine how obedient to authority people were. The results are quite stunning.

The experiment was simple. Volunteers from all areas of society were sought and told that they were involved in an experiment to test learning skills. They were introduced to another volunteer, in reality an actor, and told that the experiment required one to be a 'learner', the other a 'teacher'. In a rigged draw, the genuine volunteer was assigned the task of 'teacher'. The experiment as described to them was that the 'learner' would be asked to do a simple task - repeating word pairs - and, if they failed to do so correctly, would be punished by apparently receiving an electric shock from the 'teacher' (the volunteer). The actor playing the learner deliberately failed the task assigned and pretended to be shocked. The 'teacher' was then instructed to increase the size of the shock, by a figure of authority in a white lab coat, the 'experimenter'.

Milgram's pre-experiment work had shown that most people thought the majority of 'teachers' would either

**James Kelman, "Seven Stories"**

AK Press Audio, ISBN 1-873176-34-1

**Tom Leonard, "Nora's Place and Other Poems 1965-1995"**

AK Press Audio, ISBN 1-873176-39-2

Kelman, a playwright and short story writer, is perhaps best known now for his recent collaborative work with The Blues Poets Band. Indeed, in person, his voice does have much of the brandy-laced autumnal tone of a journeyman.

He moves coolly through the space he narrates; primarily back streets, park benches, doss houses and race tracks. What distinguishes the work is his writer's eye for the intricate details of fundamentally meaningless activity; he it insects, roofsliders or the professional better. Detail is all important, allowing him to mirror the intersections and connections of objects and people in the often unexpected angle he approaches those subjects from. Most important, it allows him to point out the emptiness behind the elaborate descriptions without having to state it overtly.

His work is anecdotal and he knows how to spin a good yarn. A self-deprecating Scottish Bukowski perhaps? But without the sex and without the women. The world described here is a world of men, most of them, ironically enough, are "cunts" and Kelman deploys the word knowing full well the implications of damnation those letters contain. These may not be your usual blues but Kelman's work is most definitely the brandy of the damned.

With Tom Leonard we are in a much colder place: Welcome to Glasgow - here is the news - "Ma lungz iz fuckt". Leonard was in the 1960s responsible for the restoration of an authentic Scottish voice to the literary arts - he was, however, deeply controversial and often bitterly opposed.

Although he is most associated with Glasgow, it would be wrong to class his work simply as 'dialect' because, like Welch (whom he deeply influenced) his written word is phonetically and uniquely his and it is this that is behind what he reads, what he speaks: the words are up for grabs, he cuts language into bloody slabs, the language that would otherwise constrain him.

What this achieves is more than the restoration of a sub-cultural voice but the music - the Muse-ic - of an individual poet. It is not, however, easy listening. The voice crashes through the dark world it describes, the bleak internal landscape and industrial & cultural wasteland outside. It is also, though, ONE voice that manages to unite the MANY unconnected, individual, unrepentant, fragmentary voices it speaks for. I was reminded often of Mad Tom howling in the storm-lashed hinterland of Lear's insanity. However, one of Leonard's lines says it best: In the words of the Good Thief: "Dork init. Good job theyve got the lights".

**An Idea Killing... 3 novels from AK Press**

*Rage and Reason*, Michael Tobias, ISBN 1-873176-56-2

*An Idol Killing*, Mark J. White, ISBN 1-873176-89-9

*The Siege of Gresham*, Ray Murphy, ISBN 1-873176-05-8

It is a shared strength of voice, that is unfortunately, lacking in AK Press' latest fiction book offerings. There are ideas here certainly, but ideas that just shunt around on the sidings of the narrative, they do not drive the novels.

A good example is *An Idol Killing*, which is a science fiction of the trashy Strange Days sort. The focus is on multi-media culture and its inherent emptiness. Indeed, one of the principal characters is called Empti Vee. However, the writing does not carry the courage of its convictions. There are sundry 2000AD-ish references to therm-surfing, laser guns (etc.) and much cartoon carnage, but the whole collapses in on itself when the description is so pedestrian and the fiction itself relies on the cliched conventions of plot/character development and the linear narrative. Maybe AK could use a Graphic Novel approach for some of its writers?

Similarly, Tobias' *Rage and Reason* falls apart because, for what is ostensibly a thriller, it is incredibly static. Again, like White, there are many ideas but only at times; only when Tobias hijacks the 'Ken Follett' style does the central irony of an animal revenging ex-SAS officer come clear.

So it is that the least ambitious, and perhaps the least worthy offering is actually the most effective. *The Siege of Gresham* finds Ray Murphy delivering the pace, unity and attack that the two more cerebral works lack. The authorial voice is more distinct, more sure and more adventurous despite the fact that the ground being covered, a kind of dystopian-urban thrill seeking, is over familiar, to say the least.

Maybe Murphy and White could write together... Now there's an idea...

