

DIRECT ACTION



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Sun THE TIMES **NEWS OF THE WORLD** SUNDAY TIMES

NEWS INTERNATIONAL

THE BITTER FIGHT

FOR

UNION

SURVIVAL

FORWARD TOGETHER
SILENT STRIKE '85
NIGHT
ALWAYS TOGETHER

SILENT NIGHT

N.U.T.G.W.
DEMANDS
UNION RECOGNITION
AT CONTRACTS
LTD./ FRENCH
CONNECTION

FRENCH CONNECTION

WE CAN WIN NOW

The strikes at News International, French Connection and Silentnight can be won, and must be if workers are to remain able to organise industrially.

BUT WORKERS IN THESE DISPUTES MUST REFUSE TO TAKE A BACK SEAT TO THEIR UNION LEADERSHIP.

They must campaign for active solidarity in their struggle from the rank and file of other unions, and if this is not forthcoming then they must use all their ingenuity to SABOTAGE AND DESTROY THE PRODUCTS AND PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY OF THEIR BOSS.

BUT IN THE LONG TERM

We have already seen some encouraging signs of the way to win. Dockers have blacked Silentnight goods; US and French unions have helped the French Connection strikers, while at home people have rallied round to organise the campaign for a consumer boycott; someone has given some of the TNT drivers a good hiding; even paper boys have set a fine example to their elders by refusing to deliver the SUN.

A massive increase in these acts of solidarity and direct action could win these disputes. But workers can only do this, and go on to take the

offensive, when they have a unionism fit for the task.

DIRECT ACTION says: lets build a fighting rank-and-file organisation that can face up to this challenge. The strength to win is NOT lacking; only the will.

DIRECT ACTION speaks louder than words

The very right of unions to exist is being challenged by the employers in these disputes.

What do they show us and what can be done to reverse the current trend of long, bitter strikes ending in defeat for the workers?

WHAT WINS STRIKES?

What wins strikes? The solidarity of workers and the use of direct action.

What loses them? Workers content to leave a strike in the hands of union officials; workers who appeal for "fair" arbitration from ACAS; strikers who expect any meaningful support from the TUC or any union leadership.

DANGER: BOSSES AT WORK

Last year more than 7000 people were killed or seriously injured at work. Occupational diseases killed another 12,000.

What is the government's response? A new white paper, to appear in the spring, relaxing health and safety rules still further.

Lord Young, Employment Secretary, explains, "Some businessmen still complain to me about the weight of work which health and safety legislation puts upon them." So he will "identify difficulties caused to employers" and "cut the burdens" imposed on business.

Accidents up and up

Yet already industrial accidents are massively increasing, no doubt helped along by the growth of YTS with its appalling record on safety. From 1981 - 1984 serious accidents in industry rose by 24%.

But in the construction industry they rose by a terrifying 41%. And it was the construction industry that was the scene for a recent experiment in de-regulating health and safety.

Cynical

The scheme, run by the secretive Health and Safety Executive (HSE), was called "A Plan of Work" and consisted of something cynically entitled "safety assurance". What this actually meant was leaving all responsibility for safety in the hands of the employers, a firm called Costain.

The idea came, of course, from the USA, where Jim Hammer,

deputy director of the HSE, saw it in action in California.

In Britain, it had predictable but tragic results. Costain's safety record got worse over the experimental period. And in one case, it cost someone's life.

Death fall

this occurred when the new British Home stores was being built in Hull. While fitting unusually small steel sheets between girders in a high wind a man fell 30 feet and was badly hurt. Normally an inspector would be called in and work stopped. But under the "Safety Assurance" scheme the bosses saw fit to avoid an expensive delay, work continued and hours later another man fell to his death.

The director of the HSE called the experiment successful, because both sides had learned from it. We call it scandalous.

Unions

A confidential paper prepared by Jim Hammer for the HSE anticipates trade union opposition to "safety assurance" and adds, "It might be easier to get agreement with trade unions locally than on a national level".

Don't let them get away with this! If any attempt is made to put this one over on building workers quietly, on a local basis, it must be opposed and loudly publicised. Peoples' lives, in construction and ultimately in all industries, will depend on it.

cooking the books...

Once again the government plans to fiddle the unemployment figures. By counting them 2 weeks later they can reduce an

"unacceptably high" number by about 60,000 - the 8th time since 1979 the government have fiddled the counting method.

THE AGE OF ENTERPRISE

The favourite word in Thatcher's dictionary of false hopes, currently being trumpeted by all and sundry, from royalty to Radio 4 and from the DHSS to the yellow press, is ENTERPRISE. The self-employed and small businesses, they tell us, show the way to the future. Tomorrow belongs to them.

There are figures that bear this out. The self-employed increased by 34% (more than half a million people) between 1978 and 1984, and now represent a higher proportion of the working population than at any time in the last 60 years. They now number some two and a quarter million.

Appeal

Of course, the idea of self-employment has tremendous appeal. Be your own boss, control things your way, be a real decision-maker - it could even mean making a fortune if you work hard. What a tempting prospect - doubly so when jobs are hard to find.

And with 4 million out of work, it's also a tempting prospect to the government. Hence all the advice centres for small businesses, and the Enterprise Allowance of £40.00 per week for a year if you set up on your own.

Besides this, the increase in self-employment has a lot of appeal for bigger business.

The facts show why. **Figures**

The self-employed just don't make those hoped-for fortunes. They don't usually get paid holidays, sick or maternity pay, or other NI benefits. Inland revenue figures show that earnings are usually lower than they would be for employees doing the same jobs.



And OVER HALF of all new small businesses fail

A recent Gallup poll found that 45% of the self-employed worked over 60 hours a week, and many used their families; as unpaid labour on top of this. Not many employees have to put up with quite such bad conditions.

The way this benefits employers is simple - by turning former employees into "indep-

THE LUCRATIVE LEFT

Terry Duffy the former president of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers the AUEW who died last October, left a will with assets of £77,609, not bad for a working lad.

...AND...

Not long ago, Derek Hatton visited Oxford to speak at a Militant public meeting. Interesting to note that he stayed overnight - not in someone's house, or even in a bed and breakfast place, but at the Randolph Hotel, Oxford's poshest, where a single room with bath is £46 per night (including service and VAT). Perhaps he saved by not having breakfast, which is £5.65 extra.

GK

EARN WHILE YOU WHAT?!

We have all seen the adverts for the YTS where the government is promising all school leavers aged 16 and 17 a place on a 2 year YTS scheme. But the government is having problems with its plans to enrol all school leavers on such schemes.

Some major companies such as Unilever, Rank Xerox, IBM and Dixons have been complaining of the increased years and increased control and auditing of schemes.

As the government attempts to improve YTS so that they become more 'worthwhile' training schemes they are bound to run into conflict with employers, who use YTS as a form of cheap labour. Some employers are talking about starting their own schemes free from MSC control.

The Leyland Affair

The Government's privatisation machine continues its battle against all nationalised industries. Now it seems that BL is to be split up and sold off. The Tories' unhealthy interest in ensuring that the buyers (current favourites are General Motors and Ford) are American is even more prominent in view of the "Westland Affair".

It seems they're not content with turning Britain into America's largest aircraft

carrier/missile launcher, or handing over Commonwealth territory (Grenada). America is to take over large sectors of British industry with the compliance of Westminster.

If the Westland Affair smelt of foul play, Leyland positively reeks. It seems General Motors have been negotiating for the sale over nine months, but only now do we learn of the deadline for tenders - March 4th! Not long for their competitors to put in an offer.

The effect of all this on jobs could be very grim. Shop stewards particularly fear an American takeover - in the US, General Motors have actually forced wage cuts from the unions, threatening huge job cuts.

Of course, whoever is in charge of BL, car workers will be subject to exploitation, and vulnerable to the bosses' trick of moving operations elsewhere whenever labour costs threaten to increase.

What about the Tories' much vaunted "British independence" and flag-waving? This, and Westland show just how much of an American satellite Britain has become.

IH



endant" sub-contractors they can make huge savings on the wage bill. To start with, 16% of labour costs are not wages and these are instantly saved.

The system at work

The best-known example of this practice is "the Lump" - the use of self-employed workers in the construction industry. But now this is spreading. Farm workers, their jobs threatened by EEC milk quotas, are coming under increasing pressure to go self-employed.

School meals staff at Hereford and Worcester County Council were made redundant and re-employed as a "self-help co-operative", saving the Tory council £55,000 in labour costs.

Metal Box made organised lorry drivers redundant, then offered them self-employed contracts at another factory.

Franchise operation is another name for the same trick. In one case, related recently by the United Road Transport Union, bakery delivery drivers were persuaded to go it alone, buying bread rounds from the company. The contract offered an attractive array of services the company would provide the drivers - WHERE PRACTICAL. It also contained nine pages of obligations, failure to fulfill which would result in a broken

contract, crippling financial penalties and loss of livelihood.

The company was particularly careful to make sure it could cream off the large lucrative regular customers from the franchisees' rounds, leaving them with the small scattered orders (cafes, corner shops) which had never provided fat profits.

