

FREE NO. 33

COUNTER INFORMATION

March/April/May 1992

Resisting racism!

The fightback against state racism and fascism is hotting up. Recent resistance includes the following:-

BRITAIN - On 18th January, over 10,000 marched through London to protest against the asylum bill, as did hundreds of demonstrators in Edinburgh. The Edinburgh march also commemorated the racist murder, 2 years ago, of Ahmed Sheik.

On 30th November last year, 200 anti-fascists prevented a BNP rally in Glasgow, holding up the BNP leadership in a pub and forcing them to escape through the cellar!

At a recent Celtic vs Hearts football match in Glasgow, paper-selling nazi scum were attacked and sent packing by supporters. About 4,500 marchers took part in an anti-racism march in London on 22 February to mark the death a year ago of Rolan Adams, 15, who was stabbed in what has been seen as a racist attack on him and his brother by a white gang. A man aged 19 is serving life for the murder. A breakaway group attacked fascists taunting the marchers. One anti-fascist grabbed by the police was released after the whole march stopped for half an hour in solidarity.

GERMANY - Since November of last year, offices in the university of Berlin have been occupied by anti-racists. They provide a safe living space for refugees, where they can organise themselves and publicise their demands.

On the twin anniversary of the 1938 "Kristall nacht" pogrom and the recent re-unification of Germany, over 100,000 demonstrated against racism and fascism across the country.

In Halle demonstrating neo-nazis outnumbered by 2,000 anti-fascists, were only saved from a good doing by the police, who made 239 arrests.

FRANCE - On 25 January in Paris, over 100,000 people demonstrated against the National Front.

On 28 January, in Caen, 2,500 anti-racist demonstrators ignored the organisers' plans to avoid confrontations, and halted a nearby Le Pen rally, amid clashes with nazi boneheads.

At the Sorbonne university in Paris, anti fascists have recently disrupted a National Front meeting and driven nazi paper-sellers off the campus.

ITALY - On 25 January in Milan, 100,000 protested at the increases in racist attacks. Last November, neo-nazi rallies in Rome and Frascati were prevented by thousands of anti-fascists.

NETHERLANDS - Last November, a Dutch anti-racist group, RaRa, bombed the house of the union justice minister, responsible for racist immigration and asylum policies.



SWEDEN - On 30 November neo-nazi marches in Lund and Stockholm were prevented when thousands of counter-demonstrators blockaded the streets in defiance of the police.

Fortress Fascism

The last two years have witnessed the rapid growth of fascist organisations across Europe. The far right poll significant numbers in Belgium, Hungary, Croatia, Austria and in Germany, where refugee hostels are attacked by nazi mobs. In France, polls show 32% agree with the repatriation policy of the fascist Front National. All this has been mirrored by a wave of racist measures at state level as Fortress Europe becomes a reality. Scared of losing votes, governments are allowing the fascists to set the agenda. Racist immigration measures are being introduced in most countries, such as the Asylum Bill in Britain, currently shelved till after the election.

The German government's response to attacks on refugees is to pen them in secure camps, behind high fences and barbed wire thus doing the fascists' dirty work for them. Playing the race card will be familiar to the politicians who have always employed it to divide ordinary people and persuade them that their loyalty lies with the bosses, not with working people of whatever colour. Fascism is just an extreme manifestation of this racism inherent in the state structure, and has to be fought as such. We need grass-roots organisations to counter racism in the community and from the state; to kick the nazis out of those communities, as residents in Muirhouse, Edinburgh are trying to do; to organise our own defence, like the autonomous anti-fascist patrols in Germany, and to develop the solidarity necessary to confront the fascists wherever they raise their ugly (bone) heads.

HOUSING FOR ALL

All over the country the struggle for decent housing continues. In Hammersmith, London, 25 homeless people have been occupying a night shelter since January to stop its closure. The Labour Council continues to try and evict them. In Yeovil, Somerset, 3 houses lying empty for 2 years on Prince Charles' Estate were occupied with

considerable local support and only evicted by large numbers of police with riot equipment. Rent strikes against large increases are continuing in Camden and St. Martins, London. Meanwhile the Home Secretary plans to introduce a law to criminalise squatting in England & Wales. Resistance is being organised.

