

DIRECT ACTION



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WORKED OVER

The 1989 Social Security Act introduced on the 9th October is making significant changes to the rights of claimants. While up until recently people on unemployment benefit or income support were required to be 'available for work'. Claimants will now be expected to show they are taking 'active steps' to look for work and if they cannot prove this they risk losing their entitlement for benefit.

One of the main implications of the Act is that after a certain period of time newly unemployed people will have a restricted right to refuse vacancies which are 'unsuitable' on the grounds of their previous experience or training. In other words, claimants will be forced to apply for jobs which they would not nor-

pletely. With this new act people are going to be expected to take up jobs that pay less than the dole.

Apart from Restart interviews which are going to continue, claimants will be asked as they sign on what steps they have made to look for work. The pro-

Nicholas Scott MP, a government minister, described this as a 'shock to the system' and he expects a claimant to get out in the following two weeks and make sure they are actively seeking work. When the claimant returns to sign on and produces the evidence to show active job seeking, they will be re-entitled to benefit.

However, a DSS source has stated that without 'satisfactory evidence' certain claimants may have their benefit suspended for up to six months, some even indefinitely. And the pressure to force claimants off benefit will be severe. Current indications suggest that claimant advisors



mally do, ie., less skilled jobs, or jobs in which they would feel unhappy or uncomfortable.

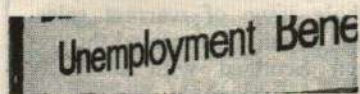
In addition to preventing claimants from holding out for 'suitable' employment, the Act states that 'after a permitted period the level of remuneration (pay) will not be good cause for a claimant turning down or failing to take advantage of an employment opportunity'.

The implications are fairly clear, claimants are going to be pushed into low-paid jobs, training schemes or off benefits com-

posals is to target 18 to 35 year olds who after two months on the register will be interviewed by a claimants adviser before being allowed to sign on and asked for evidence of their looking for work. These will include a record of employers approached with rejection letters or time and date an employer was contacted, etc. If the claimant advisor is not satisfied that 'appropriate steps' are being taken she/he can suspend the claim indefinitely, unemployment benefit for two weeks, income support on 60% of their personal allowance over the same period.

will have to refer 10% of all people interviewed to Employment Training placements.

Claimant unions are producing a leaflet on how to answer the new 'are you available for and actively seeking work'. Get a copy from your local claimants union. Don't go to the interview alone, take a friend with you or contact your local claimant union who will arrange for someone to go with you.



PARTY TIME?

Within the anti-Poll Tax movement there is a debate on the participation of the Labour Party, hinging on what form we want the emerging national anti-Poll Tax federation to take. Various marxist groupings have been arguing that the Labour Party should participate in the federation as ward and constituency branches. The same people are cagey as to whether this right to participate by virtue of political affiliation also extends to those groups who aren't entryist, or parties who stand on their own.

As anarcho-syndicalists we wholeheartedly reject this argument. All campaigns must be controlled by their members — this is true democracy. The Labour Party is a very small part of the working class, and, officially, most CLPs and wards have not played a positive role in fighting the Poll Tax. Throughout Scotland, Labour authorities are implementing the Poll Tax, and are happily compiling the register in England and Wales. Do we want these same people swamping our campaign? The answer must be no. Those on the left of the Labour Party should already be involved, but there are many areas where the Labour Party are regarded contemptuously by local campaigners because they've been so slow off the mark. Should we now open our doors to the Labour centre and right, get into the same arguments about non-payment we thought we were past, and hold back the building of the campaign? Can we afford to alienate the millions of people

angered by the Poll Tax, but unwilling to join the Labour Party? What happens when the elections come round next May — after one month of non-payment the issue will be dropped like a hot potato as a barrier to Labour's electoral chances.

We are not against Labour Party wards and CLPs participating in the fight against the Poll Tax. Indeed, we welcome the Labour Party activists who have been with us since the beginning, and those who are joining now. But the fight against the Poll Tax cannot be sacrificed to the 'wait til the next election' brigade. Quite simply, we can't afford it.



POLL TAX RESISTANCE

Nearly 500 people took to the streets of Norwich on Saturday 12th August to demonstrate against the hated Poll Tax. A healthy disregard for the law was shown by the marchers' determination to stick to the planned route, not that decided by the police at five minutes notice, and the burning of around 200 registration forms on the steps of the City Hall, regardless of police orders that only one form could be burnt as a token gesture!

Figures given by the Community Charge Registration Officer for the return of forms in Norwich admit that of 53,000 forms sent out, 15,000 have not been returned (no mention of the number of blank, spoilt or unusable forms they doubtless have!), one in three households not registering. Clearly the work of community-based groups has paid off in Norwich, as in other towns or cities in England and Wales, encouraged by the example of the 650,000 Scots now not paying the Poll Tax; a level of resistance that must be built up in the coming months.

Whilst the fight in the community must be consolidated, ensure the involvement of more and more people on block and street levels, and cover areas without present activity, it is crucial that resistance be developed in workplaces to halt wage-arrestments of non-payers, amongst local government workers to organise a refusal to collaborate with collection and DSS workers for a refusal to deduct Poll Tax from benefits. Community groups should direct some of their efforts towards initiating and encouraging these moves, taking on an industrial outlook.

Workplace resistance depends on collectively pledging to take strike action if threatened with wage arrestments, something that will never be built by union bureaucrats (either local or national), as shown in the P&O and Dockers' strikes by Sam McCluskie and Ron Todd's concern of the risk to their funds, not their members' livelihoods.

Doubtless any strike action taken by workers against court and employers support of Poll Tax enforcement will at best meet with the bureaucrats frantically trying to work compromises, at worst?

Needless to say, a willingness to initiate independent workplace groups has been greater amongst these without Trotskyist dogma, regardless of whether their workplace is unionised or not, no doubt because the 'masses can only reach a trade union consciousness'?

Links between community and workplace groups should be direct, to the benefit of each, with no basic difference in structure — open meetings, recallable and accountable delegates, the rotation of tasks. The support of one for the other has already



To put more than an ounce of faith in the TUC apparatus is looking for disaster, and wave goodbye to the very real possibility of success. As the case of the two Edinburgh NUPE shop stewards suspended for a year for having affiliated to the Lothian Anti-Poll Tax Federation illustrates, the trade union bureaucracy are prepared to crush any initiative to fight the Poll Tax, petrified at the prospect of losing funds through sequestration by the courts.

In some cases it might be possible to put through an active non-payment motion through the branch without ending up dispirited and expending energy comparable to running a marathon, the problem often remains that that is what it remains, a paper motion.

proved invaluable in the instance where non-payers at Savacentre (Edinburgh) heard they would face the sack, but the threat of their local anti-Poll Tax group picketing the premises in protest was enough for management to assure workers that their jobs would be safe.

The emerging networks of anti-Poll Tax community and workplace groups are inseparable from struggles on local issues such as housing, and at work against management attacks, government cuts, privatisation, etc. Making links with those in struggle locally, will ensure the strength and solidarity necessary initially to effectively defend our class interests and if built on and defended from reformist hostility to take the offensive.

Five months after the introduction of the Poll Tax in Scotland, official figures have been released on the level of non-payment. These make grim reading for the Tories and their Labour allies collecting the Poll Tax.

Over 665,000 have not paid a penny towards the Poll Tax throughout Scotland and although the level of non-payment varies according to regions, the central belt averages out at 20%. In Glasgow one in three haven't paid while in Edinburgh it is one in five. You have to look at the figures closely however, they only include people who are registered — 20,000 have asked for a rebate in Lothian and they are not even on the register.

Information passed on to us shows that in Lothian 121,453 haven't paid at all while 66,060 have slipped into arrears, no doubt encouraged by the campaign as well as inability to pay. Apparently 6,854 made arrangements to pay the Poll Tax in full and then changed their minds and haven't paid at all. They are now getting final notices and will be the first to be affected by recovery methods.

The regional councils have now sent seven day reminders in the hope of decreasing the level of non-payment. These can be safely ignored and anti-Poll Tax campaigners have been reassuring people.

On the day that Glasgow announced figures for non-payment a full meeting of Lothian regional councils had to be abandoned due to anti-Poll Tax protesters. The protesters were out in force, 70 packed the public benches in the city chambers while a sizeable demonstration took place outside. Inside the meeting Tories and Labour councillors were heckled and mocked when they justified attempts to recover Poll Tax arrears through legal procedures. Only two Labour councillors identified themselves with the anti-Poll Tax campaigners and called for an all-out ban on the use of legal procedures such as warrant sales. When the move was made to take the vote, the Labour convenor moved to abandon the meeting. The vote was not taken as councillors were not prepared to be identified by the anti-Poll Tax campaign for future activity. The chambers were immediately occupied and banners unfurled through the windows. The occupation lasted for about an hour after which the Poll Tax collection office was picketed and forced to close down.

Lothian Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups have promised to return to the next regional council to force a vote on the whole issue of warrant sales. This should be repeated throughout Scotland with solidarity actions throughout the rest of Britain.