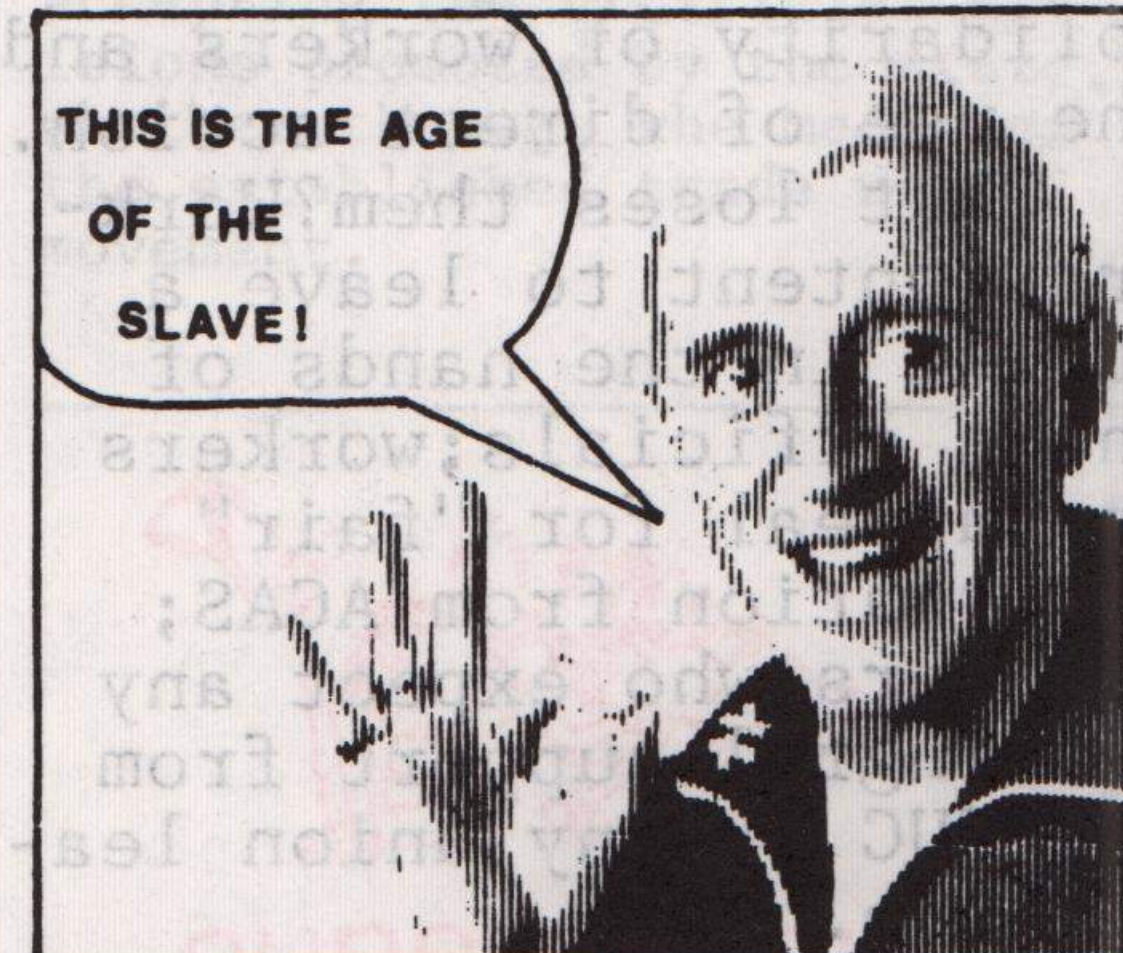
Just cosmetic?

If we consider these workers' experiences we see the push towards an increase in self-employment as far more than a mere cosmetic exercise, masking the ugly face of massive unemployment.

It is a cynical attempt to manipulate peoples' desire for work and independence to create an even more fragmented and low-waged labour force for "Sweatshop Britain".

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THIS IS THE AGE OF THE SLAVE!





WOMENS' HEALTH: AN ASTMS WORKPLACE PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF WOMEN.
Available for £1.00 from Finance Dept, Head Office ASTMS 79 Camden Rd, London NW1 9ES.

This document is intended as a guide "to pull together all the different action that could be taken by ASTMS members to improve the health of women on the workplace". For this reason it consists of several different sections which can be used separately or together, according to diff-

ering needs. Each is a short, carefully written survey of a single aspect of womens' workplace health and safety, and although produced by ASTMS, the union for office and laboratory workers, there is much of relevance to women at work in many industries.

By framing a lot of the material in a way suitable for use in group discussions, the authors have made sure that the information (and therefore the decisions) can be spread among the rank and file, rather than confined to a few experts. They strike just the right balance between careful detail and accessibility to the lay person.

There are useful discussions of Health and Safety in general, although there is an absence of criticism of the Health and Safety Executive, which would be well-deserved, and no questioning of whether laws and regulations are any good at protecting workers from work-related hazards. But the section on Stress at Work contains good advice on tackling sexual harassment, a

problem too easily swept under the carpet, so that even its victims can feel they are making a fuss about nothing.

Reproductive health gets a lot of attention. The pamphlet draws to our notice some dangers not everyone thinks of such as anaesthetic gases, or environmental pollution. It also makes the point that this is not only a womens' matter — it takes two to make a healthy baby — and argues that men too need protection from hazards of this kind. Safety should not be an excuse to discriminate against women.

The piece on pregnant women is thoughtfully written, including many small but vital details that make a big difference to expectant mothers. But the information on maternity rights may soon be out of date — let's hope it's regularly updated along with changes in the law.

Also on this subject, the dangers of VDUs to reproductive health get a section to themselves. Personally, I felt this should have been more forthright about the hazards

involved: a lot of abnormalities associated with VDUs go unreported. They should be regarded with deep suspicion by



all workers, pregnant or not, and it should be remembered that they pose a threat to other aspects of mens' and womens' health besides child-bearing.

On the other hand the section on cancer screening is excellent, very clear and informative. It also discusses the causes and prevention of

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What Syndicalists Think About...

CONTROL

In his book, "Modern Political Analysis" the sociologist R Dahl writes, "If everyone were perfectly agreed on ends and means, no-one would ever need to change the way of another. Hence no relations of influence or power would arise. Hence no political system would exist. Let one person frustrate another in the pursuit of his goals and you already have the germ of a political system; conflict and politics are born inseparable twins."

This is the fundamental belief on which sociologists base their justification of power structures in society, a belief that without these power structures men and women are incapable of finding an equitable solution to the problems of living together in a society. Saying that conflict and politics are born "inseparable twins" is nearer the truth, for conflict has pervaded human society throughout its history, a history of rulers and ruled.

History, though, has shown that, despite the imposition of the will of the privileged few, it has been the co-operation and adaptation of mutual aid which has been the main factor in the survival of the human species, and often this has been in conflict with the interests of those who were in control of society at the time — and who were justifying their existence as a socially stabilising force.

The society we have today is the product of our past. In its evolution we have inherited not only institutions but also relationships to those institutions.

Much of our society can be traced back through the centuries to the influence of Rome and Judaism. Our system of law has its origin in the Justinian Code, and the dominant mores of society are, via Cristianity, attributable to the influence of Judaism.

These influences have been modified and adapted by the circumstances of subsequent history, finally culminating in our modern industrialised society and the State as we know it today. Mad Caligula the Roman emperor claimed he was a god, and showed his arrogant contempt for the Senate by making his horse a senator. This megalomania by those who

wield unlimited power occurs time and time again through history, from Rome's slave-based society, to the Thatchers and Murdochs of today's wage-slave-based society, BECAUSE THIS IS THE NATURE OF POWER.

It is because of the corrupting effect of power upon human beings that history has seen a constant struggle to curtail the power of rulers. The English Civil War was a struggle to curtail the Divine Right of Kings, yet many a Leveller was later to die at the hands of the Parliamentarians he had fought for, betrayed once the Cromwellians had become the new Ruling Class. In our own times we have seen the dreams and aspirations of revolutions crushed under the jackboot of the self-styled emancipators.

Power not only has an effect on those who wield it. It also demands acquiescence from those it is wielded over. In present society obedience is held up as a virtue. Behind this velvet glove, is the mailed fist of compulsion for those who will not be passively compliant.

Society is structured as a power hierarchy. As the pyramid ascends so there is a greater and greater concentration of decision-making power in fewer and fewer hands.

This concentration of power gives rise to varying degrees of alienation as the scale is descended, until at the bottom, the majority of those who compose society are reduced to mere functionaries, order-takers with little or no control over the factors which determine their daily lives. At the top, the hierarchy gives rise to elitism and privilege.

It stunts and stultifies the creative initiatives that those subject to it can contribute to society, unless they serve the interest of, and are approved by, those above them. Hence progress in human development is inhibited, because the only direction permitted to it is the one which serves to perpetuate the status quo, or enhance the interests of the privileged few.

This is only furthered by the blind belief of the majority in the principle of leadership, and its masochistic desire to be led, or more often misled as far as their own

wellbeing is concerned. This overvaluation of "expertism" persists in society along with an undervaluation of the potential intelligence, knowledge and experience which the majority could bring to bear to solve its own problems. In any measure of human attributes or abilities there is a bimodal distribution, eg in intelligence, there are few idiots or geniuses at either end of a scale, the majority being spread somewhere over the middle ground.

The much-vaunted "Democracy" we are led to believe in claims to serve the people. True, it may be rule "of the people", it may claim to be paternalistically "for the people", but it can never be "by the people" while such a hierarchical structure as the State exists.