Contact SQUASH (Squatters Action for Secure Homes) 2 St. Paul's Rd., London N1 4RN

SPIRIT OF REBELLION

Pupils at a Muirhouse primary, Edinburgh have their own answer to indoctrination. After their Tory Assistant Head had said at a school service that if they became Christians they would "get out of their tower blocks and have nice houses, like hers", the 3 oldest classes refused to sing the hymn, throwing the teacher into a paroxysm of table-thumping rage.

RIGHTS NOT CHARITY

In Nov. a demo at BBC TV in Leeds was violently broken up and 8 arrested. The 'Leeds Rights Not Charity Group', a disabled direct action group, were calling for an end to TV spectacles like *Children in Need* and *Telethon* and demanding that the disabled are not seen as victims but as important contributors to society. (Rights not Charity, c/o Armley Resource Centre, Armley Grange Dr., Leeds 12

A PARCEL OF ROGUES

FIVE YEARS ago Thatcher had just won her third election in a row. A year later, Lawson as Chancellor gave a massive hand-out in tax cuts to the top 10%, while slashing £600 million from Housing Benefit. This helped to deepen the recession after the post-election boom. Ruling class divisions over Euro integration & the rebellion over the introduction of the Poll Tax led to Thatcher's downfall. A new era of 'grey' conservatism under Major coincided with the pale-pink Labour Party under Kinnock, concerned to become 'electable' by ditching "socialist" pretensions to control the 'commanding heights of the economy'.

A HUNG PARLIAMENT!

A world-wide recession, especially acute in the US & UK, sharply reduced the Tory gamble of pre-election bribes & little difference of policy is expected at Westminster no matter whether the Tories or Labour scrape a majority or whether 'parliament is hung' (or drawn & quartered!) In England it is largely a case of tweedle-dee/dum/doom. Attempts at alternatives such as the Green Party will founder on the UK electoral system. The nazis led by the BNP will attempt to stir up racism & sectarianism & the attention of local anti-fascists will force the State to defend them (again!) Militant Labour have tried to channel anger over the Poll Tax and poverty in Liverpool and Glasgow into the act of voting.

North of the border there is an acute crisis of legitimacy threatening the Act of Union. The announced closure of the Ravenscraig steelworks & the Tory defeat at the Kincardine by-election intensified 'Home Rule' support. Backed by the opportunist 'soaraway Sun', the Tories & SNP tried to polarise the choice between independence and their defence of the status quo. Even although a much increased SNP vote might deliver certain Labour seats to the struggling Scottish Tories, there lingers the suspicion that a parliament without a clear majority might 'deliver' a Scots Parliament in Edinburgh as a trade-off for sharply reduced Scottish representation at Westminster.

ANTI-POLITICIAN

A Drumchapel unemployed worker, quoted in "Scotland on Sunday" sums up the anti-Politician feeling.

"We think they're a bunch o' useless bastards... Words will no' change things. I've only voted once in my life and that didnae do me any good. It makes no difference to the likes of us. Fuck them all!"

Few Scots believe that the Nationalists can greatly improve their lot through their policy of Independence in Europe Yet the climate of instability & uncertainty over the constitutional question raises potentially wider issues over WHO GOVERNS. What the political class (drawn mostly from lawyers & businessmen) fears is that Robert Burns' description of the 'traitors' in the Scottish ruling class as a "parcel of rogues" could transfer to a public understanding that politicians, whether British or Scots nationalist only serve the interests of capitalism & the game of 'representative democracy'.

AN ANTI ELECTION RALLY is planned in London on the last Saturday before the election. For more info on this and The Anti Election Alliance tel. 0737 778525 (Class War hotline). To contact the Scottish-based Anti Politician League write POB 496, Glasgow G14 0PG.

Maintaining the State

SINGLE mothers on Income Support - the government wants your money!
The government wants to force single mothers on Income Support back into financial dependence on ex-partners.
Through the Child Support Act absent fathers will be made to pay child maintenance and this will be deducted from the mothers' entitlements. Single mothers will get nothing out of it. The Treasury will pocket all maintenance paid to mothers on Income Support.
Single mothers on Income Support who refuse to name the

father will be fined £7.93 per week: or be put back in touch with and financially dependent on him, even if he is violent; face custody battles - particularly lesbian mothers; and have to deal with DSS officers with discretionary powers to be racist, sexist and homophobic. DSS officers are already harassing single mothers to name the father, demanding to know his whereabouts, even asking for photographs, and threatening to cut women off benefits if they refuse to tell. Until 1993 all this is illegal. Any money that absent fathers pay must stay in women's

INSIDE INFO

STRANGEWAYS

"WE'RE SCAPEGOATS, that's what this is all about - they're fitting us up for something we haven't done." So explains Andy Nelson, one of 9 prisoners currently on trial for the alleged murder of Derek White during the Strangeways prison revolt of 1990.