FALLEN OUT

The Anti-Nuclear Network reports that:

The West German government has finally abandoned plans to build a nuclear reprocessing plant at Wackersdorf in Bavaria after five years of militant anti-nuclear struggle against the project. Spent nuclear fuel from the West German nuclear programme will now be reprocessed at Sellafield and La Hague in France.

The plant was abandoned after £840 million had already been spent on the site. BNFL is reported to be willing to accept 250 tonnes of spent fuel a year at £420 a kilogram.

Matina, a West German anti-nuclear activist describes the history of the Wackersdorf campaign:

'The people of the region around Wackersdorf seemed the most stupid one to the nuclear mafia, so it was chosen for the site of this 'WAA' (Wiederaufbereitungsanlage). But there the nuclear lobby had been totally wrong. All classes of inhabitants of this region took part in the protest and were supported by nuclear opponents from the whole republic. This was the origin of the second anti-nuclear movement in our country.'

'In 1984/85 we hindered the first transports of nuclear waste to the deposits near Gorleben, despite massive official violence. In '85/86 we took part in the 'hut villages' on the projected site of Wackersdorf. The peace and squatters' movements has shrunk as quickly as they had grown, but now we renewed our structures....'

'We got into the headlines again when, together with local people, we tried to hold the Wackersdorf 'hut villages' non-violently against brutal cop violence in summer '85, December '85 and December/January '85/86. The locals who did not take part directly supported the site-occupiers with food, etc., and encouragement. They insulted the brutal cops who been brought there from all parts of the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany)....'

'New anti-nuclear groups were set up all over...especially in Bavaria. But at Wackersdorf the fight became harder. At Carneval (post-Lent holiday) and Easter '86 there were pitched battles at the fence. Protesters were attacked from helicopters with CS and CN gas. Even old local people, who maybe had previously voted right wing, lost their trust in the state being a democracy. Now they helped the young left wing stone-throwing activists who had come from further away. They helped fill empty bottles, etc., to throw and gave people places to stay for the night. The state tried to divide us into 'peaceful abused citizens' and 'violence-loving anarchists' but no-one believed it — it had become too evident from whom the violence was coming.'

'Then came Chernobyl!...At Whitsuntide '86 more than 30,000 people came to the site of Wackersdorf, throwing all their anguish and their rage against the immense fence (which afterwards was no longer quite so immense). The state was so surprised that it couldn't stop this. But it got its revenge on the demonstrators on 7th June who were at Wackersdorf and Brockdorf. Excessive beatings, attacks with CS gas (out of so-called 'water cannon'), heavy fines and even prison sentences have become normal for all subsequent anti-nuclear actions. The worst, as usual is in Bavaria. For instance, the anti-nuclear journal 'Radiaktiv', produced at Nuremberg, is confiscated nearly every other time it's published. In autumn '86 even a federal-wide anti-nuclear conference at Regensburg was banned....'



'It's true that the immense fury and desperation after Chernobyl came out in a rash of sabotage. A lot of electricity pylons were sawn down, a lot of nuclear business offices were burned down, and so on, but even non-violent blockades are called 'criminal'....'

'Last summer an official hearing took place about the WAA. But the written arguments of 800,000 opponents were simply ignored, because they could not be proved untrue. The hearing was stopped. In autumn 15,000 demonstrated at the fence of the site, and the cops let them stay there for the first time since Whitsuntide '86....'

'We cannot wait on official decisions or hearings, but we think that our struggle can push them to destroy less of our world than they would otherwise. But we want more: So let us take part in the international revolutionary movement and let us make the anti-nuclear struggle the cutting edge of it!'

The above is an edited extract from a pamphlet produced for the International Congress of the Radical Anti-Nuclear Movement held in Holland in February 1989. Copies of the Congress report are £1 from ANN, address on page nine.

OINK!

Detective Chief Superintendent Melvin is to face disciplinary charges arising from his handling of the investigation into the Broadwater Farm uprising of October 1985. Now head of the Metropolitan Police Organised Crime Task Force, Melvin will be questioned about the interrogation of a 13 year old boy who was brought to trial for the Blakelock killing. The case was dismissed by the judge, who found the boy's confession 'fantastical and makebelieve'.

The confession was the result of the boy being held illegally for three days clad only in his underpants and a blanket, and denied access to solicitors and his parents. Melvin also produced the unsigned 'statement' by Winston Silcott 'You'll never get anyone to give evidence against me.' On this fabricated 'evidence' Silcott became one of three men framed for the killing of PC Blakelock. He is now doing life, along with Enghin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite.

The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign has pointed out that if there is evidence against Melvin in this case, for an internal enquiry, then there is equally valid evidence in all the cases. At a public meeting at Tottenham Town Hall on Thursday 28th September, the Campaign called for a public enquiry into the events of October 1985, and the entire investigation. Support was also asked for a picket of Tottenham Police Station on Friday 6th October, fourth anniversary of the uprising.

On Friday 29th September the estate was swamped by 400



police in a 'drugs raid'. This raid, with riot police in waiting, was spearheaded by armed police smashing in doors with axes. The military operation hauled in no drugs of any sign-

ificance, simply the small quantities of cannabis to be found on any estate. The estate was occupied from late afternoon on the Friday to early Sunday morning, with police officers trying to provoke a reaction from the residents with racist taunts. Of the 37 people arrested, by Sunday 21 had been charged with minor drugs offences, nine with public order offences, and four were still in custody pending charges.

Crime has actually gone down on the estate in the past couple of months, just as it had when Tottenham police singled the estate out for a campaign of harassment, culminating in the murder of Cynthia Jarrett and the attack on a peaceful protest as it tried to leave the estate. The actual sequence of events to which the uprising was the inevitable, desperate response of the community under attack has been consistently obscured by

the howls of outrage over the death of PC Blakelock.

The lack of drugs is now being blamed by police on 'dealers' getting a tip-off about the raid.

The reality is that the Farm is no den of iniquity, and the entire raid is an exercise in propaganda and intimidation, as well as vengeance for Melvin facing disciplinary charges. The timing, a week before the picket and in the midst of a renewal of agitation around the repression of four years ago, speaks for itself.

trophy trust and the sense of community on the estate, what the police wanted more than anything. The police share the prejudices of the ruling class they serve, their racism and class hatred are expressed in a cruder, more direct form than that of their masters. They are the law, why should they worry about



The propaganda is designed to convince the ill-informed that the people of Broadwater Farm are a criminal conspiracy, and that the protests are simply a sophisticated anti-police campaign motivated by criminals' self-interest. The harassment is part of the ongoing police campaign to destroy the community. Of the estates 5,000 residents, over 300 were arrested four years ago, eight year olds were pressured into naming ten year olds, and so on until people were named who could be plausibly framed in the atmosphere of hysteria.

The result was to largely des-

retribution? What they hate more than anything else is evidence that working class communities can help ourselves and improve our lot.

That is evidence that they and their state are not an essential part of any society, but the repressive arm of the ruling class. The more people realise this, the better we can fight our oppressors. The Defence Campaign is fighting back, with the aid of local community activists around Tottenham Against the Poll Tax.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Now that the last of the remaining 26,000 Vietnamese troops have withdrawn from Cambodia fears are being expressed over the possible return of the Khmer Rouge whose infamous return to the countryside policy instigated wholesale massacres that became known as the Killing Fields.

The Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in 1978 after a series of border attacks during which an estimated 30,000 Vietnamese died. They toppled the Khmer Rouge and the full cost of their policies were revealed to the world.

However, the new government installed by the Vietnamese was condemned as a puppet regime and the West refused to grant any aid to Cambodia. Of course, the claim made by Vietnam that the invasion came about because of the border attacks and proceeded on humanitarian grounds is not entirely true.

Ever since the defeat of the Americans the Hanoi govern-

ment have dreamt of uniting the region, once known as Indo-China, under their control. The Khmer Rouge gave them the opportunity to do this.

Once the extent of the killings were made known it was hoped that Western Aid would be provided to rebuild Cambodia. However, no matter what expressions of disgust came from the West at the killings of the Khmer Rouge the USA still carried an even greater hatred of the Vietnamese. China also had a long-standing enmity towards their southern neighbour which had refused to be dominated. The Soviet Union remained their only ally as Vietnam was seen as a thorn in other superpowers' sides.

One consequence of this is that aid, and more importantly, arms began to be shipped to opposition groups who had fled across the border into Thailand. There, among refugee camps, guerilla units were formed. A shaky coalition was set up between three groups. One is led by Prince Sihanouk who ruled Cambodia up to 1970. He was overthrown in a US-backed coup and the remains of that reg-

ained separate refugee camps and forces. American and Chinese arms and supplies have ensured the continuation of the guerilla war that has claimed thousands of lives. Cambodia has become 'Vietnam's Vietnam' as the same tactics that they used against the Americans have forced them to cut their losses and withdraw.

Although the Vietnamese



ime have formed the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF). they in turn were overthrown by the Khmer Rouge who form the third and strongest group. Each has main-

claim that the Phnom Penh regime they supported have the military edge there must be grave doubts over its ability to survive long. After all, if the Vietnamese army, generally rec-

ognised to be one of the best in the world, were unable to subdue the guerillas, as more arms flood in the military balance could shift decisively.