**Colin Ward:**

**Social Policy: an anarchist response**

LSE Housing, £4

**When We Build Again Let's Have Housing that Works!**

Pluto Press, London/Sydney, 1985, £3.50, ISBN 0-7453-0022-7

If you read 'Freedom' you'll see articles by Colin Ward nearly every issue. Until I read this rather slim booklet I didn't realise that he now holds a prestigious position at the London School of Economics. This booklet contains seven of his recycled lectures. They cover a fairly wide range of topics. Four of the essays cover the history of the squatting movement and the self-build housing movement as well. He has recovered some of the memories and histories of these movements, often ignored or suppressed by usual historians.

While in many ways drawing back from giving us some practical proposals, I think he is a utopian thinker without the social blueprint. None the worse for that he may be, because people should decide what they want and what they want to build. This is the message of his much earlier work, 'When We Build Again'. In this volume and the LSE booklet, he does make pointers to a course of action which should not go amiss. Perhaps his role is to spread the knowledge of the actions which he records. In other words, not his ideas specifically, but those of the movements which he records.

In the LSE booklet, I think he could have been more critical and less laudatory in his approach. Ward's view of 'community' is perhaps a little over-sympathetic. Community is not something already existing 'out there', but something which has to be built. In other words, 'community' is not an existing 'thing' but a process of creation. This process must be firmly in the control of the people. Ward's publications raises some interesting questions, but we shall have to look for practical answers and solutions in other places as well.

**WHEN WE BUILD AGAIN**



**Margaret Humphreys**

**Empty Cradles**

Corgi Books, repr. 1997, ISBN 0-562-14164-X

When I was a teenager in the 1950s I remember our middle-class neighbours debating what to do about their two nephews that had been orphaned. One of the options considered was to send them on one of the pioneering schemes to Canada. There they would learn a trade, escape from the ravages of post-war Britain and be able to take advantage of opportunities in a 'young country'. I remember thinking that I would not like to be uprooted from my friends and the life I knew and sent to a strange country thousands of miles away.

However, this was the fate of over 100,000 children that were sent out to Australia from children's homes in Britain over a period of forty years. They were to be 'trained in agricultural and domestic methods', and imbued with Australian ideals.

This was social engineering at its worst. But there had been precedents. During World War II, there had been mass evacuation from the inner cities of London, Liverpool and Manchester, where young children were

labelled, put on trains and billeted in the country by complete strangers who were often unwilling or uncaring.

After the disruption of war, officials in Britain did not want its children's homes clogged up by ill-educated working-class children that were a drain on its resources. Australia, however, had problems in a falling population as there were 'cradles' which were empty, and the eugenic argument was one of those used to support the policy of mass immigration: "If we do not supply from our own stock, we are leaving ourselves all the more exposed to the menace of the teeming millions of our neighbouring Asiatic states" (His Grace the Archbishop of Perth, 1938, quoted p. 12).

This was a convenient arrangement between the two countries. But no-one asked the children. They were told that they were going on holiday. In fact, nothing was to stand in the way of this mass migration, and certainly not the truth. Many of the children were falsely told that their parents were dead. The parents in turn were wrongly told that their children had been adopted by loving parents elsewhere in Britain.

No-one monitored how the child migrants were treated once they reached Australia, and often they were subject to physical and sexual abuse. In fact, just as happened in Britain, the perpetrators were often those in charge of the children's homes. This was to extend to the homes run by the Catholic Church and, in particular, the Christian Brothers at St. Joseph's, Clontarf.

Social attitudes change, and what may be acceptable to one generation is regarded as barbaric to the next. So when in 1986, Margaret Humphreys, a Nottingham social worker, came across the first cases of child migrants, she was sceptical. From the perspective of social work in the late 1980s, she found it hard to believe that one of her cases was put on a boat at the age of four and shipped to Australia. But it appeared that this was only the tip of the iceberg.

Eventually, Margaret went to Australia and fought officialdom to dig out what really did happen to these migrants. Some had settled down and were contented but many just could not rest until they knew who their parents were and why they had been sent to Australia. Margaret was able to get both the British and the Australian governments to acknowledge the matter as well as the religious and charitable organisations involved. She was able to force these organisations to open their archives and eventually was to achieve a government grant.

While the account shows how Margaret was able to re-unite many families, in many cases, it was too late. Nothing could bring back the missing years as parents had died, and childhood had been lost. As one child survivor said: "I wasn't born in Belfast, but in Cheltenham. My first name isn't John, but Michael... and I'm three years older than I thought".

This book can be read on a number of levels. On one, it is a human interest story showing how people can overcome tremendous odds, and the indomitable force of the human personality. However, on another level, it poses even more fundamental questions. As Margaret herself asks, searching for the explanation of mass migration, "Why?... Paternalism, racism, religious fanaticism and bureaucracy all formed an unholy alliance, and this was the result" (p. 72). Maybe so, but we all have our own answers, mine would include ideology and the ruling class.