Regular pickets of Manchester Crown Court show solidarity with the men who revolted against the injustices of the British prison system.

One defendant, John Spencer, recently suffered serious head wounds after being attacked by police. This followed his refusal to turn "Queen's Evidence". The defendants recently won improvements in the poor conditions in the Central Detention Centre where they are held, by staging a dirty protest and refusing food.

Following this first trial, which started on 14 January with oppressive and unprecedented security measures, 2 more groups of prisoners will face Riot and GBH charges.

Info: Manchester ABC, Box 8, 1 Newton St., Manchester M1 18W

HELL NO, WE WON'T GO

DOZENS of US soldiers have been jailed for refusing fight for oil interests in the Gulf War. Some have received sentences of 6 years. At least 23 Marines, the US' most famous fighting force, are serving sentences of up to 30 months for "desertion", even though they all applied for discharge as conscientious objectors. A classic illustration of the true role of prisons - to crush dissent. (info: War Resisters League, New York)

MARTIN FORAN

Bad news is that framed prisoner Martin Foran, on the run since June 1991, has been re-arrested. Please send letters of support to him - Martin Foran C51796, HMP Full Sutton. Info: Taking Liberties, POBox 446, Sheffield.

hands on top of state benefits. Fathers should take equal responsibility for child care and support, but this Act gives women nothing.
The Child Support Act must be stopped and can be stopped by NON-COOPERATION with the SS in the DSS! Don't let them get away with it. If we stop them now, we can make this act as unworkable as the Poll Tax!
Contact: Campaign Against the Child Support Act, PO Box 287, London NW6 5QU



BACK IN SOLITARY

JOHN PEROTTI, after years of solitary confinement imposed for being a prison activist, was released into the general prison population. 3 weeks later, John was told that he either had to drop all his lawsuits against the prisoncrats, or be flung back into solitary. After much soul-searching John decided he couldn't face solitary again, and dropped his lawsuits. Shortly after, John was accused of plotting to escape and thrown back into isolation. The prisoncrats claimed to have a tape of John planning the escape with a screw. The tape was never found. John retracted his dropping of the law suits.

He is still being held in isolation, and is still fighting against the thumped-up stabbing charge for which he was given a further 15 year sentence. He lost his first, free appeal. Lack of funds means that he must prepare his own case and defend himself this time.

SARAH THORNTON

LAST issue we reported the case of Sarah Thornton, jailed for life for killing her violently abusive husband, and then on hungerstrike in protest against her sentence. The article gave the address of Women Against Rape as a contact. WAR have asked us to point out that they are involved in, but not co-ordinating Sarah's campaign, and that the address to contact is The Free Sarah Thornton Campaign, Beancepeth Castle, Durham DH7 8 DF.

Don't let the DSS intimidate you

- * Always take a reliable friend with you to DSS interviews and take notes.
- * Insist on getting the name of the officer who interviews you.
- * Use the short birth certificate. It doesn't show the father, and it's free.
- * Tell family, friends, organisations and the media how the Child Support Act **doesn't** support you or your children.

COUNTER INFORMATION



Fighting The Law

will have won an amnesty for all poll tax non-payers.

FIGHTING THE LAW

Court rulings that computer evidence is not admissible in poll tax non-payment cases in England and Wales has thrown collection efforts into further chaos. Though the government were aiming to rush through new legislation by early March, thousands of liability order cases country-wide have meantime been adjourned.

Even when liability orders are granted, the vast majority of non-payers (eg 90% in Leeds) are refusing to comply with the order to give the authorities personal information.

The defiance of the law continues at the committals stage, when most non-payers (eg around 85% in Haringey) are not turning up. This mass non-cooperation is making the law unenforceable. 75% of police forces are not willing to arrest poll tax defaulters who ignore their final court summons, a senior police spokesman stated on 31 October.