One hope for the Cambodian government is that the shaky coalition of opposition groups breaks down and they begin to fight among themselves. Certainly they do not agree on what tactics to employ with the Khmer Rouge planning a longish guerilla war while the other two groups want a faster more direct war. Certainly there is no love lost between the groups and the Khmer Rouge will not want to be tied down to any alliance for too long.

The tragedy of Cambodia stands as a sad testament to imperialism and the ambitions of states large and small. Throughout the past decades the Cambodian peasants have been more pawns in disputes that have gone way beyond Cambodia's boundaries and have become part of the wider superpower politics. Both the USA and China have to take the major share of the responsibility. If the Khmer Rouge do come back to power how many more Cambodians will have to die to satisfy the ambitions of Washington, Peking, Moscow or Hanoi?

GOING NOWHERE

The twentieth anniversary of the re-deployment of British troops on the streets of the Six Counties to prop up the reeling Orange State was overshadowed somewhat by an event a few days earlier. On the night of 8th-9th August a fifteen-year-old boy, Seamus Duffy, was killed by a plastic bullet fired by the RUC in North Belfast. He was taking part in the annual commemoration of the introduction of Internment in 1971, which is marked with bonfires.

That commemoration, as with most such demonstrations of opposition to British rule and the accompanying repression, is a family occasion in which the community comes onto the streets. This kind of communal commemoration is a source of the strength and durability of the resistance which has met that repression. As such it is a prime target for the RUC and British army.

One of the RUC's most famous acts of brutality — the deliberate murder of John Downes in front of TV cameras by RUC Reservist Nigel Hegarty — took place during an attack on a peaceful crowd outside Sinn Fein's Connolly House in Andersonstown at the end of the 1984 Internment Commemoration March. Downes was one of many victims of the indiscriminate, deliberate use of plastic bullets against the assembled people that day.

During the course of the police riot children sitting on the roofs of neighbouring houses were fired at. Seamus Duffy was the eighth child to be killed by these weapons, the seventeenth victim altogether. The name, the designation as a 'riot control' weapon, the 'less lethal' classification, all help to make the use of plastic bullets more acceptable to public opinion in Britain, the Twenty-Six Counties and elsewhere, and less newsworthy than the use of 'live' bullets.

They allow the Crown Forces to use a degree of lethal force without risking the kind of reaction that accompanied the Bloody Sunday killings in 1972. Their use, particularly the deliberate targeting of children evident on August 8th-9th, is intended to force anti-unionists off their own streets and break up the community solidarity which is the backbone of resistance. Children are a target because they are the most vulnerable members of the community, their deaths are intended to force the community to stay in their homes, or risk the death of more children.

This lethal response to community demonstrations has failed to isolate the Republicans by cowering their base of support into passivity, its ultimate goal. What it has succeeded in doing is ensuring that the armed struggle will not be displaced as the central method of resistance by mass action. The former is carried out by small groups of dedicated people who accept the possibility of their own deaths as a necessary risk, the latter is carried out by people who can be deterred by the deliberate killing of their children.

Despite the cost in lives, the strain on British military resources, and the massive financial burden, the armed struggle is easier for the British to contain politically than mass action. Anyone who wishes to see an end to the murder of Irish children, the development of mass democratic politics in the Six Counties, British Withdrawal and working class unity, must support initiatives aimed at getting these terror weapons banned.

The stewarding was also non-existent, although the fascist opposition was, fortunately, even more pathetic than usual. There were only a couple of arrests, and living locally we went to the off to avoid the rip-off beer tent. Attendance at the carnival was 15,000, which is hardly surprising, since sitting in the sun drinking beer, listening to Irish folk and rock bands (none of your trendy music) is pretty pleasant.

My trade union branch sent delegates to the launch conference of Time To Go! and affiliated later. There was a fierce debate about whether principled anti-imperialists should support TTG, which seems to believe that the war in Ireland is bad because it undermines the legitimacy of the British state, and they want to save it from itself.



In London during this period there were two manifestations of opposition to British rule. The first was the regular Internment Commemoration, organised by the Irish Freedom Movement (RCP), on 5th August. The turnout, 2,000, was down on previous years, undoubtedly the result of the competing Time To Go! march and carnival on the 12th. This is cause for regret, because in spite of the general hostility to the RCP the march has been growing in size for the last couple of years as the variety of groups active around British withdrawal have supported it on principled grounds. Internment, like the other major event commemorated by a march in London, Bloody Sunday, was of great political significance, and should not be forgotten.

I could be cynical and say that forgetting politics is what the Time To Go! campaign has been all about, but that would be an over-simplification. The whole event was intended to be the kind of passive, non-threatening day out the GLC specialised in. The march was a peculiarly depressing affair — the organisers, unlike the IFM, complied with a ban on Republican Flute Bands — and initially seemed to be only about 1,500 strong. The route was incredibly short, Whittington Park to Finsbury Park. Although it swelled as it went, there is widespread doubt that it made anything like the 8,000 claimed.

On balance the campaign was welcomed as a means of drawing people into debate and activity around British withdrawal, so that anti-imperialists could open up a new audience.

The Time To Go! leadership has other ideas, in many areas Irish Year of Action committees were set up to allow the Irish in Britain Representation Group and Troops Out Movement a say. The emphasis has been on allowing the Labour Party and trade unions to support withdrawal on their own terms, watering down the demands and limiting the terms of debate. What gains, if any, have been made as a result of this are small. Increased interest in Ireland has much to do with the work put in over the years by principled activists, and the impact of the twentieth anniversary.



The big carrot has been trade union affiliations, but once again it is difficult to see what has been gained by watering down the politics. The biggest national affiliate is NALGO, but national affiliation (apart from the usual financial contribution) has made little difference. There was no publicity drive for August 12th, and not even a whisper of a historical article about Ireland in *Public Service*, the union's paper, TTG's idea of union involvement means nothing more than donations and banners on a march.

This failure by NALGO can partly be attributed to its absorption in the local government pay dispute, which appears to have stretched the union's resources, but NALGO was the Big Success. In other unions, particularly those with an Irish

of hypocrisy were reached on 9th September, when the IRA's killing of a soldier's wife by mistake in Germany brought forth the headline 'Who next, the kids?'. 31 Irish children have been killed by the 'security forces' since 1969.

While there needs to be unity around British withdrawal, it is the right wing Time To Go! which is splitting the movement — denying long-standing activists a say, and also deliberately clashing with the Socialist Conference and the Internment Commemoration. Support for self-determination for the Irish people will grow when there is widespread understanding of the issues among working class people, stifling voices not approved of by left Labour MP's and union bureaucrats will not help. Sinn Fein, which seems to regard one MP as worth a thousand activists, has thrown its weight behind Time To Go! — it would do well not to place all its eggs in that opportunist basket.

Time To Go! seems to believe that it is not in the British state's interest to be in Ireland. The Tory military police intelligence establishment has rather different ideas, it won't be persuaded out. To look closely at Britain's real role in Ireland, rather than looking at the whole thing as a mistake, reveals the true nature of that state. Time To Go! is a holding operation by those who believe the state can rule by consent, and see its role in Ireland as a dangerous aberration.

Some of us express our solidarity with the Irish people out of internationalism, and see the fight against British imperialism as a fundamental part of the revolutionary struggle. Since many of Ireland's problems — like the highest ever emigration — are caused by its dependent 'third world' economy, Time To Go!'s goal of stabilising the British state is a barrier to solving most of Ireland's problems. As 'third world' peoples know to their cost, there are more means of killing than military ones. In the long run the only realistic way to achieve peace is the overthrow of capitalism.

NR



'region', ditching principled anti-imperialism did not prevent the well-worn 'a vote for Time To Go! is a vote for Sinn Fein and the IRA' arguments from getting aired. In true bureaucratic fashion, the need to appease loyalist union members in Scotland and the Six Counties rules out any serious discussion of where our class interests really lie.

Perhaps the best illustration of the limitations of the Time To Go! approach is the antics of the *Daily Mirror* in August. The death of Seamus Duffy was followed by a *Mirror* front page by publisher Robert Maxwell (ex-Labour MP, and anti-trade union boss of Pergamom Press), which must have had quite an impact. The article called for British withdrawal, and actually said that the British state had no positive role to play in Ireland, an improvement on the usual 'our boys are there to prevent the Irish (inexplicably) killing each other' line.

On August 15th, the actual anniversary of troops going onto the streets of Belfast (14th in Derry), the *Daily Mirror* ran a photo of Miss Great Britain with two squaddies in Derry. The bathing-suit-and-high-heels-clad Amanda Dyson sported a beret, camouflage jacket, and plastic bullet gun. In effect an endorsement of Seamus Duffy's murder by the *Mirror*, not to mention sexism as usual. The real depths

TAKE YOUR PICK

In the House of Commons on Friday 1st September a steering committee for an All British Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions was set up. Two days later another national anti-Poll Tax meeting took place at the Polytechnic of Central London. All those at the Friday meeting were present on Sunday, so why two meetings? With all the work that needs to be done to resist and defeat the Poll Tax, why are key activists being asked to duplicate national organising efforts?