MARGARET HUMPHREYS  
**EMPTY CRADLES**



## Paranoia Paradise: reviewing gender and sexuality

CALIFIA, Pat - Sex changes: the politics of transgenderism; Cleis Press ISBN 1 57344 072 8 £13.99 WILCHINS, Riki Anne - Read my lips: sexual subversion and the end of gender; Firebrand Books ISBN 1 56341 090 7 £13.99 QUEEN, Carol & SCHIMMEL, Laurence (Eds.) - PoMoSexuals: challenging assumptions about gender and sexuality; Cleis Press ISBN 1 57344 074 4 £11.99 (All available through AK Distribution.)

A BBC production recently advertised for "feminine" lesbian couples to do a holiday series; far more prevalent, particularly in Personal Ads, is the phrase "Straight-Acting" (SA). Straight-acting means, of course, "masculine" (it's usually used by men). The social acceptability of same-sex-lovers is dependent not so much on what we do in bed, or with whom we do it (as long as we are in monogamous two-income-no-kids relationships), as on how well we conform to gender stereotypes.

We've come a long way from the original Gay Liberation movement, which sought to free everyone from both the restrictions of compulsory and exclusive heterosexuality (and by implication from a homosexual mirror image of it) and of the binary gender system.

Lesbian & Gay politics have been transformed by the rise of an openly lesbian and gay middle class - writers, academics, political lobbyists, entrepreneurs. People who have a stake in capitalist society, but who are handicapped by their deviant sexuality, have sought to remove the handicap, not to change the society which delivers the privileges they enjoy, and which they seek to enjoy more fully.

"Genderfuck" (men in frocks, complete with facial hair) is not an idea with much currency in today's conformist, capitalist-dominated subculture. Feminism still has a bigger influence than is immediately apparent, however, and lesbian-feminism, which is partially responsible for policing gender in the "community", has also produced critics willing to revive the original feminist and gay liberationist ideas. The bisexual writings of the last few years are testimony to this, and now voices in defence of transsexuality and transgenderism have emerged.

Pat Califia is a name which provokes strong reactions. She is perhaps best known as an anti-censorship campaigner and a seminal figure in the lesbian SM/leather community. The common factor in her activism is her opposition to "fundamentalist feminism", of the kind advocated by Andrea Dworkin, Mary Daly and "Transsexual Empire" (author Janice Raymond). Califia takes issue with its judgements on sexual expression and representation, and its essentialist conception of gender, which assumes women are inherently good, nurturing, etc.

This leads her to champion the right of transsexual and transgendered people to define their own lives, rather than have them defined by others. The book begins with a chronological review of literature about transsexual men and women, starting with the first wave of autobiographies, followed by the work of doctors portraying transsexuals as pathological, and then their portrayal as Frankenstein's monsters sent by the Patriarchy to infiltrate and take over the women's community by Raymond.

A critical review of gay scholarship about "Berdaches" ("third gender" people who existed in many Native American cultures) follows, highlighting the way these figures have been press-ganged to project modern gay identity back into history, erasing or explaining away evidence of what we might describe as "bisexuality" or cross-gender status in the process. Califia supports the project to reclaim queer history, but opposes the way evidence is distorted to homogenise all sexual and gender diversity as "homosexuality".

Califia then returns to the "second wave" of transsexual autobiography, a consideration of the status of the partners of transgendered people, and "gender activism" by organisations such as Transsexual Menace [sic]. The emphasis throughout is on opposition to essentialist notions about gender, advocacy of the right of people to self-definition and self-determination, and a class-based opposition to the petit bourgeois tyranny that afflicts much of feminism and the Lesbian & Gay establishment in the U.S. Definitely an eye-opener for anyone who thinks SM=fascism.

Riki Anne Wilchins is one of the founders of Transsexual Menace, and Executive Director of GenderPAC, a political lobby group. As such, "Read my lips" is a collection of writing about gender activism. As well as having the same "feminist" targets as Califia, there is material on opposition to hate crimes, and to the mutilation of intersexed people's genitals to fit idealised "male" or "female" anatomy by surgeons. These are rare dispatches from the resistance to the enforcement of the binary gender system by violence and medicine.

Wilchins also has a good take on Identity Politics. She points out that organising around "Identity", rather than around all the issues which affect us, creates a one-dimensional perspective "focused on mainstream acceptance which will gain for acceptable queers full civil rights, while largely bypassing the issues of those queerer queers who might upset the civil rights applecart by distressing the straight power structure." Identity politics is, in short, about internalising the divide-and-rule strategy used by those in power to limit social change.

"What's interesting is how often the tools used against oppressed minorities are simply recycled by them. It's not just that, in Audre Lorde's words, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house", but that picking up the master's tools apparently impels us to rebuild the master's house over and over again." This awareness of both the connection between means and ends, and of how viewing issues as "single" divests them of their revolutionary potential (not that Wilchins is a revolutionary) makes this book useful material for an anarchist approach to gender and sexuality.