Surely, ONLY the people themselves can determine what is their interest and ensure its realisation. To delegate this function to any social group other than themselves is to reject their own social responsibility, and court disaster and betrayal by those to whom it is entrusted.

Why should people entrust things to be "done for them" when they have in their own hands the ability to do these things for themselves?

So this is the dilemma: how to organise a society which can fulfill human needs without the centralised power hierarchy and its inherent problems and dangers?

Syndicalists have always argued that the pyramid of power must be inverted, and that at all levels, administration must be accountable. How is this to be done? By a federalist industrial structure of society based upon a principle of control from below.

In every unit of production, transportation, communication, distribution, etc, workers' control would be exercised by DELEGATES SUBJECT TO RECALL AND CENSURE BY THOSE WHO ELECTED THEM. Each workplace would practice self management. These would liaise and be federated one to the other throughout society, not in a vertical, hierarchical structure, but as an equalitarian horizontal structure.

This would mean each workplace, in conjunction with

others in the same industry, establishing local, area, regional and national committees of delegates, to co-ordinate administration of production and distribution of all goods and services throughout the whole of society.

Control would at ALL TIMES remain in the hands of the larger social grouping, the local controlling the area, the area the regional, and so on — a total reversal of the present structure of society. This would be a society based upon ABSOLUTE, DIRECT workers' control from below, controlling production, distribution and services determined by THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES to fulfill their social needs AS THEY THEMSELVES HAVE DETERMINED.

By such safeguards as these built into the social fabric once and for all, a truly human society could develop without the class divisions which have plagued people hitherto; a society where there would be no more comfortable privileged niches for opportunists to entrench themselves in under any guise; a society where all participated in the daily decision-making; where men and women could grow to their full stature as equals.

In contrast to the political opportunists claiming to represent the interests of the working class, when syndicalists speak of workers' control we mean control by the rank-and-file workers themselves, not nationalisation, or the formation of a new bureaucracy under the domination of a party claiming to act "on behalf of" the workers. This only serves to replace one boss class with another.

As Syndicalists we do not seek power. We do seek to destroy the mechanisms of power whereby one human being can dominate another and live by the exploitation of their fellow.

This is not a Utopian dream and we fully realise the formidable task ahead before this can ever be achieved, but we believe that this concept of society is the culmination of a process fundamental to the nature of humankind, whose irresistible striving for freedom is an intrinsic part of nature.

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SAVAGE REPRESSION

FOWLER

FIGHTBACK

Now that the White Paper on changes to the Social Security system has been published, containing no real surprises, we can expect to see a lot of energy expended in sterile campaigning and posturing at party political level. With the news that the measures will mostly not be in effect until April 1988, the cry will have gone up in hundreds of Labour Party meetings throughout the country — "Oh good, now we can make it an election issue!" This says it all. What is important to political careerists is not the actual plight of people who are going to be affected by these callous proposals, but the political mileage they hope to gain from them.

Claimants don't need this sort of "help". Those who are really concerned about the effects of Fowler's proposals will involve themselves in grassroots activity at community or workplace level. It is vital to bring about a situation whereby claimants and people in work alike realise that these measures are part

of the ongoing widespread attack on the lives of all working-class people. Since this realisation must mean becoming aware of the true nature of all political parties — and therefore the role played by Labour politicians in the repressive machinery of the state — it is difficult for even the most well-meaning Labour Party member to reconcile campaigning on fundamental welfare issues with the overall aims of their organisation. This, of course, applies equally to any other party.

To hear mealy-mouthed politicians of the left and left-of-centre speak on the subject, anybody with no knowledge of political life in Britain could be forgiven for thinking that this was the first time the basic human right to a decent standard of living compatible with human dignity had ever come under attack. Sniping at party politicians is boring, largely a waste of time, and best left to other actors in the party political theatre, but the point has to be made, simply to illustrate one of the major problems in trying to promote action by people on their own behalf. This is that the nature of any political activity "in the system" is such that an initiative on the part of people affected to remedy an adverse situation they face is stifled, by channelling it away from direct action to ineffective and sterile activities such as lobbying their MP, or prattling about at local party meetings.

DIVIDE AND RULE

Another problem, not unconnected, is that people very often do not recognise their true enemies or allies. This is the result of a system which has the tried and trusted principle of divide and rule as its lifeblood. Among working people with little or no first hand knowledge of the situation faced by those living on benefit there is often the attitude that claimants are some kind of a threat. This, coupled with the usual views of "scroungers" and the "inequity" of people at this level of poverty, promoted by the state through its media, results in a feeling that claimants are a group apart. For illustration, visit any Football League ground in the

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DOCTOR ON TRIAL

A London obstetrician, Ms Wendy Savage, is currently "on trial" at a special inquiry held by her employers to investigate her use of "natural childbirth" methods. If she fails to justify herself, Ms Savage may face the sack, after spending several months suspended from work, unpaid.

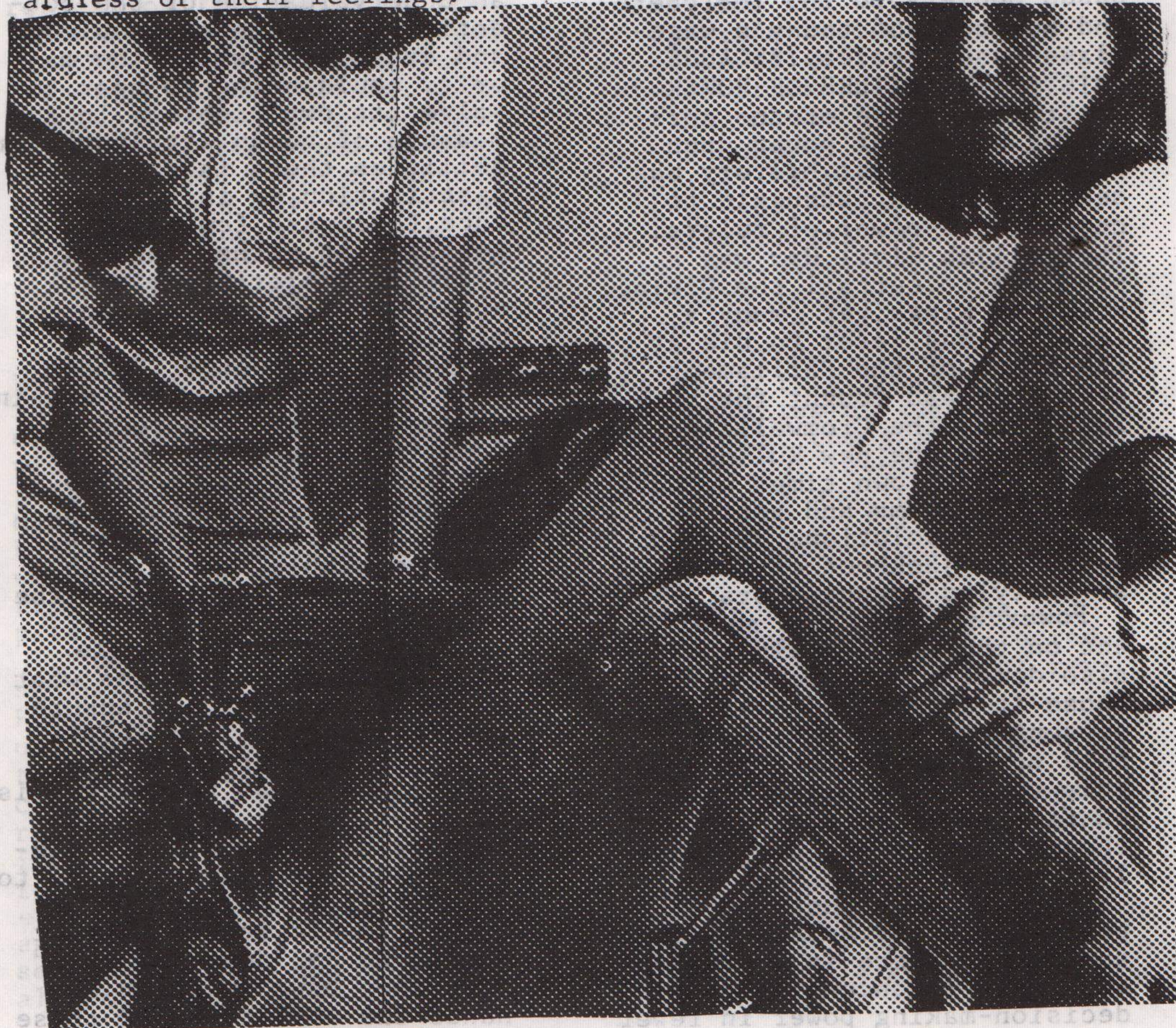
The case follows complaints from her colleagues, all male doctors who favour routine technological intervention in all births, however healthy.

These doctors also favour lucrative private medicine, unlike Ms Savage, who works only for the NHS.

To try and remove Ms Savage her opponents have accused her of malpractice during five births — out of the hundreds a busy doctor treats each year — when she allowed the mothers every opportunity to deliver their babies naturally.

Yet three of these women are perfectly happy with the way they were treated. It is highly probable that medical interference could have complicated their cases further, while no-one can prove that it would have saved the two babies who, sadly, died.

And are the five mothers happy with the fact that their medical records are being used publicly in the inquiry, regardless of their feelings?