Actually they aren't, both meetings were in support of the forthcoming national meeting to set up an All Britain Federation in Manchester on 25th November, but there the similarity ends. The Sunday meeting was originally going to be organised by the Socialist Conference (a collection of Labour Briefing, various socialist/liberal groups in the Labour Party, and SWP — who ought to be in the Labour Party), as a similarly informal successor to last year's Newcastle meeting.

They were persuaded to hand over the organisation to the London Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups — a bona fide anti-Poll Tax grouping, rather than a political faction. Originally London was to be joint organisers with the Avon Federation, but by accident they found out about the meeting on September 1st. Since that meeting was between 10am and 1pm on a working day in Methodist Central Hall, the organisers offered to combine efforts out of a commitment to unity, and make it a weekend event with the all-day Sunday 3rd meeting.

The organiser, Labour MP for Liverpool Broad Green Terry Fields, told them where to go. At this point the Avon Federation recalled its delegates for 'exceeding' their mandate to support initiatives to move towards national federation, on the only basis a genuinely broad-based movement can be built — non-registration, non-payment, non-collection. Letters were then circulated from the Avon Federation and Tommy 'more credentials than the TUC General Council' Sherridan.

Both letters denounced the September 3rd meeting as not 'broad, open and democratic', and declared support meeting on September 1st as the only body 'equipped with the necessary authority to convene a national steering committee'. Avon denied they'd ever been involved with the 3rd, Sherridan went so far as to both deny the existence of a London Federation, and allege that it only represented six groups. The fact that both letters used identical

phrasing is not really surprising, since the signatories, like Terry Fields, are members of Militant.

Incidentally, the organisers of the September 3rd meeting only found out about the 1st by accident, tried to co-ordinate with Fields, and took the trouble to get the addresses of, and invite every known anti-Poll Tax group or federation. London now became the key area for the future of a genuinely broad-based and democratic anti-Poll Tax movement.



RAG TRADE

The London Federation's August meeting (the first Tuesday of every month at Camden Town Hall) was attended for the first time by the secretaries of three estate-based anti-Poll Tax unions, who were clearly a little shocked that they were in the presence of 15 other groups' delegates, including a number of borough-wide federations. The major debate was around the issue of the two national meetings, as a result of which the Federation's position of support for both meetings was upheld.

The Militant three claimed no-one had heard of the Federation, although one later admitted he had through Southwark Community Resistance. As Chair of that meeting, my closing remark was to urge everyone to publicise the Federation and get all known London groups along. So we were a little put out that on Wednesday 30th August a meeting was organised by Ashmole Estate APTU in Vauxhall, Lambeth at which a London Steering Committee of Anti-Poll Tax Unions was set up. 62 groups were present, and an amendment to affiliate to the London Federation was lost 57 to three.

On the Thursday half a dozen Militant members, one of whom admitted to being from Enfield

and none of whom offered a local address, tried to set up an APTU in West Green ward in Tottenham (perceived as the heart of the London Federation). In spite of the obvious nature of the exercise, the Millies refused to admit they were simply splitting the campaign, and claimed that they wanted to involve 'ordinary people' by going local (so why pick an area none of them live in?). The dozen or so Haringey APTU activists (and one 'ordinary person') who turned up had to make it clear that since there was no political difference no initiatives outside the established non-payment campaign would be tolerated. Nothing has been heard since.

Hornsey & Wood Green APTU received a letter from the LSC, postmark 29th August (before it was set up), saying that the September 3rd meeting was cancelled in favour of September 1st. Many other anti-Poll Tax groups were the recipients of this disinformation effort. On the Friday a steering committee was formed on the basis of one delegate for each regional or citywide federation present. Both the London Fed. and the LSC were recognised for the capital, in spite of later claims that the latter was no rival.

The role of the LSC became clear when the Organising Committee for 25th November was elected, on a 'regional basis' — Scotland, Wales, North of England and London. The Organising Secretary is now another of Sherridan's credentials, the London representative was, like the other two a member of Militant, Steve Nally — secretary of Ashmole Estate APTU.

On Sunday, the morning session nearly degenerated into merely a Militant-bashing exercise when delegates of nine Edinburgh groups and Streatham in Lambeth decided that they had kept quiet too long about the former's activities. The main debate was around the composition of the organising committee, and it was resolved to approach the All British Steering Committee with our nominees to broaden out the organising committee, and make the Conference a two-day event to allow more debate.

In the London Federation moves to merge with the LSC,

initiated by the former, but not opposed by the latter, are in progress. A Week of Action from October 30th to November 5th, with a march from Trafalgar Square to picket Downing Street on Saturday 4th, is planned. The broadest possible meeting should be ensured by the attendance of every group at the 25th November Conference.

Finally, there are claims by Militant that their members are being attacked, blamed by them on an Open Letter to All Anti-Poll Tax Groups from London DAM distributed on September 3rd. They see a leadership battle going on between them and 'the anarchists', but the reality is that just about everyone is fed up with their stitch-ups, and their attempts to intimidate any dissenting voices into silence. The Open Letter was designed to expose their activities and restrict their freedom to rig meetings.

While we have no hang-ups about political violence, we do not feel it is an appropriate way of tackling Militant. They are incapable of working on a principled basis because they are politically weak and need to prevent the exposure of their recruits to more sophisticated groups. They also don't know how to deal with other groups on any basis other than domination. The best way to resolve this problem with Militant is to force them to work with other groups, or be seen to be the splitters.

This is how the London Federation is dealing with them, the only escape from this tactic they have is diverting debates into the territory of claims of a witchhunt against them. Given Militant's record of physical intimidation, it would be hardly surprising if the stories of attacks on them were true, and we will not condemn anyone who responds to intimidation in kind. But not only does Militant-bashing waste energies better spent in the fight against the Poll Tax, it gives them a get out from their current dilemma. Many libertarians will shy away from internal campaign work as bureaucratic manoeuvring, but it is through such work that a movement dominated by no-one will be built.

NR, Hornsey & Wood Green APTU

ANOTHER FINE MESS...

On Wednesday 9th August members of Burnley local anti-Poll Tax groups and Burnley Anti-Poll Tax Union occupied the public gallery of a meeting of the finance subcommittee at the local Town Hall. The main items on the agenda concerned the Poll Tax. As there were so many of us, they had to change rooms and find extra seats for us. This was done with good grace by the Councillors. However, this feeling of helpfulness soon withered away as the meeting progressed to the main items when heckling and questions started to rain down on them. Madam Chairman (sic) told us that we had been informed to keep quiet, but as we were not, we had to shut up or she would call the police; she was greatly shocked when we told her we wouldn't shut up or leave. The meeting was then adjourned and the councillors left (some in a

great hurry) to jeers and cries of 'you can forget about being re-elected!' The police arrived (to the sound of Laurel and Hardy theme tune) just as we were leaving.

Apart from showing our opposition to the Poll Tax, we learnt some interesting things — they are thinking of introducing community charge stamps to be bought from the Post Office (the same idea as TV stamps)! Also, the mood has now changed in Burnley. People were saying at first 'don't attack the Labour Party (the ruling council), this has been forced upon them, they are only doing their job'. However, the Labour Party are now coming in for the same treatment as the Tories — and cannot defend themselves. The message is clear, all politicians are the same, whatever colour — they are all there to uphold the state.

SHOPPED

The loopy Poll Tax Unit people at the London Borough of Lewisham are up to more tricks. After privatising the compiling of the register, forking out thousands (they couldn't tell us how much) of pounds on a Poll Tax Jobs Fayre, where most of the jobs (those worth having anyway) were pre-allocated, and privatising the billing process to a subsidiary of British Telecom, their latest idea takes the biscuit. They intend to put a network of desktop computer tills in corner shops so that people can pay their Poll Tax on time! It's an American system, and Lewisham has been targeted to experiment with because of its 'high proportion of council estates and cash paid earners'. What that means is that every other inner city borough told the companies involved where to go, but Lewisham's Labour councillors still support Poll Tax implementation with a few honourable exceptions. Interestingly enough, the pilot schemes are in Catford and Hither Green, and the three Hither Green ward councillors have already made a stand against the tax. It's not the first time Hither Green has suffered for their councillors having principles. Amazingly enough, Keith Walker, spokesman for Western Union Payments Network Ltd., one of the companies involved, claimed 'the scheme will be welcomed by local people because of the ease of payment it will bring'. He's in for a nasty surprise...



grASSed

DSS workers are being asked to help implement the Poll Tax in a new move by management. From October 2nd, all claimants not on housing benefit (whose records councils already hold) will have their files pulled out, and workers will have to fill in form NHB10(CC). Management have chosen their moment well, with the CPSA's right wing executive opposing any action at all, and the recent defeat of the ballot on action over Moodie. The Moodie proposals will transfer civil servants jobs from inner London to Belfast, Glasgow and Wigan. However, in the ballot on action, the Executive included offices not affected by Moodie, and the ballot was lost. As far as we know, the NHB10(CC) has not been used in Scotland, and the authorities are clearly worried at the extent of resistance to registration.