It is also funny, sad and highly readable. If, like me, you thought Judith Butler had some good points but you couldn't work out what they were due to the self-indulgent jargon, this is a book for you. Whoever thought up the title "PoMoSexuals" wouldn't agree, because at first sight it seems to be the kind of work which exists purely as part of the political economy of academia - sold by being on Lesbian & Gay/Queer Studies reading lists.

It's actually a useful anthology questioning sexual labels and identities based on simple binary gender orientation. Five years ago, it might have been a bisexual anthology, and it's about bisexuality or, more accurately fluid desire, and gender diversity.

The problem with the word "bisexual" is not only that it is taboo because it exposes the fragility of the fixed, exclusive homosexual mirror image of "God-given" heterosexuality, upon which the case for Lesbian & Gay Equality has been built. (The "you owe us equality because we can't help it!" philosophy whose logical extreme is the search for the gay gene - Chandler Burr's "genetic defect" [!].) Ironically, it also implies acceptance of the binary gender system, which "bisexual" behaviour undermines.

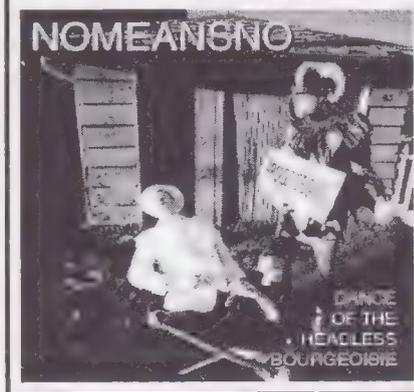
It is also disliked by those of us who get turned on/down by people of all genders because it implies we have "two sides" to our sexuality. The reality is more like this - the gender of someone I fancy is a factor in how I relate to them (and so is the likelihood of violence), but mine isn't. The fluidity, or flexibility, of our sexual desire has undermined attempts to build up bisexual communities, and consequently bisexual identity politics. Not having an acceptable label is a pain in the short term, but it also makes assimilation and accommodation more difficult.

All of which tells you sod all about the contents of the book, but warning people not to be put off by the title and blurb is important. I wouldn't recommend it if you are not interested in dissident takes on same-sex desire and "bisexuality" - and if you are, and you haven't read them, try "Bi any other name" or "Bisexual horizons" first. But you probably think I only read this stuff to out-queer everyone else, anyway. 

## Nomeansno 'The Dance of the Headless Bourgeoisie'

1998 Alternative Tentacles VIRUS 215 CD or dbl. LP

The 10th LP (if you include the live one and the collection of odds and sods) from Canadian hardcore punks Nomeansno, one of the best band in the world, definitely the joint best live band in my experience. Don't be misled by the punk label, this is not your standard shouty mohicaned noise, this is class hardcore stuff... Based around the vocals, bass and drums of the Wright brothers, the music has always had the edge over straight forward bang bang bang shout shout shout stuff. With the rhythm section being the core of the band and with the rhythm section being so tight and inventive, it is just so much more and so much better. With their increasingly opaque lyrics painting a bleak world view, where apocalyptic events occur and nothing really changes (see "The world wasn't built in a day", a classic slow mood track on this album and "The day everything became nothing", on the 12" single/CD 'The day everything became isolated and destroyed'). By their own admission, the brothers Wright like to look at the grey areas of life where things are not cut and dried, where people are not as good as they should be. This twelve track dbl. LP or ten track CD (- so go for vinyl -) may not be the best Nomeansno record ever. For me, it takes a while to absorb their new stuff, the rest of it being so firmly within my experience, but it leaves most music out there standing around looking for change for the bus. So do you and your neighbours a favour and stock up on Nomeansno and, if the proposed European tour this Autumn goes ahead, keep September and October free in your diaries (with a bit of luck, they'll bring their alter-egos the Hanson Brothers - Ramones and ice hockey driven pop punk nuts). 





# Britain's Unknown War

Brian Nelson revealed the massive collusion; the British State helped Loyalists kill people in Northern Ireland. How can the RUC be trusted with their new 'anti-terrorist' powers since the Omagh bombing?

What nationalist and imperialist motivations lie at the heart of the matter?

**I**n the 1993 Downing St Declaration, the British Government stated it had 'no selfish, strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland'. This is probably true. It's industry is in decline and any strategic significance vanished with the cold war. The British State likes to portray itself as neutral over Ireland. Brian Nelson's case is one concrete sign that this portrayal is grossly misleading. British security forces have not had a peace-keeping role in Northern Ireland. In fact, the British State has used Loyalist paramilitaries as proxies for its own war against the nationalist community.

Throughout 1989, 250 copies of official police files on IRA suspects were pasted on walls in Loyalist areas of Belfast by the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). Members of the British security forces had passed them, and many more that appeared later, to the UDA, who used the information to carry out murders.