FREE POLL TAX PRISONERS

By February about 130 non-payers had been jailed in England and Wales (non-payers cannot be jailed in Scotland), with Labour Councils as repressive as Tory authorities.

But the struggle doesn't stop at the prison gates. On 8 February a message from non-paying prisoner Michael O'Connell was read to the weekly picket of London's Pentonville jail - announcing the formation of Pentonville Anti Poll Tax Union!

Other prisons recently picketed include Armley, Leeds on 1 February, and Bristol. Demonstrations against jailings



OVER 12 MILLION people are refusing to pay the unjust poll tax. People power has forced the Tories to announce its future abolition.

Now the anti poll tax movement is fighting to get all the poll tax debts scrapped. How can this be done? Certainly not by appealing to the political parties, all of whom uphold the interests of the rich. *An amnesty can only be won by making the poll tax impossible to collect.*

This means - community support through the local anti poll tax groups - direct action to stop bailiffs and sheriff officers - legal support and mass action at the courts - prisoner solidarity.

If this community self-organisation and mass refusal to pay continues, the authorities will eventually be forced to give up pursuing the debts. They may not make an official announcement - *but the non-payment movement*

SHERIFF STOPPIN' BAILIFF BASHIN' ACTION

* 1,000 people took to the streets of Springburn, Glasgow on 10 December to physically stop a poundings blitz by sheriff officers. Crowds up to 200 strong blockaded the entrances to non-payers homes to prevent 250 poundings. Kids on bikes carried messages and fleets of cars chased the sheriffs. When 29 protestors were arrested, 300 people besieged Baird St. police station.

* Scotland's first poll tax warrant sale was dramatically called off on 1 October when 100 protestors stormed Turnbull St. police station in Glasgow, the site of the sale.

* A campaign of direct action against Madagan's bailiffs in Plymouth has featured regular pickets, smashed office windows, superglued locks - and a bailiff's car burnt out! 2 bailiffs have now left the area.

have been held in Burnley, Hull, Ealing, central London, Birmingham, Greater Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh..

At Norwich Crown Court weekly pickets have supported 15 people facing "riot" charges from a 1990 demo in Colchester. 4 people jailed following the 1990 Trafalgar Square demo are still inside.

The independent anti poll tax groups are making **Freedom for all poll tax prisoners** central to the poll tax amnesty campaign. All prisoners need your solidarity and letters of support. Contact The Poll Tax Prisoner Support Network, c/o TSDC PSG, 506 Brixton Rd., London SW9 8EW. Tel. 071 738 7586.

SOLIDARITY

The anti poll tax movement has shown the potential power of people standing together against injustice. Some anti poll tax groups are now aiming to build on the community solidarity created in the anti poll tax fight.

Tottenham Against the Poll Tax have formed the new Tottenham Solidarity Network which will not only continue the anti poll tax battle, but intend to be active over issues such as housing, transport, the environment, healthcare, child care, supporting industrial action, opposing harassment over debts, sexism, police oppression, racism.

Similar Solidarity Networks are currently being formed by 2 other local Haringey anti poll tax groups, and by Stockbridge New Town Anti Poll Tax Group in Edinburgh.

NON-PAYMENT SOARS

* Only half of Scotland's 91-92 poll tax income had been collected, with one month of the financial year to go.

* In England and Wales 26% on the register have been summonsed - and with chaos in the courts many non-payers have not yet been summonsed.

* 11.5 million Britain-wide have received summonses. (Guardian 22.2.92, 27.2.92)

BE THERE!

17 March - Demo at Edinburgh High Court against jailing of Tommy Sheridan for his participation in anti warrant sale action. Tel. 031 663 7777.

28 March - Federation APT demo in Glasgow. Tel. 041 552 1179.

CONTACT

APT Network c/o NWAPT Forum, PO Box 9, Eccles, M307FX. Tel. 061 707 1584.

London Fight the Poll Tax, c/o BMCRL, London WC1N 3XX. Tel. 081 692 9181.

Scottish Anti Poll Tax Action Tel. 031 557 1595..

Tottenham Solidarity Network, c/o 72 West Green Rd., Haringey, London. Tel. 081 802 9804.