The Poll Tax registration is not the only assault the long suffering claimants will have to put up with. October also sees the introduction of the genuinely seeking work clause, designed to force the unemployed onto workfare schemes such as Employment Training.

PUPPET ON A STRING

The emergence of a Solidarity-dominated government in Poland is certainly a historic moment in post-war politics. For the first time a member of the Warsaw Pact will be run by a non-communist regime.

As events unfolded, western governments and commentators voiced their approval and support. A typical reaction was that the Solidarity movement had 'progressed' from workplace politics to parliamentary politics and so on to government. Reality, however, is very different.

It is certainly true that pressure from below coupled with Poland's continuing economic problems and the effect of the changes in Gorbachov's Russia, have combined to force the Communist Party to re-assess its position.

They have chosen to back-pedal and give ground. There is nothing new in this. Many states in the past have adapted to pressure from below, managing to absorb and nullify it. After their heavy-handed reaction to the emergence of Solidarity and the slow realisation that it was not going to go away, even under martial law, the Polish communists have adopted a subtler strategy.

The continuing economic crisis has meant shortages of many basic goods both for industry and consumers. Austerity measures have forced up prices and kept wages low. Little or no investment has occurred and Poland's international debt remains huge. Even harsher measures were envisaged and the communists feared that it would be too much and an open revolt would occur. This is the last thing they, or the Soviet Union, wanted so the process was begun along the road of limited political reform. Sections of Solidarity, led by Lech Walesa seized on this and pushed it, leading to the present situation. Now however Solidarity are in the position of having to face similar choices to the communists and may be forced by the logic of the situation into similar responses.

Not surprisingly, Lech Walesa, a great admirer of Thatcher, has maintained his distance from the new government by refusing any formal position. He is busy cultivating his statesman image and could

to exploit to the full their 'honeymoon period' to force through harsh measures. Already, talks have been held between the parliamentary and union leaderships to come to a no-strike deal arrangement. It is all too reminiscent of the Social Contract corporatist approach of Labour governments in this



be holding himself back to be Poland's saviour should the present government fail. He is at the same time advocating a transformation from state socialism to free-market capitalism.

But in moving away from their workplace/union base and effectively becoming a political party, Solidarity has opened up and emphasised the differences within its ranks. While still in the workplace militants still had some influence but as it grew the Catholic intellectuals influence grew and it is these who have been the backbone of the new government.

Most of them are open advocates of Thatcherite economic policies and are, in the long term, seeking to extract Poland from the Warsaw Pact. At the moment however they continue to make assurances to Russia that they wish to remain 'allies', although on different terms. This is why the foreign and defence ministries have been retained by the communists.

In dealing with the domestic situation, Solidarity are hoping

country who attempted similar deals to keep workers under control. It remains to be seen how the Polish working class responds to 'their' union and 'their' government acting in this way.

What is bound to happen is that the coalition of forces that constitutes the Solidarity movement will inevitably begin to split apart. The Catholic dominated leadership have obviously chosen the path of reform and are using their positions through parliament and the church to consolidate their gains. Others within Solidarity, especially those influenced by anarcho-syndicalism, will have to reorganise themselves in their workplaces to form a new revolutionary position.

As the inevitable harsh economic realities are felt and the Solidarity government squeezes the working class there will be greater scope for such a movement to emerge that turns from the dead-hand of reform, rejects both the old state socialism and capitalism and moves towards revolution.

HOLIDAY IN THE SUN

As thousands of East Germans moved across the Hungarian border into Austria and on to West Germany the repercussions of the liberalisation policies in Eastern Europe are being felt, both in the East and the West.

Relations within the Warsaw Pact are becoming strained, especially between East Germany and Hungary, reflecting the differing attitudes of their respective communist leaderships. The Hungarians have used the reforms initiated by Gorbachov to introduce their own economic and political changes. The most dramatic being the literal dismantling of the 'Iron Curtain' along their border with Austria.

East Germans have used the pretext of going on holiday to go to Hungary and then to cross into Austria. At first many simply crossed the border illegally. Others applied for visas but as the numbers grew Hungary decided to waive all visa requirements and so the flood began.

The East German government has condemned Hungary for this move. There are obvious tensions within the Warsaw Pact between the hard-line Stalinist

poses of people escaping across the Berlin Wall from East to West. Now, however, with thousands crossing at once, underneath the official welcomes are the beginnings of doubt. Already in some quarters



there is the talk of refugees from the East stealing West German jobs and taking up accommodation. It is possible that in the future the restrictions to travel from East to West will come in the form of visa controls, a Western curtain of red tape.



states like East Germany and Czechoslovakia and the liberalising ones like Poland and Hungary. Little of the changes that have been seen in the latter states have been evident in East Germany and have little chance of coming.

The problem, beside their ageing leader Erich Honecker, is that the whole reason for their state's existence is an ideological one. Other East European states can claim to be nations in their own right. Both East and West Germany are creations of the Cold War. To stray from being hard-line state socialist would deny East Germany's reason to exist.

There have been repercussions also in the West. Much was made for propaganda pur-

A strange parallel to this is that in the USSR itself. Glasnost has meant the Soviet Jews are finding it much easier to get passports to emigrate to the West. For many the favoured destination is not Israel but the USA. Up to now the US government has had an open door policy for Soviet Jews. For propaganda purposes this was fine as the emigres only came in ones and twos and were often famous dissidents.

Now with the possibility of an influx of ordinary unknown Russian Jews the US is to change policy and to introduce tighter immigration controls.

It seems that freedom, western style, may have more strings attached than people from the East realise.



PINOCCHIO

NO MORE HEROES

During recent months Britain has been engulfed in an orgy of nostalgia. If you turned on the TV or read the media you would be forgiven for thinking that Britain was once again at war with Germany.

Of course, it was all to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Britain's declaration of war against Nazi Germany in September 1939. Old films were shown, documentaries screened and articles written dealing with the sequence of events leading up to the war and the various reactions of the time.

What was missing from all this was any analysis of why the war started, the reasons for the various nations' involvement and the national interests that underpinned them.

No attempt was made to explain the pre-war situation, the economic depression, the rise of fascism and the reaction to it. Britain's entry into the war was simply stated as a desire to defend Poland and democracy in general.



COCKED UP?

This however does not stand up when the history of the inter-war years is looked at. The economic crisis that struck capitalism saw states respond in various ways but all in an authoritarian manner. It manifested itself differently from the Roosevelt 'New Deal' in the USA to Mussolini's fascism and Hitler's nazi variant.

The changes after the first world war with a shift in economic balance saw Britain come under increasing pressure. Britain's foreign policy hinged on the need to protect its empire and trade routes. To this end the main concern in Europe was the rise of Italy and the effect on the balance of power in the Mediterranean.

Beyond this the main enemy in ideological terms was seen as the USSR which the West had failed to destroy immediately after the revolution. The fear of international communism however was unfounded as Russia

under Stalin had a totally nationalistic outlook and their foreign policy was not geared to promote world revolution but to preserve the Soviet state. In fact, the twists and turns in Soviet policy actually weakened the left in those countries where Moscow-dominated communist parties had influence. This was especially evident in Germany.

With the rise of Hitler Britain's ruling class hoped to use Germany as a potential tool to destabilise Russia. It was hoped that Mussolini would prevent too much German expansion in the rest of Europe.

The policy of appeasement that Britain, and France following the lead, undertook had been put down to the influence of the peace lobby that developed in the thirties. This is untrue. The anti-war groupings were mainly middle class pacifists reacting to the horror of the first world war. Contrary to the idea put out today, the revolutionary left, especially anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists advocated physical opposition to fascism, the evi-

dence of Cable Street proves this. The British ruling class however admired Fascism and aimed to divert any European conflict eastwards.

That Britain had no desire to fight fascism was demonstrated in Spain during the revolution and civil war. Britain preferred Nationalist Franco-led Spain and although officially provided a policy of non-intervention, British capitalism actively traded with and supported Franco.

Of course, Germany and Italy openly showed their support by sending 'volunteers' to aid Franco despite the non-intervention pact. Russia gave conditional support to the Republic but worked to prevent any possibility of social revolution. Stalin needed a liberal-democratic Spain that would not be a threat to Russia or to the West.

Eastern Europe was seen as an

economic market in which major powers competed. All of the states, with the exception of Czechoslovakia was controlled by right-wing dictatorships, some of which were admirers of fascism.

Britain and France were quite prepared to see liberal-democratic Czechoslovakia annexed by Germany (with help from Poland) but then went to war to defend Poland, a neo-fascist state, when attacked. Although opposing Germany, Britain and France continued to make overtures to Mussolini for his support, or at least Italy's neutrality. Churchill, who is portrayed as the great defender of democracy, the 'voice in the wilderness', was an active admirer of Mussolini.

It was only after the war began, and especially after the German invasion of Russia, that democracy versus fascism was used as a rallying cry. From the moment the tide began to turn, the Cold War began. Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill pursued

their respective national interests during the course of the war.

Roosevelt sought a post-war world dominated by American capitalism, Stalin a buffer zone of satellite states and this is what happened. Churchill's main concern was the maintenance of the Empire to preserve Britain's economic independence and to counter the influence of the Allies. That is why the Atlantic Charter that declared all peoples have the right to choose their own government was amended secretly by Churchill to exclude India and the colonies.