The UDA made its possession of these files public in an apparent attempt

to embarrass the security forces and the British government for their frequent and hypocritical condemnations of Loyalist killings. Brian Nelson, a senior figure within the UDA, passed evidence of the massive numbers of files being leaked on to British Military Intelligence as early as 1987, but nothing was done to stop it. Nelson was tried and imprisoned for his role in Loyalist terror in 1992. His trial and subsequent revelations uncovered the full extent of British state collusion with Loyalist paramilitaries. We now know Nelson had warned British Military Intelligence of a massive Loyalist arms shipment from South Africa in January 1988. Military Intelligence did nothing about it. These arms were used to carry out a hideous series of assassinations and massacres in the years that followed.

Nelson, a former British soldier, joined the UDA in the early 1970's. In 1974, he was convicted for kidnapping and torturing a partially sighted Catholic man. Nelson went on to work for British Military Intelligence from 1983 to 1985, afterwards living in Germany. In 1987, a senior Military Intelligence officer (usually referred to as Colonel 'J') invited him to return to Northern Ireland. Thus, he resumed work as a British intelligence agent and rejoined the UDA, where he was made their senior intelligence officer, responsible

for gathering information on Republican suspects and planning their assassination.

## Stevens Inquiry

Nelson's double life as a terrorist and a British agent came to an end as a result of the Government's 1989-1990 Stevens Inquiry, set up to investigate the leaks of security files to Loyalist paramilitaries that the UDA revealed in 1989. As a result of the Inquiry, 59 people were charged or reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions, most on relatively minor matters such as 'unlawful possession of documents' and 'collecting and recording security information'. Only Brian Nelson was charged with conspiracy to murder, and even he got off very lightly. Shortly before his trial, 15 charges against him were dropped, including two of murder. He pleaded guilty to 20 charges in all, including conspiracy to murder five named individuals and collecting and processing information likely to be of use to terrorists.

During Nelson's trial, Colonel 'J' testified on his behalf, claiming that information about a large number of planned assassinations was shared with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC - the police force in Northern Ireland). The defence was that 217 lives were thus saved through the RUC preventing the



For how long has it gone on? RUC headwear, circa 1940s.

The modern RUC in action



assassinations being carried out. The RUC Chief Constable vigorously denied that this had occurred to anything like the extent Colonel 'J' claimed. Nevertheless, the judge accepted it as mitigation for Nelson's crimes. As the human rights group, Amnesty International pointed out in its report *Political killings in Northern Ireland*: "The court did not hear of a single arrest or interception operation, carried out on the basis of information provided by Brian Nelson."

## state sponsorship

The evidence presented at Nelson's trial shows that the security forces had no intention of preventing Loyalist murders. However, they were quite happy for information to be passed on to the UDA, who would then carry out the killings the security forces did not want to dirty their hands with. It has been alleged that Military Intelligence even helped Nelson streamline and systemise the UDA files on potential targets. It was reported at Nelson's trial that in 1987, Military Intelligence took the entire set of UDA files into its possession, including the vast number of security force files that had passed into UDA hands. Military Intelligence therefore knew of the extensive leaks that were taking place, but no inquiry into them was carried out until the Stevens Inquiry in 1989, when the UDA forced the government's hand on the matter.

It is important to note that the Stevens Inquiry did little to actually stop the leaking of information to Loyalist paramilitaries. In subsequent years, the possession of hundreds of other security files by Loyalist paramilitaries continued to be revealed.

Recently, Sunday Telegraph reporters John Ware and Geoff Seed investigated the Brian Nelson affair. In their article, they claim that the security forces became involved with Nelson to direct UDA targeting against known IRA members. This is based on previously unreported statements by Colonel 'J', and intelligence records of Nelson's meetings with his Military Intelligence handler. The article looks like an attempt to make the collusion between the security forces and Loyalist paramilitaries look relatively benign from the British standpoint. After decades of 'Hang IRA Scum' type media reports, many British people would not have found the illegal killing of IRA members unacceptable. The Ware and Seed version of the Nelson affair is very far from the whole truth. The UDA always had a strategy of murdering nationalists and Catholics with no paramilitary connections, as well as suspected IRA or Sinn Fein members, in the hope that nationalists would blame the IRA for inciting Loyalist retaliation. It was also a product of the mindless bigotry and sectarianism that lies at the heart of Loyalist paramilitary 'political thinking'. British intelligence must have known that simply helping the UDA to target 'genuine IRA suspects' would do nothing to deflect the UDA from the purely sectarian part of their campaign.

## Pat Finucane

Military Intelligence knew that Brian Nelson was also targeting people who were not IRA suspects. After his trial, he admitted organising the 1989 murder of Patrick Finucane, one of the leading Belfast civil rights lawyers acting for those held under British anti-terrorist legislation. Nelson had gathered information about Finucane and told his intelligence handler that Finucane was being targeted. Nothing was done to prevent two gunmen bursting into the family home while they were having dinner and shooting Finucane in front of his wife and three children aged 9, 13 and 17. Interestingly, the Sunday Telegraph article does not mention Patrick Finucane, presumably because the case does not fit easily into their own limited account of the extent and consequences of collusion between the security forces and Loyalist paramilitaries.