THE ARGUMENTS

No-one should deny the benefits of modern science properly applied to problem pregnancy and birth. Mothers and new babies rarely die at birth. Techniques like forceps and Caesarian deliveries can save lives. But the factors which have played the biggest part in increasing the number of healthy mothers and babies are improved housing and food, and the decline in smoking.

Is natural childbirth just a load of sentimental nonsense, opposed to a rational, safe approach? Or can mothers really claim that what's most enjoyable for them is safer for babies too?

There is ample evidence that much medical interference in the natural process of birth, while it brings wealth, prestige and personal power to doctors, can lead directly to physical harm to patients.

For example, epidurals* can cause violent headaches and, more rarely, permanent disabil-

ity if they go wrong. But more often, they inhibit labour dangerously, so that forceps are needed, which in turn means trauma for the baby and an episiotomy² for the mother.

Or, pethidine³, routinely administered, reaches the baby via the placenta and slows down the urge to breathe and suck after birth.

Or, induction of labour^o can lead to violent pain, strong drug doses, forceps and other problems. Vicious chain-reactions, caused initially by relatively minor medical interventions, can end up in life-threatening situations.

THE ALTERNATIVE?

Proponents of natural birth on the other hand, do not oppose all medical help — only routine unnecessary interference. It is surely the right of every woman to know what is happening to her and why; to decide what position feels most comfortable for her during labour; to avoid pain where possible and choose how to control it where not; to be awake and aware during this uniquely exciting experience; to use her body as it was perfectly designed to be used by millions of years of evolution, without the "help" of episiotomy, a sadistic practice whose popularity is more akin to the barbarity of ritual genital mutilation than a concern for good health.

A VITAL STRUGGLE

So the Savage case has more than one important aspect. It is not merely a matter of self-indulgence for mothers, who would produce a more-or-less healthy baby whatever the circumstances. We are talking about the right to safety as well as comfort.

We are also talking about a challenge to, powerful and important systems of repression. Doctors, and through them, the State, can exercise enormous power over patients. Few are more vulnerable than labouring women and new babies. Anyone observing the treatment of infants in post-natal wards sees a system that seems to be designed to crush and erase any impulse to freedom and self-regulation.

Follow this up with the gross distortion of the mother/child relationship which also occurs (every farmer and zoo-keeper knows the disastrous results of intruding between mothers and newborns at this sensitive time), particularly when there has been a lot of pain, surgery or drugs. Add on, at a later date, the armoury of state repression aimed at children and you have the perfect recipe for a servile, passive, drugged and scab-prone population.

The present authoritarian high-tech birth process is the first link in the chain the bosses need, to bind us from the first breath we take.

Sensitive childbirth can't make revolutions — but it can help to make revolutionaries.

THE IMPLICATIONS

If Ms Savage loses her case it won't affect her alone. All over the country, doctors who might be prepared to allow free choice to mothers will change their minds. They won't dare to risk their jobs. Only women who can afford private care will find such treatment easily accessible.

Besides this, the existing trend towards more intervention will accelerate. Britain has the highest rate of forceps/caesarian births in Europe — almost 20%. Operative deliveries are more lucrative for doctors and drug companies alike. And if doctors fear a Savage-style inquiry whenever things go wrong, they will insist on such procedures to protect themselves from blame.

The lesson for women is plain. DON'T trust to hospitals and doctors. INSIST on your right to give birth at home, with a skilled midwife, unless a real medical reason for hospitalisation exists (and if it does, find out why).

More generally, this case has shown us, once again, that any system worth its salt CAN'T be reformed from inside. It will take a revolution to shift the weight of repression from the labour wards. The first step is making sure we all understand why it should be on the agenda.

*epidural: pain control carried out by introducing a drug into the spine, leaving the patient completely numb from the waist down.

²episiotomy: cutting the vagina to enlarge the birth outlet; the cut is repaired later with stitches, which has long-lasting painful side effects. It is occasionally needed in emergencies but doctors like to do episiotomies anyway.

³pethidine: a narcotic drug injected to relieve pain in labour.

^oinduction: starting labour artificially using synthetic hormones, sometimes needed if continuing pregnancy could be dangerous, but sometimes performed for convenience.

philippines

BEHIND THE ELECTION UPROAR



May Day '85 the message is clear. The KMU march despite government bans.

Before it even began, nobody could have been under the illusion that the Philippines election would be run in the same way as our so-called "free, fair and democratic" elections (where the voters themselves rather than the votes are manipulated, but at least the counting is accurate).

The protagonists themselves were well aware that the poll was simply a response by the dictator Marcos to pressure from his masters the USA to make his position appear more legitimate.

However, even the Americans seem a little taken aback by the blatant fraud and open violence resulting in Marcos' claim, as we go to press, that he has a majority of 1½ million votes and will remain in power.

WHY ?

The media inform us that the reason for America's intense interest in the fate of the Philippines (which since the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945 has been more or less a colony of the USA) is that the world's two largest US naval bases are situated there, "protecting" the Pacific from the threat of a Russian takeover.

But while it's unwise to underestimate the importance to the US of strategic factors, the underlying economic situation explains both the military and political involvement.

THE SITUATION

Imagine a country where
 ● factories are in a zone surrounded by walls and barbed wire, which no-one can enter without queueing to show their pass to the guards (no, it's not Wapping), and which has its own armed police and spy network;
 ● workers are "very adaptable, of good temperament and cheerful", who will work from 7am to 8pm if need be, or not at all if demand slackens, with no sick leave, safety regulations or redundancy pay;
 ● wages are around £3.00 per day, for punishing work quotas, and unions which call

strikes are declared illegal (under last year's Cayetano Bill);

● troops and armed police routinely beat, imprison or kill union militants.

A TROPICAL PARADISE

This is the Philippines. Sounds like a boss's paradise, doesn't it?

That's why bosses like Ferranti and Astec (electronics), Mattel (toys), IGMC (clothes for chainstores like Littlewoods, C&A, Hepworths, etc), Ford (motors), Lotus (shoes) and many others worldwide have found the Philippines such a profitable place for labour-intensive industry.

These powerful giants are increasingly capable of withdrawing completely from areas like Western Europe or the USA if organised labour reduces the huge profits they expect. They then set up in places like the Philippines' special export zones, or even more cheaply, sub-contract work to a puppet local firm which is even more easily abandoned if demand drops, or, as is more and more often the case, the "docile, cheerful" workforce begins to give trouble.

For unrest in the Philippines is not merely a response to the present electoral charade. In fact the very opposite is the case.

WORKERS RESIST

Many of the workers in Philippine industry are young women, fresh from isolated village communities. Often part of their wage has to be sent back to support their families while they live in cramped, unhealthy dormitories provided by the employers.

Although these factors make them very vulnerable to management pressures (leaving aside the routine brutality of the military and the zone police) thousands of these workers are joining the KMU (1st May Movement, a militant, independent union federation). They engage in courageous and determined strike actions, which

more and more often have a successful outcome.

An important aspect of their struggle is the very strong solidarity between workers in different factories, which can lead to widespread "indignation strikes". For example, in June 1982 a Japanese plastic sack company, Interasia, increased its production demands, resulting in a strike. After violent incidents on the picket line, culminating in the arrest of 54 strikers, 20,000 workers in the Bataan Export Processing Zone stopped work, forcing Interasia to negotiate under pressure from the authorities. For most of them this was their first involvement in industrial action.

What a good example this offers to British workers, beaten time and time again by their own disunity. Another lesson we could learn from the struggle of the KMU is their tactic of "Welgo Ng Bayan" — the Peoples' Strike.

This is a direct challenge to the government and consists of a general strike by the employed, extending to the whole community. So transport, shops and schools are boycotted. It is hard for the government to split a working class united by their involvement in supporting the strike.

Perhaps the basic reason for these underlying strengths in the KMU is its attention to the education of its members. These are active militants, not passive card-holders. In 1984 the KMU gave union education to 650,000 workers, in spite of its minimal resources.

This education does not consist of plush weekend schools on the finer points of negotiating procedure, or well-appointed workshop sessions learning to use the new technology. It deals with the basic reasons for poverty, exploitation and imperialism, and how activists can organise in the face of armed repression.

LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE

The means of organising

used by the KMU are not the only thing British workers can learn from. The whole experience of the Philippines labour movement offers some important lessons.

Chief of these is the vital importance of industrial struggle. The Philippines election has been one of the most grotesque parodies of democracy to bear the name, but it still serves to demonstrate the uselessness of electoral methods to achieve real change.

Even if Mrs Aquino's opposition grouping had been allowed a majority, the USA, through its military and business operations would remain the true ruler of the country. Indeed this may still happen, if the Americans can persuade Marcos to go quietly.

The other alternative, offered by the Communist guerrillas of the New Peoples' Army is even less hopeful. The prospect of a Vietnam-style intervention by the US is fearsome, while an eventual Communist victory, imposed by military force, would be equally horrific.

But workers organising themselves, in the workplace and community, in control of their own aspirations and means of struggle, hold real hope for a future not merely free of dictatorship, but capable of becoming free of poverty, exploitation and domination.

Less dramatically, the Philippines provides a graphic demonstration of the workings of multinational capital. Investment — which means jobs — can be spirited away to the most profitable parts of the world faster than ever before, while workers who have, over the years, achieved some rights or reasonable living standards, are thrown out of work and lectured on the need to be "competitive".