RED YEARS BLACK YEARS

BOOK REVIEW BY PM

This new title from ASP is a reprint from the Italian publication *Rivista Anarchia* (1973), and concentrates on anarchist workers resistance to the fascist gangs during the 20's and the Nazis in the war years from 1943-45.

It is not a complete history of this period, which would, and hopefully will one day, need much more research, but a collection of accounts from some of those involved.

As such, there is nothing that links it all together, and perhaps a more appropriate title would be *Anarchist Resistance in northern Italy* as all the material concerns events in the more industrialised part of the country. A minor grumble.

In the 1920s there was a large anarchist/anarcho-syndicalist movement. The USI (Italian Syndicalist Union) had around 500,000 members and the daily paper *Umanita Nova* had a circulation of 50,000. In response to repression they engaged in industrial action and armed resistance and insurrection (Sarzanna 1921, and Parma 1922).

All this, however, could not stop the failure of the factory occupations of 1920 or the continuous attacks by fascist thugs. Much of the reason for the workers defeat must be firmly put down to the attitude of the Socialist Party (PSI), who even signed a 'pact' with the fascists in 1921, and the Communists, with their constant appeasement (repeated years later in Spain to the same disastrous results).

Despite sectarian and political sabotage, lies and slander, anarchists and socialist/communist militants took an active part in the Arditi Del Popolo. This was an organisation which emerged to fight back against the violence of the fascists. They did much heroic work but to no avail.

With the coming to power of Mussolini there followed twenty

years of darkness. The pamphlet takes us through what became a familiar theme for those who resisted: the struggle at home, which, for the survivors, ended with arrest, beatings, torture and imprisonment. This was followed by harassment, unemployment and forced exile (moving from country to country to escape deportation back) and more harassment — a vicious circle.

But throughout it all the resistance continued. Most made their way to France and Paris in particular, where they immediately set about their work: anti-fascist publicity, individual actions, keeping in touch with the underground at home, etc. When the Spanish Revolution broke out many of the exiles continued their fight against the fascists alongside their comrades in the CNT and FAI. Many died and many were wounded only to return to the front again. Others died later in concentration camps in France through shortages.

Of those who survived some again took up the struggle, this time in their homeland when the fascists fell and Mussolini was dealt with in the appropriate manner. They took an active part in the partisan resistance to the German Nazis, within specifically anarchist militias in some areas.

With the Liberation (sic) in 1945 came 'democracy' and those who did little or nothing, in Western and Eastern Europe, took the credit while those who spent a lot of their adult lives resisting were forgotten. 'Democracy' and 'Communism' had at least one thing in common — they both held back social revolution.

The introduction to this pamphlet ends with 'This small work is a tribute to those men and women of the Italian anarchist movement who fought both the native fascists and the German

Britain's role in the second world war, like the first, was primarily to defend national interests and not to fight for an abstract concept like democracy. As the Tories attempt to change the teaching of history to be first a learning of dates and to exclude the study of why events happen the media have been one step ahead in their look at 1939. The real fight against fascism was taken, not by the nation states, but the CNT/FAI and the resistance and partisan groups of Europe, as well as many ordinary workers. It is this that should be examined as well as the true motives of the nation states.

Nazi invaders, and who after 1945 did not set out to crown themselves with glory or betray the slaughtered millions. The pamphlet finishes with 'The Italian anarchist struggle against fascism did not stop in 1945.' There follows three brief accounts of solidarity actions against the Franco regime - no messing!

This is a handy and welcome pamphlet both for its historical accounts and inspiration. It should be on every DAM member, DA reader, anarchist and anti-fascist's bookshelf.

Footnote: We have every right to be proud of our record, from the very first day, in the fight against fascism. We have never compromised, unlike some others on the left.

When reading the likes of this and other publications (*Durutti: The People Armed*, for example) doesn't it make it even more sickening when we hear and read of those who would claim that anarchists have anything in common with fascism?

In the past and present we have had to put up with these people and organisations. Members of DAM and Red Action have been called 'worse than the fascists' for physically stopping them smashing up a meeting. They see us as thugs but at least we know all too clearly whose side we are on.

We are not naive however: we do not think that when we've dealt with the BNP/NF, etc., (and we will) that that will be the end of it — it will only be the start.

We are anti-fascists - we can say that because we do that. What about them? They are beneath contempt. We know who they are and will not let them stop or hinder us in carrying on the tradition. There can be no compromise and there will be no apologies. Ever.

LETTER

Dear DA,

We were appalled by your decision to publish an article encouraging workers to 'poison' basic food products (Can of Worms, DA Aug/Sept), claiming it to be an 'effective' form of direct action.

The author's enthusiastic promotion of the sabotage of basic foodstuffs as an 'easy and efficient way of hitting back' is as idiotic as it is dangerous.

The crucial distinction between bad and irresponsible food tampering and good and effective distinction is — apparently — in DA's analysis, to be found in the size of the items used in the poisoning process.

The way to avoid food poison-



ing casualties among the working class people who buy the beans, baby foods, crisps, yoghurts and other products that have so far been targeted by poisoning, is by inserting large objects in them, instead of small ones: presumably big bits of metal, hefty chunks of wood, etc? It is also apparently OK to inject harmless 'revolting flavourings' into food to. How

you are supposed to know that you haven't just been poisoned when you eat a mouthful of injected food isn't explained...

The fact that DA advocates a supposedly 'safe' form of food contamination is, at the end of the day, irrelevant. The strategy at the heart of such a campaign is identical to that real would-be poisoners use.

For food tampering to be 'effective' people have to believe that the threat to their health is real. As a strategy, its success relies not on forging a united campaign of class struggle against the magnates of the food industry, but in an anonymous and secretive bunch of 'revolutionaries' being able to scare working class people into not buying certain brands of food through fear that they will injure themselves and their families.

Like other forms of harmful 'direct action' it does nothing to increase the confidence, combativity or consciousness of the class, instead — through seeing the rest of the class as a mass of consumers to be bullied, cajoled and frightened — it reinforces people's passivity, and feelings of powerlessness and fear.

It does nothing to expose the true nature of capitalism and, at best, its impact can only be to force a temporary 'blip' in the vast profits of the food industry.

For workers in the industry, food poisoning has been a disaster. Management have used the sabotage as an excuse to intensify their attacks on their workforces. In factories that have been 'hit' they have been able to introduce video surveillance on the lines, random searches, interrogation of individual workers, and more.

MARTIN FORAN

Martin Foran, who was framed by the West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad, has suffered deteriorating health since his imprisonment. Despite a colostomy operation and serious assaults from the screws, Martin has always resisted. Since May, his colostomy has become infected and has swollen, he has been seen by a specialist from Stockton-on-Tees, and needs a total colectomy.

However, the prison authorities at Frankland, Durham have denied him access to this specialist, and have even denied him painkillers. He also has cancer of the eye, but the Governor stated to Martin's wife that they have no plans to remedy it. On 31st August, Martin was moved to Pentonville, London. While there he saw a doctor at St. Mark's hospital, who said that he would be treated at Durham. So, after a couple of weeks, he was moved back again. Martin's lawyer is trying to force Frankland to let the specialist from Stockton-on-Tees see him. Frankland are resisting this because they are afraid of what the specialist might say about them, and particularly the prison doctors.

Meanwhile, attempts are being made to link the campaign with the Birmingham Six and other cases investigated by the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. The police investigation of the SCS is already looking like a whitewash, with West Yorkshire police stringing it out, and their brief to only go as far back as 1986 — after Martin's case, the Birmingham Six, Carl Bridgewater, etc.

You can protest to the governor of Frankland at HMP Frankland, PO Box 40, Finchale Avenue, Brasside, Durham, DH1 5YD, or the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1. Write to Martin Foran, C51796 at the Frankland address.

We cannot sit idly by while the state murders a member of our class for a crime he did not commit. Raise Martin's case at your union branch, student union or any other organisation to which you belong. Your solidarity is not just appreciated — it is vital. It's the only thing the ruling class understand. For more details of Martin's case write to BCM Foran, London, WC1N 3XX.

Because food sabotage is so 'indefensible', workers have found it nigh impossible to organise resistance to this intimidation and harassment.

As a strategy, food 'poisoning' is utterly indefensible, totally counter-productive and thoroughly anti-working class.

That an agitational/anarchist journal should give space and credence to such ideas is scarcely believable.

The Direct Action Movement should either explain and justify its conversion to the notion of indiscriminate 'consumer terrorism', or the DA collective should publish an immediate and unequivocal retraction.

Yours,

The Anarchist Communist Federation

Reply: DA is not necessarily in agreement with all it publishes. We have a distinct editorial line, but there is plenty of room for taboo subjects to be raised. We are sure the author of the article will reply to you in the columns of this paper, unless they are convinced by your arguments. We make no comment. The purpose of publishing signed articles, and letters, we don't necessarily agree with is to allow them to be debunked, for which your letter is welcomed by us. We subscribe to the unfashionable idea that working class people can think for ourselves, and that the real revolutionary press is that which contributes to the experience and debate through which class consciousness is built up, not that which attempts to give a 'leadership of ideas'. The pages of DA are, within certain obvious limits, open to all, our only condition is that articles should be accompanied by the author's real name and address (for our own use only) - we will only publish initials or supplied pseudonyms.