## arms shipment

The circumstances surrounding the 1988 South African arms shipment also show very clearly that Colonel 'J' and Military Intelligence did not give a damn about preventing indiscriminate murder. The shipment included 200 AK47 automatic rifles, 90 Browning pistols, 500 hand grenades, 30,000 rounds of ammunition and 12 RPG7 rocket launchers, to be split between three Loyalist paramilitary groups; the UDA, the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Resistance. Brian Nelson knew this arms shipment was going to arrive and Military Intelligence knew about it too. However, it was not intercepted and the terror groups were allowed to receive and keep these weapons. Two equally unbelievable reasons have been given for this.

First, Nelson, in a diary of his work as a British Intelligence officer (some of which was revealed to the BBC 'Panorama' program in 1992), claimed that the army allowed the shipment to land in order to protect his cover. Given the vast size of the shipment this hardly seems credible. What was the point of having an informer in the UDA if information of this magnitude was not acted on? Second, British Intelligence sources told the BBC's 'Inside Ulster' program (28.1.93) that they tracked the arms shipment from South Africa to Northern Ireland but then simply lost track of it. The security services could not have lost track of such a vast arms shipment if they had any will at all to intercept it. It is not credible to accuse the security services of simple incompetence - they must have deliberately allowed the arms to arrive and be distributed.

After the arrival of the arms, Loyalist paramilitaries redoubled their murderous efforts. In the 6 years before the arms arrived, Loyalist paramilitaries killed 71 people. In the 6 years following, Loyalists killed 229 people.

It must be clear from the evidence of collusion between the British security services and Loyalist paramilitaries that the British Army in Northern Ireland was not a peace-keeping force. Peace keepers do not allow participants in a conflict to import and use military weapons. A key role of the British security services in Northern Ireland has been to terrorise nationalists in the

The northern Ireland human rights group Relatives for Justice estimate that, in the period 1988-94, at least 100 deaths involved weapons from an arms shipment from South Africa, that the British security services knew about but failed to intercept. These avoidable deaths included;

- the killing of 2 Catholic girls aged 19 and 16, and a 29 year old man outside a mobile shop, in March 1991, on the Drumberg Estate, County Armagh;
- the killing of 5 Catholics, including a 15 year old boy in a betting shop in the Ormeau Road, Belfast, in February 1992;
- the killing of 8 Catholics in the Greysteel pub massacre, on October 30th 1993, by the UDA. Gunmen arrived in Halloween masks. One shouted 'trick or treat', then they opened fire with automatic rifles;
- the killing of 6 Catholics in a pub in Loughmishland by the UVF, in June 1994.

hope of forcing them to submit to British rule. The South African arms shipment and the Nelson affair are just parts of the strategy that gave rise to the Falls Road curfew, internment without trial and Bloody Sunday.

### bulldog bullshit

The real motive for Britain's strategy, and its continued presence in the 6 counties, is probably that most mindless motive of all - British nationalism. The British Left has spent years agonising over whether it is legitimate to support Irish Nationalism or whether such nationalist struggles undermine the concept of working class internationalism. There have also been legitimate worries about human rights abuses and the killing of civilians by the IRA. What the Left has often ignored is that British nationalism is by far the greatest problem in Northern Ireland. It has been the British determination to 'keep Ulster British' and not to 'give in to terrorists' that sustained the war in Ireland for so long and delayed the creation of a meaningful peace process. The British state carried out its atrocities because the British government did not

want the world to see its forces evacuating Northern Ireland, Vietnam-style, at the head of a victorious Republican movement.

Nationalism is the glue that the British state uses to paper over the huge social divisions that exist in British society. At the height of the Thatcher recession of the early 1980's the right-wing media whipped up a storm of nationalist hysteria over the Falklands War. The media also used the Royal Wedding of Prince Charles and Diana to stir up patriotic sentiment. The point was to convince those ordinary working class people who were suffering that they were 'one nation' with the rich and the representatives of the rich in the Tory Party.

It may be that the current peace process is the start of the end of British rule in Northern Ireland. It may be a way in which Britain can leave Northern Ireland in a manner it controls from start to finish and which saves the face of the British government. The record of Britain's vile, dishonest war in Ireland will remain, however, as a graphic example of the terrible consequences of British nationalism. 

(cont'd from page 21.)

Gross Indecency. He wasn't sacked for being gay, but for failure to disclose the "conviction". If he wasn't gay he wouldn't have been jumped by five coppers while snogging in a park in the first place. To sack him for failure to disclose the Caution is not discriminatory, oh no - this is an Equal Opportunity Employer, it doesn't discriminate. His workmates were furious, not being Equal Opportunity Employers, merely workers, they foolishly saw this not only as a failure to "actively combat direct and indirect discrimination", but as discriminatory and an act of victimisation of a gay man for having a sex life. ("We love the sinner, but hate the sin", remember.)