A WORLD TO WIN



SARAWAK

IN SARAWAK in E. Malaysia indigenous forest-dwellers are being forced to take increasingly drastic direct action to save their homes and way of life.

3,600 acres of the Sarawak tropical rain forest are being destroyed every day to supply timber to W. Europe and the giant Mitsubishi Co. in Japan. The Penan tribe has built its village right across the main logging highway and has vowed to fight to the death. *"If the police come here we will blowpipe them."*

On 19 January protestors wielding a giant inflatable chainsaw blockaded Newport dock in S. Wales to stop the unloading of rainforest timber from Sarawak. A similar action against a shipment of Indonesian tropical rainforest timber into Liverpool was planned for late February. These much-needed international solidarity actions follow a wave of European-wide actions for International Penan Day in October.

More info : Earth First! 9 Cazenove Rd., London N16 6PA Tel. 081 806 1561

ITALY

ORGANISING outside of the bureaucratic official trade unions, thousands of workers throughout Italy struck on 25 October and 6 December. Resistance to the attacks on wage levels, social services and the right to strike is being organised through the COBAS (Grass-roots Committees) and other worker-controlled bodies. (Info: Umanita Nova and Incompatibili)

BRAZIL

A STATE of emergency was declared in N.E. Brazil following looting and riots in an area where drought has left 9 million facing starvation. 1,000 farm workers invaded Sierra Telhada clearing food from street markets. Police were unable to stop the rioters and 70 town hall employees fled the area.

AFRICA

Thousands of workers in Chad's capital, N'djamena went on strike on 17th February to protest at the assassination of a human rights activist. In Morocco, thousands of phosphate workers went on strike on 20th February demanding better wages and conditions. In Abjidan, Ivory Coast hundreds were detained after a major riot following an anti-Government demonstration on 18th February. Guinea's military president narrowly cheated death when students firebombed his limousine outside the capital, Conakry on 17th February.

Simmering Discontent

The problems the USSR has handed down to its successor, the CIS, have absolutely nothing to do with the 'death of communism'. Since capitalism means a **society based on wage-labour**, regardless of whether there's a free market or a stock exchange, the USSR was always state capitalist and never anything else.

What made Soviet capitalism different was the intensification of bureaucracy, first under the Tsars and then under Lenin and Stalin. The effect this had on workers wasn't to stop them struggling: with repression, it simply made their struggle take the form of sabotage, absenteeism and sloppy

work, rather than strikes and occupations.

Once the inflow of workers from the countryside dried up, bureaucracy became less and less effective. Instead of just expanding industry, the elite increasingly needed **technological reform**. First, though, they needed the market, so that they could see what was most profitable for each unit, and which units they should shut down altogether.



The main problem here was that this would mean disciplining the working class in new ways - by means of economic insecurity, rather than just politically, with the police. Fear of a revolt made the rulers dawdle for years, but eventually, when industrial growth actually became negative (minus 15% in 1991), they had to stick the boot in. With or without the hammer and sickle over the Kremlin, whether or not the coup was defeated, for the rulers there really was no alternative to an extremely rapid 'liberalisation' of prices (ie swingeing cuts in real incomes), and a massive dose of 'privatisation' (ie mass unemployment).

THE STRUGGLE SO FAR

On 2 January prices let rip. Controls remained only on a very few goods, such as milk, 3 kinds of bread, and sausage: their prices were 'only' allowed to go up three to fivefold, whereas prices for everything else are now set at whatever the market will bear. Most wages failed even to double. Disturbances occurred in St. Petersburg on the first day. Nothing big - just several dozen people here and there getting into some argie-bargie with shopkeepers or the cops. Within a fortnight there were numerous similar reports, often suppressed by the UK media. Many were very positive. In Stavropol shops had their windows broken and received threatening phone calls. So the state Food Trade Agency struck a deal with a meat factory to cut prices. In Vladimir the price of milk was to be raised to 6 roubles a litre, or about 2 hours average wage: a disturbance ensued, the cops arrived, and the price was put back down to 1.20roubles. In Nizhny-Novgorod the price of milk was also cut, from 8.50r to 1.62r, after young mothers organised a march from a special dairy shop.