DA Collective



THE PITTS

One of the most important and bitter strikes to break out in the 'land of the free' for many years has been underway in the Appalachian mountain country in the US for six months...

1,900 coal miners employed by the Pittston Coal Company in West Virginia, Virginia and Kentucky have been on strike since April 5th. The origins of the strike go back to early 1988,



when the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) signed a contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (the employers federation). The Pittston Company refused to sign this industry-wide contract and sought a separate contract with the union. The salient features of Pittston's proposed contract were: the use of outside contractors, unlimited working overtime, and the repudiation of long-standing guarantees on health provision and pensions for retired miners.

Since walking out the Pittston strikers have remained solid and the company has had to bus in scabs from outside. Entire communities have become involved, as miners' wives, retired miners, laid-off miners, even high school students, and just plain locals have expressed their support for the strikers. Early in the strike thousands were arrested on sit-down demonstrations after the courts were used to outlaw pickets. Over one trillion dollars in fines have been levied against the union!

In June, Pittston pulled out of federally mediated peace talks. The sight of three arrested strike leaders being led away to jail in leg-irons on TV broadcasts sparked sympathy strikes amongst miners throughout the eastern coalfields. Some of these walkouts were union approved, others wildcat (some of which were in non-union mines). At one point between 40,000 and 50,000 miners were on strike. This seems to have scared the authorities somewhat... The three strike leaders who were to have been imprisoned until the union agreed to pay the huge fines were in fact released a few days later.

In addition to the usual use of the police as strike-breakers, federal troops have been called in to escort coal convoys. The strikers continue to operate pickets, illegal or otherwise. Trigger happy company security goons guard Pittston property and scabs. Shots have been

exchanged between these mercenaries and strikers. Coal trucks have been stoned, Pittston property torched, and power supplies to Pittston mines sabotaged. The strike has developed into all out trench warfare similar to the Miners' Strike here in 1984/5.

The UMWA was once the symbol of the power of the post-war US labour movement, with 500,000 members who mined nearly all US coal. But the union has been in decline for many years. New technology drastically reduced the number of miners needed to mine the same amount of coal. In addition, US coal is increasingly mined in non-union operations in the western and mid-western states. Today the UMWA has 65,000 members, mining a third of US

coal output. The UMWA has to make a stand against Pittston because if it loses this one the other coal companies will go into attack too.

The Appalachian coalfield has a bloody history. In 1921 at Blair Mountain in West Virginia federal troops, sheriffs' deputies and company goons opened fire on 10,000 miners marching from Charleston to organise the union in Logan County. Twenty-four were killed. The Battle of Blair Mountain was the largest armed conflict in the US since the Civil War. In 1972 a faulty



dam burst at Buffalo Creek and left 125 dead and 4,000 homeless. Nobody has forgotten that it was a Pittston dam.

The DAM's sister organisation in the US, the Workers Solidarity Alliance, brought the Pittston Strike to our attention earlier this year. We passed on the request for solidarity to contacts in the NUM. Messages of support and a donation have been sent to the strikers by a South Yorkshire NUM branch. Workers have no country, the class struggle is worldwide. Express your solidarity with the Pittston strikers. Messages of support and donations to:

UMWA District 28, PO Box 28, Castlewood, VA 24220, USA.
UMWA Region 2, 4500 McCorkle Avenue SE, Charleston, WV 25304, USA.

Note: In 1987 4.5% of Pittston coal exports went to Britain, and a major consumer is British steel...

FOSTERING ATTITUDES

Controversy over black or mixed-race children being fostered or adopted by white families has come to the fore recently with the case of a black child being taken off a white foster parent after a court case.

Now the Health Minister David Mellor has warned that funding could be withdrawn from voluntary groups who have a policy of always placing black children with black families.

His attitude shows that the Tories have little or no perception of the needs of black children in our racist society.

As black children grow they need the support of people of their own race to understand and defend themselves from racism. But the recent case has highlighted the dilemma when racism is tackled, not from root causes, but from above by local authorities laying down procedures.

There are basically three kinds of fostering; short term, where a child is taken in for a defined time until a permanent placement is found. This is often used as an alternative to taking a child in to a children's home. Long term fostering is usually

for older children who are looked after until they are independent enough to live alone. The third is fostering with a view to adoption if the child settles in to the home.

With a small baby it really does not matter about inter-racial fostering. The problems arise when a child grows and is in his/her teens. That is when cultural or racial differences can cause problems and in many cases the foster placement breaks down.

Beyond the racial question there are cultural differences. Even fostering a black child with a black family may not work if they have different cultural backgrounds.

While our society remains as it is these problems will continue to occur. Only by tackling the root causes can there be any hope of overcoming these problems. It is no use a predominately white society laying down often unsuitable 'guidelines' no matter how well meaning. Change has to come from below.

MS

We welcome readers comments on this issue.

WELL DUNNE

Two workers at a plastics factory in Leicester have been sacked for refusing to work on an order for South Africa. Ross Galbraith and Gary Sherriff are both members of the Transport & General Workers' Union, and asked their boss to cancel the order, for a high technology metal substitute called Nyloil (used in gear boxes, but with possible military uses).

The boss refused to cancel the order, and sacked them with a week's notice when they then refused to work on it. He informed the Department of Employment that they had resigned, preventing them receiving dole for months, and they are in considerable financial hardship as a result. The two workers were the only union members at the firm, Granby Plastics, which does not employ any black workers — in multi-racial Leicester.

The TGWU has taken up their case, although Deputy General Secretary Bill Morris was concerned mostly about the use of the 'crude mechanism of

sacking' rather than helping them stop the order, and labour movement organisations around the country have been contacted about the case. One big success so far has been speaking at a fringe meeting at the TUC alongside South African union leader Moses Mayekiso.

A march and picket of Granby Plastics is planned for Thursday 12th October: assemble 8am corner of Catherine St. and Barkby Rd. Although the first concern is money (hint!), there are high hopes for the case, with parallels being drawn with the Dunnes Stores strikers' fight against South African goods in Ireland. Organisations are asked to sponsor the march, make donations to the fund, and invite one of the workers to speak at meetings.

Cheques should be made out to Trades Council Defence Fund, and sent to the Unemployed Workers' Centre, 138 Charles Street, LEICESTER LE1 1HB. Tel. (0533) 530005

DUNGENESS BLOCKADE

Anti-nuclear groups are asked to come to join the Blockade Against Dungeness on Saturday 21st October. People are asked to organise themselves into affinity groups beforehand, with plans for actions for the day. The demands are to close Dungeness A & B reactors, close the dissolution plant, and no Pressurised Water Reactors at Dungeness.

POLL TAX MEETING

A meeting to set up an All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation will be held on Saturday 25th November in Manchester Free Trade Hall. We urge DA readers to make sure that their anti-Poll Tax group is represented, details can be obtained from the London Federation of APTGs, c/o 72 West Green Rd, London, N15.

CONTACTS

SOUTH EAST

Brixton DAM — c/o 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London, SE24 0LR.
 Cambridge DAM — c/o Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge.
 DAM Civil Service Workers — c/o East London DAM.
 Deptford DAM — PO Box 574, Deptford, London, SE4 1DL.
 East London DAM — c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX.
 Lambeth DAM — PO Box 761, Camberwell SDO, London, SE5 9JH.
 North London DAM — c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX.
 Norwich DAM - Box DAM, The Greenhouse, 48 Bethel Street, Norwich.
 Oxford DAM — Box DAM, EOA Books, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford.
 For contacts in Kent, Oxford, Plumstead, Reading and St. Albans, write to South East Region DAM Secretary, c/o Lambeth DAM.

NORTH WEST

Bolton DAM — Box DAM, Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester.
 Burnley DAM — 5 Hollin Hill, Burnley, Lancashire.
 Liverpool DAM — Box DAM, 82 Lark Lane, Aigburth, Liverpool 17.
 Manchester DAM — Box DAM, Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester.
 Preston DAM — PO Box 172, Preston, Lancashire, PR1.
 For contacts in Bury, Cumbria, Lancaster, Salford and Stockport, write to North West Region DAM Secretary, c/o Manchester DAM.

NORTH EAST

Doncaster DAM — PO Box 122, Doncaster 4, South Yorkshire.
 Leeds DAM — Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds, LS2.
 Sheffield DAM — PO Box 106, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S60 1NW.
 Teesside DAM — Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds, LS2.
 For contacts in Bradford and Newcastle, write to North East Region DAM Secretary, c/o Nottingham DAM.

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh DAM — PO Box 516, South West DO, Edinburgh 10.

MIDLANDS

Nottingham DAM — Box 4, Hiziki, 15 Goosegate
 For contacts in Corby, Leamington Spa, Leicester and Wolverhampton, write to DAM National Secretary.