Meanwhile, back in the field of industrial relations, everything hinges on a technicality - was the word "Caution" mentioned *anywhere* in the recruitment literature. The issue of whether someone whom the police only caution is a sex criminal and a potential threat to young people in his care doesn't even arise if Human Resources

can find a reference to cautions somewhere, anywhere. An Equal Opportunity Employer is not interested in its managers' equation of gay men with child molesters - institutionalised discrimination cannot exist.

The workforce at the school were threatened with "bringing the Council into disrepute" (by exposing its hypocrisy and discrimination) for discussing the sacking amongst themselves. The Council's cover-up of its discriminatory practice has not been challenged, and a reference to "cautions" was duly found.

### Business logic

One of the reasons reinstatement was always unlikely is that the individual concerned was on probation, and had not got around to joining a union when his contract was swiftly terminated. Not only did this mean he could be disposed of more easily, it meant that his workmates support for him would be effectively disowned by the unions to which they are affiliated.

Never mind that loads of gay men

who risk a similar fate are their members and that the best way to protect them was to win reinstatement. The corporate interests of the union take priority, membership (and subs. income) must be maximised, solidarity counts for nothing. Anarcho-syndicalists are the opposite - for us solidarity is not a commodity to be provided on subscription, it is what links us to our fellow human beings.

Unfortunately, the institutions of the Lesbian & Gay Community have a similar business/service logic to the conventional unions. Even before Freedom UK 'outed' Pride as a business, it was totally dependent on sponsorship, mainly from purveyors of legal drugs. The rest of the Scene, and the press which serves it, are about finding our niche in capitalist society. Stonewall is a self-appointed, straight-acting, middle class civil rights body, Outrage is a more militant version of the same. To me, the problem has always been that I am subject to authority - if no-one can decide my face doesn't fit, I don't have any problems! 

# Young Property

Discipline and punish.  
The cycle of abuse continues. Young people are cheap property, or worse still, play objects for brutal games

**Before "Cheap Labour" was elected to power last year, Jack Straw, then Shadow Home Secretary, advocated a curfew for children. He planned to ban children from the streets after 9pm. The curfew plan was couched in terms of 'empowering local communities'. It would have little effect on the children of the rich, but it would severely infringe the lives and liberties of working class children, who have only the street in which to play.**

At present, the curfew plan is one plank on a raft of repressive measures which have originated from one of Cheap Labour's many expensive think-tanks. Near the top of the Government's wish-list, is the idea of a national identity card for young people.

Initially the scheme is voluntary, and carrying the card will be mandatory for young people wanting to prove they are legally old enough to purchase scratch cards, alcohol, cigarettes, solvents, and to hire videos. The Citizen's Card, as it will be called, may not be compulsory, but it has all the trappings of any National Identity Card, including photo and hologram. It is the thin end of the wedge, and will lead to a National ID card for everyone, regardless of age. The government has chosen young people as an easy target, so that we will become used to the idea of young people being asked to prove their identity wherever they go. And when they are 'old enough', they will be 'offered' a New Deal (which one is

not permitted to refuse), and be put to work on 'market' wages - because Cheap Labour don't believe in a minimum wage for younger workers.

The Citizen Card Planning Group is currently negotiating with 16 Trade Associations, the National Lottery and Railtrack. In addition, there have been pledges of support from the Tobacco Manufacturers Association and the National Federation of Retail Newsagents. Businesses and industry have been asked for £330,000 to start the scheme up. And by the way, all card applicants will be asked to pay £5 and provide their own photos.

The Citizen Card and those corporations supporting it should be rejected and boycotted. On the latter, older people need to be prepared to help out with the boycott of cards. Why co-operate with a card which (a) is designed to assist in strengthening Government information networks, not merely prove age, and (b) will be expanded - so it will be YOU next? Unless, that is, the Citizen Card is deemed unenforceable. Don't give it a chance, give young people a chance instead.



## Heights of Brutality

**An Australian minister recently branded hypocritical a British request that Australia orders an inquiry into the sexual and physical abuse of British child migrants.**

The family services minister, Warwick Smith, attacked the British policy that shipped 7,000 orphaned and

illegitimate children to Australia between 1947 and 1967. "The issue is a little rich for some of the British people to now be calling on the Australian government to inquire into a decision they made which defies all logic," he said.

The House of Commons health committee wants an inquiry into "the torture, rape and degradation" of hundreds of children whose average age was eight. Mr Smith said it was too early to say whether Canberra would back any of its recommendations. But he said he would ask the Roman Catholic Church to explain its part in the forced migration. The committee's report named orphanages run by the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy as worthy of criminal investigation.

The accounts of the abused are damning testimony of the violation of young migrants, many of whom were so traumatised they later committed suicide. One former migrant said the Christian Brothers had competed to be the first to rape him 100 times. Another blue-eyed boy had punched his own eyes daily so the Brothers would not find him attractive. Five years ago, the order apologised for the abuse and offered out-of-court compensation and counselling to its victims.

The debate over justice for the migrants echoes the demands of the "stolen generation" of Aborigines taken from their parents and placed in white homes, who tell similar tales of abuse. The prime minister, John Howard, has refused to apologise to the Aborigines, saying no government can apologise for the actions of its predecessors. 