WE NEED TO BUILD LINKS WITH WORKERS OVERSEAS, NOT COMPETE WITH THEM. WE HAVE THE SAME BOSSES — THE SAME ENEMIES. LET'S FIGHT THEM TOGETHER.

AR

c.n.t. fight for union recognition

Last month we reported on the growth of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour) among French postal workers. Unfortunately, syndicalist success brings with it repression from the bosses, to whom the CNT is a nightmare: a revolutionary union controlled by its members committed to industrial direct action, solidarity and the creation of a working-class society where all are equal.

For several years the CNT's strength in the Telecommunications sector (PTT) has been increasing, fighting the inertia and collaboration with the bosses of the traditional unions.

In 1982 the PTT union federation of the CNT won the right to organise union committees, circulate union literature in the workplace, hold union meetings outside working hours and to give union recognition to all members in dispute with the employers. These union rights were agreed by the French Government.

However the PTT management at Paris (region 5) Meslay du Maine and Lyon Montrachet 6F have refused to recognise the CNT.

Management at Paris no 5 and Meslay du Maine have victimised CNT union militants involved in the struggle for union recognition, even accusing them of stealing money from the post cash desk.

The CNT ask for your support in their struggle against the capitalists who are attacking basic human rights.

Get YOUR union branch to send letters of protest to MINISTRE DES PTT, 20 A de SEGUR 75700 PARIS and messages of support for the postal workers to FEDERATION CNT-PTT 33 RUE VIGNOLES 75020 PARIS.



CNT POSTAL WORKERS DEMONSTRATE IN LYONS.

Workers, bosses, unions

Discontent simmered amongst French workers in the years before 1968, a compound of low wages, unemployment, dictatorial bosses and a union movement not capable of improving the lot of its members.

French workers' wages were the second lowest in Europe, next to the Italians', and half a million mostly young workers were unemployed.

Almost mediaeval working conditions prevailed. Michelin boasted they had talked to strikers only three times in 30 years. In June 1967, Peugeot called in riot police to evict occupying strikers and two workers were killed. Citroen had the reputation of running a prison rather than a factory. Union rights were negligible. Workers of different nationalities — Algerians, Spaniards, Yugoslavs — were placed side by side to prevent them from talking.

Immigrant workers were especially exploited. A third of Paris Citroen's workforce were immigrants, living in dirty hostels and forced to join the company unions. Witnesses attest to the joy of Citroen workers occupying their workplace in May '68.

The French bosses were so confident in their rod of iron that they didn't even bother to buy off their technicians and supervisors. These strongly backed the May/June strike.

Nor did the unions defend workers from this aggressive boss class.

The CGT (General Confederation of Labour) was controlled directly by the Communist Party, more intent on gaining political power by occupying a minor ministry or two.

Then there was the CFTD (Democratic Confederation of French Workers), until 1964 the Christian Confederation of French Workers, which was prominent among the white-collar workers who played an important role in the May events.

Finally, there was the CGT-FO (Force Ouvriere), conservative, anti-communist and funded by the USA. Its members at the Sud Aviation plant at Nantes were to start the General Strike, and were, paradoxically, imbued with anarcho-syndicalism. Similarly, FO unions in Loire-Atlantique (a department with a long anarcho-syndicalist tradition) pushed the General Strike to the point where workers took control of functions hitherto the job of the State.

Student unrest—trigger to action

Surprisingly it was student unrest that led to the leashing of the strike wave. French universities, like British ones, were for the middle classes: in 1968 only 2% of French students were of working-class origin.

The students felt hard done by. Their courses were not absorbing enough; the campuses were rather drab. In early 1968 the professors at the Sorbonne could literally see the writing on the wall. It said, among other things, "Alcohol kills. Kiss a girl, take LSD"; "Long live the revolt of the Saigon workers!"; "All reactionaries are paper tigers". Students had already taken part in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations and now participated in a movement led by Maoists, Trotskyists and other Marxists for a greater say in the running of the Universities.

From May Day 68 things moved fast. That day saw 50,000 people march through Paris —

FRANCE 68

THE GREAT STRIKE

Why am I rioting. Mainly because I am against added value tax. I bought a silencer for my moped and I had to pay 20% more for it than last year". Young rioter, Nantes.

"I am a worker. I am demonstrating for higher wages. And then also about pretty well everything. I hate the bosses' guts. I've got my revenge to take." Striker at Nantes Sud Aviation.

"Liberate the imagination. Take your dreams for reality." Student graffiti, Paris.

What was the May 1968 General Strike in France, a movement pursued by workers in opposition to their unions? Some say it was in sympathy with middle-class students, others a fight for reforms, still others a demand for social revolution.

What was this thunderbolt that came out of a blue sky, causing De Gaulle to fly out to his tank commanders in Germany, but which was bought off simply by calling an election?

DIRECT ACTION analyses this prelude to a revolution which never took place.

the biggest demonstration since May 1960 at the height of the Algerian war.

On May 3rd De Gaulle's authoritarian government tried to snuff out the protests with repression. The Rector of the Sorbonne invited the riot police (CRS) to arrest students listening to the Marxist Cohn-Bendit. 527 were arrested, but in response the students went on strike and fighting ensued. Four students were given heavy prison sentences for this, which resulted in two days of rioting. 600 students and 345 police were hospitalised.

The government closed the universities after this. On the 10th 3,000 demonstrating students were attacked by police with incendiaries, and tear, poison and paralysing gases. Many passers-by were beaten by CRS in bitter fighting which went on all night. This time 116 students went to hospital, and so did 251 police.

The appalling violence shown by the police incensed French workers. At first the unions had condemned the protesting students, but they soon changed their tune. Workers had reason enough to hate the police who had often intervened in labour disputes. The students had made a brave stand against forces which for more serious reasons the workers also opposed.

theatre was occupied and turned into a debating centre. All over France the frustrations of the workers boiled over into factory occupations.

In Nantes, due to anarcho-syndicalist influence, FO transport workers blocked roads into the city. There and in Caen, the Prefect was deprived of all effective power. A central strike committee of all the unions distributed petrol coupons, organised food supplies and regulated prices.

Everywhere people adopted the syndicalist tactic of the stay-in strike. They kept their machinery in perfect condition and in some cases started production without the bosses. It is a testament to the abilities of working people that though totally unprepared for revolution, certain regions and industries in France went so far in so short a time down the road to revolution.

Some sought better wages and conditions; others, half-incredulously, saw the chance of revolution.

The CGT response

"Dangerous student-inspired adventurism" was the Communist Party/CGT judgement of these events. Thus they insulted their own membership with the idea that they had foolishly been led into a general strike by students.

The CGT was horrified by the fact that it could no longer control its members. 40 years of pretending that the Communist/CGT marriage would lead to revolution were exposed as the CGT tried to defuse the developing crisis. Georges Seguy, the CGT boss was quoted on May 20th "No deviation and no insurrection."

The end of it all

On May 25th (the same day that Prime Minister Pompidou stated "The demonstrations will be dispersed with the maximum energy") the frightened government, industrial and union leaders met at the rue Grenelle in order to stitch up an agreement, consisting of small reforms, to get the mutinous workers back to normal production.

Throughout the country the union base gave a resounding NO to the sellout deal: it was not enough.

On May 29th De Gaulle flew out to the French army in Germany to get their pledge of loyalty in the event of a civil war. On the 30th, he agreed to elections for June 30th, while also threatening unspecified stronger measures.

Resistance in industry began to crumble, faced with the twin problems of confusion about the election call, and brutal repression from the CRS.

For example, at the Peugeot works at Sochaux, thousands of riot police stormed the factory, shooting 12 workers and killing two.

As the election approached, De Gaulle, abetted by the CGT, banned scores of left-wing organisations.

The fight continues

The elections led to a Gaullist victory, but with the departure of De Gaulle himself. How can we account for such a climbdown after the events of May/June?

Marxists argue that the workers lacked leadership from a vanguard revolutionary party. But there were dozens of Marxist groupuscules to choose from — all middle-class and highly unattractive to most French workers.

Syndicalists believe that the explanation lies in the nature of France's union movement.

A successful revolution needs years of preparation and education amongst workers. The syndicalists of the early French union movement realised this, and emphasised educational activity at their workers' centres. They knew that union members needed to learn the strategies of the ruling class and how to combat them.

But in 1968 French workers were organised in either a reformist Communist union, a semi "Confessional" union, or a conservative one. They could not see through De Gaulle's desperate electoral gamble.

And nor were they ready to follow the example of those at Nantes and St Nazaire, who started the creation of a situation of dual power, with the unions taking over the running of society. This is not surprising given that their unions were hostile to such aspirations.

What is impressive about France 68 is the remarkable ability the workers showed to seize an opportunity to better their conditions.

And it gives the lie to the idea that revolution is something for the third world and not for industrial Europe. Wherever workers are exploited, the seeds of revolt need only the right conditions to germinate once again.



Action

On the 14th May the workers at Sud Aviation Nantes, many of them anarcho-syndicalists, imprisoned their works manager in his office and occupied the factory.

The following day, the Renault workers at Cléon struck. In Paris the famous Odéon

In fact a majority of striking French workers were deeply suspicious of the Bohemian students. Attempts by various Marxist student organisations to enter the worker occupied factories around Paris were met with polite but firm refusals. The workers did not want to be led by the students.