STRIKES

There were also a number of strikes for higher pay. Ambulance drivers came out for a day in Yakutsk; in Novorossiisk, workers at a shipping company struck in support of a demand to be paid in dollars. Tube workers in St. Petersburg threatened to walk out, as did teachers in Kaliningrad. In Vladivostok around 200 people gathered outside the local council offices. While one placard read, "We're pro-market, but against crippling prices", another was more on the ball: "We demand bread, not circuses, nor queues for it".

At the time of writing, the biggest strikes we've heard of have been among the miners in the Karaganda region of Kazakhstan. Many of their demands were conceded, such as wage rises of 100 - 200% and guaranteed food supplies. President Nazarbayev also capped prices for a few essential goods. Meanwhile a miners' strike in Vorkuta (northern Russia) won higher wages, part of which are now paid directly in food. Such workers' victories directly conflict with the bosses' need for a free market! Wildcat miners' strikes were also reported in the Kuzbass (western Siberia).

BREAD RIOTS

Full scale food riots have erupted in Uzbekistan, involving 5,000 students and several hundred cops. The cops wielded clubs as students overturned cars and fought with iron bars. At least 2 students were shot dead, possibly more. President Karimov announced 4 days later that students would be able to buy food at the old prices.

BOSSES OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

It's hard to tell how 'well' the reforms are going on an overall level. Living standards are dropping, but there has as yet been no full-scale revolt. Regardless of stop-gap aid, though, it would seem that the reforms aren't hurting enough for foreign capitalists: neither Germany nor Japan, nor even the USA, is falling over backwards to invest. On the one hand this means that the bosses of these countries aren't convinced that the boot has gone in hard enough; on the other they're still not banking on social peace. All the signs thus point towards increased strife, *increased struggle on both sides, ie by the rulers and by the poor*. In 6 months time today's stakes will seem small.....Here's hoping for a long hot summer!

EVERYTHING MUST BELONG TO EVERYBODY!

"Our final objective is a free communist society...We declare as our fundamental principles the abolition of the state, anti-capitalism, anti-militarism, and internationalism. We reject the idea of a centrally planned economy (State monopoly) with its bureaucratic State management, but we are also against market economy, against private property and private capitalism. Everything must belong to everybody. All forms of hired labour must disappear. We are also against frontiers and nationalism."

Initiative of Revolutionary Anarchists (IREAN), RUSSIA, Moscow 105215, 9 -AIA Parkovaia Ul., D.55, KV 60, Kostenko Dimitri

Home of Democracy ?

Defiance of state repression continued in Greece late last year despite a brutal clampdown which saw over 100 radicals, mainly anarchists, arrested within a week.

In late October a student demo in Athens, against repressive education reforms, was attacked by police. 32 people were arrested. Within a week 18 had been given jail sentences of 1 - 8 years. 250 picketed the court in solidarity.

On 2nd November large numbers protested. Police arrested 33 people who were charged with sedition - for fly-posting!. The 33 were beaten and tortured, and the women prisoners sexually assaulted. Sentenced to 6 months, the defendants were later released on appeal. 300-500 demonstrated at the court each day.

A 300-strong protest demo on 9th November was again attacked by police, with 46 arrests.

This repression comes in a period of intense class struggle in Greece, with many strikes against the structural adjustment programme ordered by the IMF/World Bank and implemented by the Conservative government.

Pickets of Greek Embassies/Consulates and other solidarity needed.

Protest letters to Greek Ministry of Justice Katekahi St., Psyhico - 1055, Athens, Greece.

NEW ZEALAND

19 MEMBERS of the National Unemployed and Beneficiaries Movement were arrested for building a shanty house on a merchant banker's lawn in Auckland. The protest, on 26 November, was against the National Party government. 2 days later 300 marched against legislation which prevents sacked workers claiming benefit for 6 months, if the Social Welfare Dept. think it was their fault. Police attacked demonstrators who burnt effigies of politicians. (info The State Adversary)

URGENT APPEAL

for donations and standing orders. Each issue costs over £500, if C.I. is to appear even quarterly, we need more contributions and help with stamps

COUNTERINFORMATION:

Write for info on local C.I. distribution and other local activities in Central Scotland. N.England; C.I., c/o 52 Call Lane, Leeds. All news and views to: P/H C.I., c/o 11 Forth Street, Edinburgh, EH1. U.K.