# Who is Solidarity Federation?

Solidarity Federation is the new solidarity movement. Formed in March 1994, it consists of a federation of groups and individuals across England, Scotland & Wales. The basic foundation of Solidarity Federation is the Local.

## Getting down the Local

People are getting together to form Locals – Solidarity Federation groups. Locals put solidarity into practice. In time, each Local will have a premises as a base for solidarity action in the local community. Locals are organising or getting involved in local campaigns across a wide range of issues – both in the community and in workplaces. Issues are wide-ranging: defending our natural and local environment and health; opposing racism, sexism and homophobia; in fact, anything which defends or contributes to our mutual quality of life. It all forms part and parcel of the building of a solidarity movement.

## Direct Action

Apart from being the name of this Quarterly, Direct Action is the tool which Locals use in all their work. At a basic level, this can be simply the spreading of information through leaflets, local bulletins and public meetings to raise awareness and involvement locally. However, Direct Action is not limited to spreading information. It means a physical presence in defending and promoting a better quality of life. Fundamental to Direct Action is the reality that we can only rely on ourselves to achieve our goals. While we reserve the right to take opportunities to fight for improvements to our quality of life now, the solidarity movement must always remain independent from those we are demanding from. Solidarity Federation will accept neither leadership, charity, nor guidance from government or business – instead, we must couple our principle of solidarity with the practice of self-reliance.

## Aims and Principles

The Solidarity Federation is an organisation of people who seek to destroy capitalism and the state. Capitalism because it exploits, oppresses and kills working people and wrecks the environment for profit world-wide. The state because it can only maintain hierarchy and privilege for the classes who control it and their servants; it cannot be used to fight the oppression and exploitation that are the consequences of hierarchy and the source of privilege.

In their place, we want a society based on workers' self-management, solidarity, mutual aid and libertarian communism. That society can only be achieved by working class organisations based on similar principles – revolutionary unions. These are not Trade Unions only concerned with "bread and butter" issues like pay and conditions. Revolutionary unions are means for working people to organise and fight all the issues – both in the workplace and outside – which arise from our oppression.

We recognise that not all oppression is economic, but can be based on gender, race, sexuality, or anything our rulers find useful. Unless we organise in this way, politicians – some claiming to be revolutionary – will be able to exploit us for their own ends.

The Solidarity Federation consists of Industrial Networks and Locals which are the nuclei of future revolutionary unions and centres for working class struggle on a local level. Our activities are based on Direct Action – action by workers ourselves, not through intermediaries like politicians and union officials; our decisions are made through direct participation of the membership. We welcome all who agree with our aims and principles and want to work to achieve social revolution. We recognise that the class struggle is world-wide, and are affiliated to the International Workers' Association (IWA), whose Principles we share.

## Networks

Solidarity Federation members who work in the same work sector have formed Networks. Their purpose is to promote solidarity amongst workers. Networks also use all the tools of Direct Action at their disposal, to fight for better pay and conditions. Networks form the basis of a completely new labour movement, nothing like the Trade Unions, which are weakened by having to abide by ridiculous laws, and by hierarchical power structures and self-interested paid officials. The fundamentally different nature of Networks fits their fundamentally different aim.

## Where to?

As Locals and Networks grow, they practise community and workers' self-management. Eventually, industries will be run by producers and consumers. In other words, by workers (in Networks) and people in the wider community (Locals) who want the goods and services they provide. And this is no flight of fancy or textbook dream. As the solidarity movement grows in members and influence, so does the scope for action. Both the Locals and Networks have already established a reputation and are showing real results in membership & effectiveness.

## Global Solidarity

Capitalism is international, so we need to be organised globally to oppose it and build a viable alternative. Nationalism and patriotism lead to pointless and false divisions, used as tools to fuel economic and bloody wars. Solidarity Federation opposes these in favour of a movement built on global solidarity.

Solidarity Federation is the British section of the International Workers' Association (IWA), the anarcho-syndicalist association. This gives it essential international solidarity and experience from much larger sections such as the CNT (Spain) and USI (Italy). Founded in 1922, the IWA has a long history of solidarity in action; by the 2nd World War over 5 million people worldwide were affiliated. A combination of war, fascism, and soviet 'communism' all but destroyed the movement, but after the Spanish CNT re-emerged in the late 70's, the IWA had a new lease of life.

Today, there are sections ranging from a few dozen to thousands of members, and growth is rapid. At the last IWA Congress in Madrid, another 7 new sections were affiliated from South America, Africa, Ireland, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

## Getting Involved

**A global solidarity movement can only gather strength as many more people who share the same aims get involved.**

**Contacting Solidarity Federation offers the possibility of contributing to this growing momentum. It is not like joining a club, union, or political party – rather, it is an opportunity to channel your efforts for change and, at the same time, benefit yourself from the experience.**

**It might just be worth it.**

**(See page 9 for contact details.)**

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LABOUR**

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# *Direct* **Action**

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