SOUTHWEST

Bristol DAM — BOX DAM, 37 Stokescroft, Bristol 2.
 Plymouth DAM — PO Box 105, Plymouth, Devon.

NATIONAL SECRETARIES

National Secretary — PO Box 106, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S60 1NW.
 International Secretary — Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds, LS2.

INDUSTRIAL

DAM Council Workers — c/o North London DAM and Doncaster DAM.
 DAM Despatch Workers — c/o Deptford DAM.
 DAM Education Workers — c/o Manchester DAM.
 DAM Railworkers — c/o Manchester DAM.
 Sheffield Independent Healthworkers — PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY.

CONTACTS

Anti-Nuclear Network — Box 30, 187 High Road, London, N22.
 ASP (anarchist publishing group) — BCM Box 3714, London, WC1N 3XX.
 Black Flag (anarchist monthly) — BM Hurriscane, London, WC1N 3XX.
 Despatch Industry Workers Union — PO Box 574, London, SE4 1DL.
 Haringey Direct Action Group — Box 30, 187 High Road, London, N22.
 Organise (anarcho-syndicalist group) — c/o 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast 1.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

- 1 — The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.
- 2 — Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.
- 3 — We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self-managed production for need, not profit.
- 4 — In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.
- 5 — We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the workplace and the community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers' organisations must be controlled by the workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers' movement. Any and all such delegates of such workers' organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.
- 6 — We are opposed to all states and state institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all states do not exist to protect the workers of those states, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.
- 7 — We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to control their own lives and environment.
- 8 — The Direct Action Movement is resolved to initiate, encourage and wholeheartedly support the creation of independent workers' unions based on the principles of anarcho-syndicalism.
- 9 — The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism: a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.

Although *Direct Action* is the national paper of the Direct Action Movement, with most of its copy and financial contributions coming directly from DAM members, we would like to stress that DA is open to any readers who would like to contribute to it. Our aim is to produce an open, anarcho-syndicalist, working class paper. We will consider any articles or letters for publication (within reason — fascists, party hacks, etc., need not bother), although we will not publish contributions sent from an uncredited source. In other words, send us your name and address in case we need to get in contact with you. Pseudonyms or initials will be used instead when published. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of either the *Direct Action* Editorial Collective or the Direct Action Movement as a whole, they are included to provoke discussion.

Producing a paper like *Direct Action* is not easy financially, at the moment we are struggling to pay

off our printing bills to Aldgate Press. We rely on a steady flow of donations to help us clear this and to set us up on a sound financial footing for the future. As a result of this we have set up a fighting fund with a target of £2,000. If you would like to make a donation to help us carry on send your money *Direct Action*, PO Box 761, Camberwell SDO, London, SE5 9JH.

If possible, all articles should be typed. If you are able to word process your articles, we can use them if you send them on 5 1/4 inch 360k IBM compatible diskettes. We can translate files from Wordstar, Multimate, Wordperfect, ASCII, Displaywrite, Word and DCA Formats. Please include an SAE if you want the diskette returned.

The following donations were banked in May, June, July and August.

Doncaster DAM — £10; D, Eton — £30; A, Corby — £2; Canbridge DAM — £20; Preston DAM —

£10.50; Teesside DAM — £1.23; R, York — £3.50; R, Swindon — £10; J, Brighton — £4; Manchester DAM — £10; A, Corby — £20; L, East London — £1; J, Cumbria — £5; Edinburgh DAM — £1; M, Teesside — £7.50; D, Rugby — £25; Manchester DAM — £20.

The following donations were made after the launch of our fighting fund and were banked in September.

L, Lambeth — £50; R, Leyton — £7; A, Romford — £25; W, Reading — £10; S, Norwich — £25; J, Leicester — £60; R, Swansea — £5; Oxford DAM — £4; Teesside DAM — £15; A, Kilburn — £150; M, Lambeth — £40; Teesside DAM — £10; Manchester DAM — £128.15.

This makes a total of £529.15, which makes the target figure now £1,470.85.

Many thanks to the comrades who have made donations to the paper. Keep up the good work!

● Tick where appropriate and send to *Direct Action*, PO Box 761, Camberwell SDO, London, SE5 9JH. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to *Direct Action* Movement. Enquiries for bulk orders are welcome.

* I would like to find out more about the Direct Action Movement and the International Workers Association. Please send me information. Send to DAM National Secretary, PO Box 106, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S60 1NW.

The DAM was formed in 1979 from the SWF (Syndicalist Workers Federation) and other groups and individuals believing in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism. It is the British section of the International Workers Association (IWA), the anarcho-syndicalist international, which was formed in 1922 and has sections in France, Spain, Italy, West Germany, Norway, Denmark, USA, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Argentina and a provisional section in Finland.

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DIRECT ACTION

COMMUNITY

POLICING

In 1970 the B Specials, an armed paramilitary 'reserve constabulary', were disbanded on the recommendation of a British government report detailing measures by which the Six County government at Stormont should clean up its act, and stabilise itself. The disbandment of this sectarian Protestant militia had been a major demand of the Civil Rights movement, but this was no victory.

The 'B men' were simply brought under British army command as the Ulster Defence Regiment, and better armed without any attempts to change the sectarian character of the

death squads are neither new, nor aberrations. As well as providing a means for loyalists to officially bully and harass anti-unionists, the above-mentioned activities are the real role of the regiment, sanctioned by official inaction.

Last May Joanne Garvin, a UDR Greenfinch, and Cameron Hastie, a corporal in the Royal Scots, received 18 month suspended sentences for passing information to the UVF. Garvin left the UDR before the trial, but Hastie has just been reinstated by his regiment. Aidan McAnespie's killer was simply fined by his regiment for 'negligent dis-

ment, a short time out of the public eye, and full reinstatement because the job won't get done if you punish squaddies for doing it.

The locally-recruited UDR have the most intimate links with the loyalists, and have been the chief conduit of arms and information to the death squads. The RUC, who southern politicians and the SDLP want to accompany UDR patrols to ensure their good behaviour, collect that information. Indeed, some of the information which has turned up in the hands of the UFF has been collected by the southern police, the Garda



BRAIN CELLS

force. The only change was the establishment of direct British military control of this Orange militia, it was controlled, efficient repression that was required — not the granting of the civil rights demands that had driven the state into crisis.

There has been a lot of publicity around the 'wayward' behaviour of the UDR in September, but the involvement in sectarian killings, the supply of arms to loyalists and the passing of files on 'IRA suspects' to

charge' of his machine gun. Ian Thain, the only soldier to be convicted of murder (of Thomas 'Kidso' Reilly), served only two years of his sentence, and is now back with his regiment.

Compare these facts with the 20 and 30 year sentences handed out to republicans on the flimsiest evidence in no jury courts, and official tolerance of murder and collusion with loyalists becomes clearer. A slap on the wrist for getting caught or being so blatant as to be an embarrass-

Siachana (Civic Guard), and passed on to the RUC.

This has happened under the 1985 Hillsborough Agreement, which was claimed by the then 26 County foreign minister Peter Barry to signal an end to the 'nationalist nightmare' in the north. First the sectarian murder campaign intensified by the loyalists in response to 'Dublin rule', and now evidence that Garda files on Republicans passed on to the RUC have ended up in the hands of those

**Manchester Martyrs
Commemoration March
Longside Market, Manchester
26th October 12:30 pm**

same loyalists, with deadly results, have turned Barry's extravagant claim into a grim joke.

The experience of sectarian killings has led many anti-unionists, especially republicans, to lock their doors, fit special security locks and stren-

IRA volunteers killed (three in the last two years) says a lot about the accuracy of RUC intelligence. But if death squad targeting was totally accurate, then a campaign orchestrated by MI5 and RUC Special Branch would be impossible to deny.



I SPY...

gthen doors, and develop security procedures to identify friends who can be let in. There are increasing complaints from anti-unionists that in recent house raids the RUC have taken an unhealthy and detailed interest in the security arrangements of many homes. The only people with use for that kind of information are the loyalist paramilitaries.

It comes as no surprise that that information, along with files on suspected Republicans, then 'goes missing' from RUC stations and UDR barracks, and turns up in the hands of the UFF. What we now know is simply what has long been strongly suspected, confirmed by hard evidence. Milltown murderer Michael Stone repeatedly stated that he had 'seen the files' of his victims, and that they were 'legitimate targets' — that he was given files on suspected Republicans for assassination. The UDA published an RUC mugshot of Gerard Slane, to back up their claim that he was killed for being in the IPLO, in their magazine *Ulster* last year.

Not all sectarian attacks are on suspected republicans, many are random, and if every dead Catholic had been an IRA suspect, then the small number of actual

It may well be, given the loyalists' persistence that their victims are IRA members, that they are assured as such by RUC handlers, but that the accuracy of targeting is kept deliberately low to generate an atmosphere of widespread terror among anti-unionists, and obscure the involvement of the state.

The current attention given to the UDR is partly a diversion from the integrated nature of the official and unofficial terror apparatus operated by the British state in Ireland. This operates with the co-operation of the 26 County state. The only solution is the dismantling of the entire British military-political apparatus, and self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

F.O'NEILL