DOUBTS ABOUT SYNDICALISM?

D.A.M.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

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



LETTERS



Dear Comrades,
The article "What Syndicalists Think About Class" contained political views that didn't sound right to me. It mentioned "any future syndicalist society..." "Syndicalism is not a social order without government and private property — the word used should have been Anarchy or Socialism. In the same paragraph it says "there will be only productive workers...full employment..." What a load of crap. Not all work will be productive: what about looking after the old, young or sick? There will be no employers, only workers' control

Further on it says that a working-class person is one that sells their labour to a boss. I disagree; it means one who doesn't have a say in the running of their life or environment. Not everyone gets a wage!

Finally, I found the last sentence laughably mistaken. What about revolutionary anarchists who don't call themselves syndicalist, or individual anarchists?

Love and solidarity,
GS L'pool.

THIS LETTER HAS BEEN SHORTENED FOR REASONS OF SPACE.

GC REPLIES: We believe a syndicalist society would be an anarchist society. Syndicalism is imbued with anarchist ideas — it is our method of struggle in the present, and through its local unions and industrial federations a way of organising the future stateless society.

By employed we meant occupied in useful work. As a person involved in looking after a small child I believe that caring for people is very productive work indeed.

GS misrepresents our definition of class. If he rereads the article he will see that it does take into account the unwaged and the question of powerlessness.

Finally, syndicalists are the most class-conscious workers. Anarchism on its own is not enough — look at the anti-working-class position of Freedom, or the anarcho-capitalism of the Libertarian Alliance. Only syndicalism unites libertarian principles, direct action and class consciousness — the only route to social revolution.

MISSED POINTS

Dear Comrades,

The article entitled "Drive Out The Scum" misses the point that people who sell heroin on the streets tend to be small-scale dealers who are only out to make money in order to support their own habits. The people who are making the real money sell heroin in large quantities and have the finance, expertise and contacts necessary to evade prosecution unlike the less fortunate street dealers.

With reference to the review of Doris Lessing's book, it is rather shallow to condemn "terrorism" absolutely. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. Throughout history oppressed peoples have resorted to violence when all other avenues of protest have been denied them.

It is stated in the same book review that all middle-class involvement in left-wing struggles is "utterly parasitic and self-indulgent". This is a sweeping generalisation and borders on class bigotry. There are middle-class people who are capable of genuine involvement in workers' issues.

Finally, the article headed "A Nation of Animal Lovers", concerning the fate of pit ponies at the now closed Sacristan Colliery, contained unnecessary irony — "Readers will be glad to know that the ponies will be looked after". It is hardly the ponies' fault that pits are shut and jobs lost. Furthermore these animals unconsentingly work down black holes and have no trade union to defend them. On average, 3,000 animals die every minute of every working day for the "food" trade and an animal

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

Chile Appeal

Last month we opened an appeal to help Chilean anarcho-syndicalists form their own union. Send your donations to: DAM International Secretary, 16 The Meadows, Hambleton, Selby, N Yorks.

MARXISM: FACT AND FICTION

Dear Comrades,

Your Editorial Collective's reply to Chris Wells is quite simply wrong.

It is a fact that not all MARXISTS are LENINISTS: the SPGB for example and a number of remnants of the First International. I actually met a guy in Glasgow — a Marxist — who consciously took the Menshevik position; he certainly wasn't a Leninist.

It is also crude misrepresentation to say Marxist-Leninists etc believe in the setting-up of a state "on behalf of the working class". Whether you agree with the concept of a state or not, most Marxist-Leninists believe in DIRECT control by the working class on the basis of democratic workers' committees and councils (soviets) so that the first and final say so must come from the working class as a whole.

You would be perfectly correct to suggest that this concept has not worked out in practice, but that is a different thing from saying it isn't the concept at all.

Revolutionary greetings
Dave Douglass.

OUR REPLY: All Marxists are Marxists, so it seems to those of us outside their various groups. That is they follow the teachings of KH Marx, 1818-1883, a German intellectual who produced an enormous body of theory, much of it couched in highly technical terms. Anyone interested in a lengthy and detailed criticism should read "A Critique of Marxism" by Sam Dolgoff.

Meanwhile, may we point out a few of Marx's theories and actions, which should make any self-respecting revolutionary think twice before calling themselves a "marxist"?

There is the FACT that Marx preferred to destroy the 1st International (through rigged congresses at London, the Hague and New York) rather than tolerate the participation of the Anarchists.

There is his assertion that the Communists are "the most advanced and resolute section of the working class" who "have over the great mass of

the proletariat the advantage of understanding", with its germs of an authoritarian party system.

There is his racism — yes, Marx defended slavery (the basis of "progressive" America) and imperialism (the means whereby the Germans "civilised" the "Stubborn Czechs and Slovaks").

There is the pseudo-scientific nonsense of "dialectical materialism", "economic determinism" and "laws of history" which have achieved nothing except to justify endless collaboration with the boss class.

There is the misconception that the State is merely "a committee for managing affairs"



which, by concentrating on purely economic concerns, ignores the self-perpetuating nature of authoritarianism.

So, even leaving aside the possibility that Marx's followers have distorted or misapplied his teachings, Syndicalists have plenty of good reasons in what he himself wrote to oppose Marxism.

So much for theory. While Cde. Douglass draws a distinction between theory and practice, Anarcho-Syndicalists see theory as redundant unless it is inseparable from practice. No Marxist-Leninists have ever put into practice the idea of DIRECT control of society by the working class.

We are 100% certain that most of their rank-and-file followers believe they should. Their mistake, in believing it possible, must be pointed out at every opportunity.

DIRECT ACTION

BREAKING THE FRENCH CONNECTION

The strike of Contracts Ltd workers (French Connection) at South Shields is still going strong. Workers there have been on strike since September 1985 for union recognition and an end to 19th-Century working conditions.

The dispute can be won through the blacking of french Connection clothes, with the solidarity of other workers, but if this is the case it will be in spite of the strikers' union, the NUTGW, who have failed to give much support to their members.

One way of helping them to win is the campaign for a consumer boycott of French Connection's overpriced merchandise.

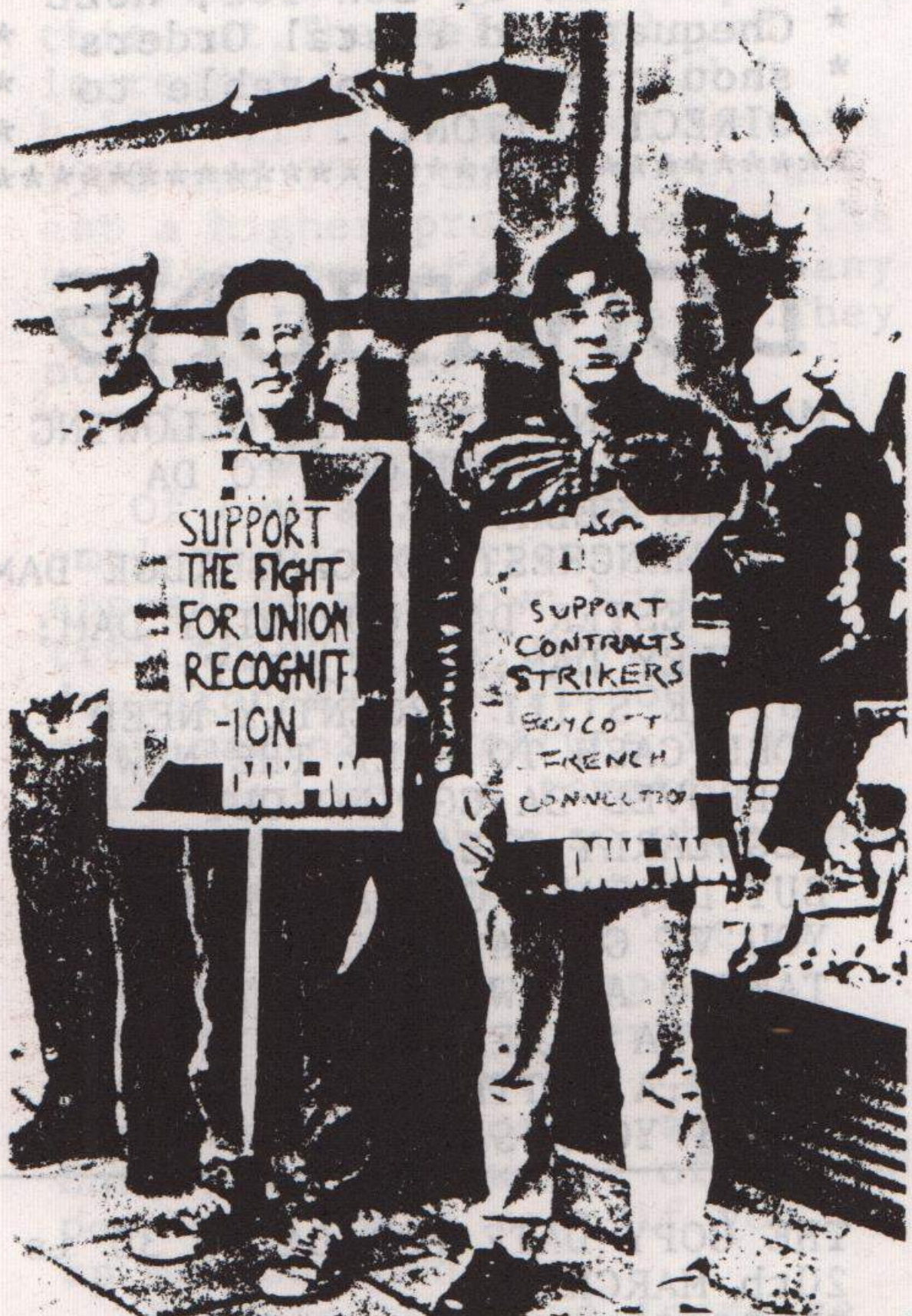
DAM groups and other trade unionists have been picketing shops stocking the French Connection label. At Leeds and Manchester they have succeeded in turning some customers away.

French Connection also have shops in France and the USA. To hit the bosses there as well, the syndicalist unions in those countries have been asked for their support.

In response the French CNT has produced posters urging a boycott of French Connection goods, and their members have picketed outlets in Paris and Ivory.

Direct Action urges all readers to take action in support of this strike. If it is lost bosses in the rag trade will launch a general offensive against union rights and working conditions in the industry.

Letters of support and donations to:
NUTGW, 18 Norfolk St, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear.



DAM MEMBERS PICKET FRENCH CONNECTION IN MANCHESTER.

CHANNEL TUNNEL = UNEMPLOYMENT

Who saw the rich and powerful of Britain and France gathering in Canterbury Cathedral to get Gods blessing for the venture? Personally I think he's about the only person with the engineering know-how to do the job.

Thatcher claims her "engineering Falklands Factor" would create over 40,000 new jobs however the Governments own White Paper expects only 10,000 new short-term jobs set against a loss of 5,600 ferry jobs and 1,600 jobs in Dover.

What little vocal opposition there has been against the Tunnel scheme has come from Little Englanders concerned "that Albion will be over-run by greasy Europeans" Some point rightly to the spoilation of Kent, which will become, in effect, a massive car park.

However, there are other reasons for opposing Thatcher's/Mitterand's would-be election trump.

■ The Tunnel will make it harder for British strikers to win, as strike-breaking supplies and labour can be got more cheaply from abroad;

■ Industry will continue to move from the north of Britain to the south, creating an industrial desert in the north, with all the attendant misery of unemployment;

■ Not just tens but hundreds of workers may die building this expensive and pointless link;

■ We will see the militarisation of the south coast to "prevent the terrorist threat to the Tunnel";

■ Although the government gives the impression that the scheme will be privately financed, the massive cost of roads and railways serving the Tunnel will be borne ENTIRELY BY THE PUBLIC.

It is vital that unions halt this stunt, which nobody except the corrupt government profiteers want. And this means industrial action.

Given the spineless attitude of the labour movement at present, this seems unlikely to happen, but nevertheless there is no other way to defeat this expensive white elephant. It is up to the rank and file.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

dies in a British laboratory every six seconds. The press would have us believe we live in a nation of animal lovers but the facts speak differently.

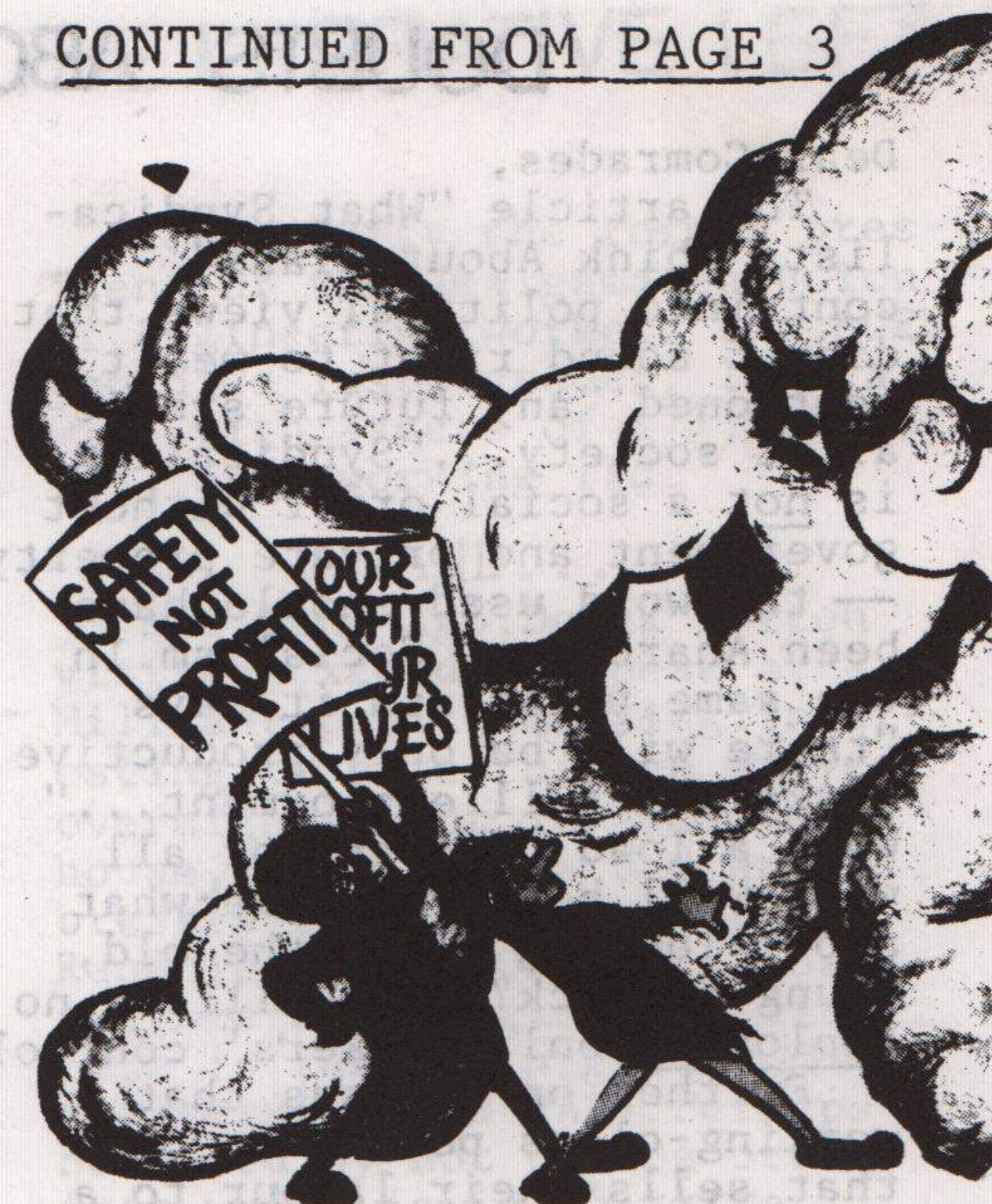
Yours fraternally,
A Jones.

THIS LETTER HAS BEEN SHORTENED FOR REASONS OF SPACE.

WE TAKE YOUR point about the drug dealers, but feel the rest of your letter deserves a reply:

Opinion on violence and terrorism are not the prerogative only of men! Perhaps the original article did not make a very explicit distinction between violence and terrorism but the author is certainly no pacifist. Reviewing this novel was an opportunity to make the point that isolated acts of terrorism are elitist, and irrelevant to the mass of ordinary working-class people. Libertarians believe that we must make our own revolution, through our own involvement,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



cervical cancer. It would have been good to have a similar chapter on breast cancer, a more common disorder which also responds to early detection and treatment.

Finally there are sections on Well Woman Centres and Workplace Women and Health Groups. In a way it seems over-optimistic to contemplate setting up these kind of initiatives when even basic NHS care is being cut so drastically, but where there are interested groups of women it should definitely be encouraged. Not only can it ensure that vital provision is still made for women's health services, but it also represents a beginning for health care controlled by individuals rather than imposed by "experts" and bureaucrats. Something like this could develop and grow into the community at large.

The pamphlet ends with a very good directory of books, leaflets, videos, etc, on all the topics mentioned and more. This is an excellent list of basic information sources (except that it shows up the need for a detailed, readable publication about the health effects of VDUs) and the pamphlet is almost worth £1.00 for this alone. There is also an impressive list of materials published by ASTMS.

Although its production is basic — photocopied sheets bound in a plastic strip, with some blurring of graphics — this document is very good value for money indeed, and recommended for anyone concerned with workplace health and safety.

AR

not have it imposed by some small group, however well-meaning. A good example of the kind of results terrorism can achieve is the state of Israel whose inception was largely, (not wholly) due to acts of terror. Not quite what we seek!

Middle-class well-wishers are not welcome to syndicalists because their experience does not give them a true understanding of workers' problems. Instead, they automatically try to seize control over workers' activities and organisations on the grounds that they know best, but their opposing class interests ultimately show up in their practice. We don't need self-appointed experts to tyrannise over us.

Finally, the pit ponies. No one in the DAM would advocate any sort of cruelty to these creatures. Our point was that they had attracted more concern and publicity than miners at the same pit — human beings, often with dependent families, who weren't being offered the option of a pampered retirement, but simply being slung on the scrap-heap of the dole.

LEGALISTIC MALADY

On February 21st NGA type-setters and printers in London and Northampton voted in a secret ballot to refuse to stop producing News International's colour supplements. After the defeat Tony Dubbins, NGA General Secretary, boasted that his members had remained within the law.

HOW SHAMEFUL for any union to obey the bosses' laws, designed to paralyse any strike action!

Who remembers the TUC's fighting talk when first faced with Tebbit's anti-union legislation: "No co-operation and a 50p levy to fight the measure" was their line then.

Not now. The unions feebly follow every court ruling, and forgotten is the brave talk of union leaders going to jail for their beliefs.

The secret ballots at the centre of all this are a boon to the bosses. Instead of the open democracy and enthusiasm of the mass meeting, decisions are made in isolation in the worker's living room, in front of the TV as it spews out its anti-union lies.

Union militants must oppose these laws. Get rid of the malady of respect for the bosses' law!

GC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

south of England, and listen to the derisive chanting (much of it by young, poorly-paid people) of "on the dole", directed at visiting fans from the north.

Claimants too are divided, not only against people in work, whom they often regard as being comfortable and having nothing to grumble about (the "how dare they strike, they're lucky to have jobs at all" attitude), but also against other claimants, often on the grounds of artificial differences, such as ethnic group, or imagined differences in benefit level. It can also be difficult for people to be convinced that the reason they are not getting enough money is the nature of the system, rather than the personal vindictiveness of clerical workers at the Social.

Difficult though it is, it is important to encourage people to realise where the true divisions lie — along class lines. An attitude not always expressed adequately, for example in claimants' groups, and perhaps more especially within trade union organisations, is that claimants and working people should stick together against the real enemies. This involves working towards establishing and maintaining good relations between claimants and DHSS and Unemployment Benefit office workers, as well as with labour movement activists and all working people.

Without digging up the standard "unity is strength" clichés, it cannot be stressed too much that it is vital for people to work to form stronger links between everybody on our side of the fence, and not to fall into the trap of accepting the artificial divisions promoted by the state, whether through the media or the established trade union movement.

GK



SUBSCRIBE!!

LATE EXTRA:

THE LAINGS DISPUTE

On the afternoon of Wednesday February 19th, John Laings, the multinational construction firm, was granted a High Court injunction against a group of six building workers, who have been in dispute with Laings since October 1985.

The injunction allows two of the workers to picket the original site of the dispute in Glenbuck Rd, Surbiton, but not the rest. And none of them may picket or visit any other Laings site.

They cannot speak publicly or distribute any literature about the dispute, and the injunction makes them responsible for anyone else who pickets Laings in solidarity.

If any of these conditions is broken, Laings can apply for the workers to be ruled in contempt of court, if this happens they will be arrested and imprisoned until they purge their contempt.

The injunction was served on 21st February as they stood on the picket line.

THE BACKGROUND

Seven members of UCATT (the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians), six bricklayers and one labourer, started work for Jonoroy Brickwork at the Laings Homes site in Surbiton in early October 1985. Jonoroy are a sub-contracting firm, with a history of intimidating and physically attacking employees who demand better wages and conditions.

When Laings realised the seven were union activists, it instructed Jonoroy to dismiss them, which it did on October 18th.

This is not unusual in the building industry, which has a disgusting record of industrial accidents (150 deaths and countless injuries each year) and 19th century working conditions. Workers who are prepared to fight this are feared and ruthlessly disposed of.

The seven demanded their reinstatement, an end to blacklisting of activists, no more lump labour, and direct employment by the main contractor (in this case, Laings).

Supported by the Regional Council of UCATT the workers formed the Laings Lock-out Committee and started a campaign of picketing other Laings sites and approaching other workers for financial support and help "on the line". These tactics were largely successful — one site ground to a halt — thanks to the aid of TGWU drivers who refused to cross picket lines, notably Marcon's concrete drivers who stopped deliveries to five different sites.

In response, there was a vicious campaign of intimidation against the pickets. Huge lumps of concrete fell mysteriously from great heights, landing close to them, while on-site workers were discouraged from contact with them by the ever-present threat of the sack.

THE UNIONS

During this dispute several regional organisers of UCATT gave half-hearted support, but there was total opposition to the Lock-out Committee from T&G Regional and UCATT National officials. TGWU Regional secretary Peter Kavanagh, and UCATT General Secretary Albert Williams were both observed being wine and dined by Jonoroy: could this have something to do with their opposition, and that of other officials who went to great lengths to alienate any chance of vital solidarity action by other workers?

In general, the relationship between unions and bosses in the construction industry is unhealthy close. All Federation of Building Trade Employers members, and most of the larger sub-contractors operate deals with the two major unions based on the "check-off" system, whereby union dues are stopped out of employees' wages.

This, coupled with the con-

SINCE OCTOBER LAST YEAR, SEVEN BUILDING WORKERS HAVE CARRIED OUT A DETERMINED STRUGGLE AGAINST THE APPALLING WORKING CONDITIONS AND POOR WAGES IN THEIR INDUSTRY, AND FOUGHT TO DEFEND THE RIGHT OF ALL WORKERS TO ORGANISE, PITTING THEMSELVES AGAINST THE GIANT MULTINATIONAL FIRM, LAINGS.

THEIR USE OF FLYING PICKETS AS A TACTIC HAS HAD CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS, BUT NOW THE BOSSES HAVE BROUGHT IN THE COURTS. UNDER THE TORIES' ANTI-UNION LAWS THEY HAVE BEEN DENIED BASIC RIGHTS IN A WAY THAT WOULD HAVE HAD THE TORIES SQUEALING IF IT HAD BEEN IMPOSED ON RUSSIAN WORKERS.

THEIR STRUGGLE GOES ON, BUT THEY NEED OUR HELP.

BELOW, THIS DIRECT ACTION SPECIAL LATE EXTRA DETAILS THE BACKGROUND OF THE DISPUTE, AND SAYS HOW YOU CAN HELP.

stant use of the blacklist of union activists effectively breaks down workers' organisation in the industry.

A self-appointed leadership (both major construction unions are suffering from ballot-rigging scandals) more concerned with protecting its income than its membership, is selling the workers' bargaining power in exchange for bulk check-off payments from the bosses. The unions' membership lists are totally unreliable. Dues are frequently paid for people who have left the industry or even died years ago.

PICKETS INTENSIFY

In spite of all this, the Lock-out Committee, through the use of flying pickets, forced Laings to agree to a meeting of the National Committee Panel on November 12th. This agreed that:

1) Laings had to re-employ the bricklaying gang at Surbiton as soon as it reopened (they had closed the site in order to sack them).

2) Until then, Jonoroy had to re-employ them.

3) The issue of lump labour at Surbiton was to be discussed with union officials. But in the event, Laings refused to negotiate and Jonoroy did not attend.

In response the Lock-out Committee intensified picketing. This was matched by pressure from union officials to force workers to cross picket lines, culminating in a meeting on November 19th

of the UCATT Executive Council which failed to make any picket official, in spite of the fact that all the demands concerning the blacklist, the lump and direct employment are official UCATT policies!

Action was now extended to another job, the prestigious

British Library site in King's Cross. This led to large-scale police intervention and eventually to the arrest of a UCATT member picketing in solidarity. The case was later dismissed by a magistrate.

Now drivers who had previously given support began to back down. Events quickened as the pickets spread to the largest building site in Britain, Hays Wharf at London Bridge. Another picket was arrested (later to be acquitted) while lorry drivers were crossing the picket line, the police shouting orders at them to do so.

The Lock-out Committee met Hays Wharf shop stewards who unanimously agreed to call for strike action on their site if Laings would not agree to the Committee's demands. Within an hour a written agreement from Laings was presented and signed.

This guaranteed work for the gang at a site in Banstead Surrey with Jonoroy, and a restart at the Laings site early in 1986.

SHORT-LIVED

It seemed that a few workers prepared to use the flying picket, and others who would honour it, had forced a small easing of the employers' stranglehold over building workers. But this was short-lived.

When the gang arrived at the Banstead site on December 2nd, they found themselves locked out, along with 20 others. The excuse given was that Jonoroy had been thrown off the site. But after picketing the site, negotiations resulted in reinstatement for all.

During the following weeks workers on the site organised improved working conditions including toilets and a can-

teen, and one of the Lock-out Committee was elected bricklayers' shop steward, and convener of the shop stewards' committee.

But this was not the end of the story.

Jonoroy tried to separate the gang, transferring some to Surbiton, as promised, while attempting to sack the others "for bad time-keeping". In spite of picketing the Banstead site, they found themselves locked out for the third time in three months.

DETERMINED FIGHT

Work stopped at Surbiton. Picketing began again at the British Library, where pickets were arrested. The police and union officials lost no time in coming to the aid of the bosses.

While the Lock-out Committee had persuaded drivers not to cross the picket line, TGWU and UCATT officials sent letters to all drivers telling them not to cross the picket line as it was unofficial.

Now the Courts have joined in the attack on these workers who after a long and difficult struggle are still determined to control their pay and conditions of work, and defend the right to organise and fight for these aims.

Ranged against them are the corrupt union officials and determined bosses bent on maintaining almost feudal powers over their employees.

They need your help now! Picketing takes place: Mon-Sat 7.15 am - 4pm, British Library Site, Midland Road, St Pancras, London. Donations and enquiries: Laings Lock-out Committee, c/o 135 Hayward Gardens, London SW 15.

E. London DAM



Lockout committee chairman Brian Higgins trying to stop lorries on the Laing picket line.