The last ten years have seen a massive attack on the working class. As the drive to create a low-waged economy continues, so does the need to roll back the gains made by organised labour. One group of workers after another - from steelworkers to printers - have been lined up and defeated. It has become obvious that the sectionalised, reformist unions are incapable of organising the solidarity needed to resist these attacks on our class.

We can no longer remain divided according to trade and union loyalties. What a different story it would have been if groups of workers had taken action together instead of allowing themselves to be picked off one by one.

It is time that basic principles were re-established. Workers must re-learn that we don't cross picket lines not just when instructed to by the union or when the dispute is connected with our own industry, but any picket line; that solidarity just doesn't entail passing empty resolutions of support at branch meetings or giving the odd pound or two in collections but also physical support. Physical support in terms of the blacking of goods, refusing to handle work normally done by strikers and of course sympathetic action.

As rank and file workers we must take the initiative in disputes right from the very start - democratic strike committees directly controlled by the strikers must be organised. It's no good waiting till the strike has already been stitched up and sold out by bureaucrats. It is up to strikers themselves to go out to other workplaces to demand the support and solidarity needed instead of sitting back in the vain hope that the likes of Willis, Hammond, Dean, etc will do it.

By once again returning to that most basic working class principle - the need to organise against the bosses - we can begin to fightback. We are not talking about an organisation controlled by bureaucrats but one controlled by ordinary workers based on solidarity and mutual aid, united together against the common enemy - capitalism and the state.

TUC GET OFF OUR BACKS

turn to p.6

DON'T CROSS PICKET LINES
On Thursday, February 5th, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of SOGAT '82 decided to withdraw all support for the year long struggle at Wapping for jobs and trade union rights. This decision, whose leaders have allowed the SOGAT bureaucracy to run the strike, was made after months of waffle and vacillation throughout the dispute, thus maintaining a degree of credibility for themselves, followed next the day claiming they could not continue the strike alone.

From the start it was clear that only a mass campaign of solidarity would work. This would take two forms. Firstly, a Executive Committee (NEC) of SOGAT whose leaders have allowed the SOGAT only one thing could win - solidarity. At Warrington in 1983 the TUC refused down Wapping by sheer weight of numbers paper bosses. A capitulation by the SOGAT NEC boasting on television that she had against the newspaper barons would have jobs on Fleet Street, so why was Murdoch defy the Tories' anti-union laws and

The cameras at Wapping may not lie but the Sun does often.

From the start the only strategy the NEC put forward was the highly expensive and boycot, whilst the Stalinist dominated London District Committee (LDC) who had real control of the strike refused to call for Fleet Street to come out.

What was necessary was for the rank and file to take control of the dispute through regular mass meetings with a striking committee elected by and account- able to these meetings. At the high point of the strike, David was at the stage by a mass meeting of 4,000 print-workers, yet the opportunity was not to organise a rank and file alternative. The only focus for these meetings was on Fleet Street, or small rank and file propaganda groups and leaflets. Not surprisingly this demanded in reality. There was no organised expression of the militancy which had the authority and the guts to put pressure on Fleet Street. The strikers had at street level despite the machinations of those who wished to pull a brake on effective picketing, but this largely spontaneous and ad-hoc activity took no coherent form.

PASSIVE ATTITUDE

A turning point in the dispute came at the SOGAT biennial delegate confer- ence, where the NEC, supported unconditionally by the LDC succeeded in getting a motion passed committing the union to stay within the law in order to avoid its funds being sequestered for a second time, SOGAT had already its funds sequestered once because it had not bailed its members in the nationwide witch-hunt before asking them to black News International titles. The favourable outcome should have encouraged the bosses to end the dispute. The LDC for its part was seized to organise a rank and file strategy whilst building for wider activity took no coherent form.

LAURA ASHLEY made in a sweatshop

Twenty one women from Airvide Products, in Ardrossan, Scotland, have been on strike since September 1986. Conditions in the 2 factories - one making lampshades and the other making televisions are appalling. In the lampshade factory there are no guards on the machinery and workers are left vulnerable as the extractor fans don't work. In the television factory this could affect babies carried by pregnant women. In its worst conditions the factory dust levels are 12 times the permitted limit.

The workforce, largely women and YTS trainees, have been on strike for a year and a half about these conditions while the top wages are £1.50 an hour. In March 1986 three young men who went to the TGWU were on strike at Airvide in Ardrossan. The strike was once described as a "model entre- preneur" picketing. Quoting solicitors' ad-vice Ross won that battle but not the war. Ross, being repeatedly harrassed and threaten- ed by Ross, the factory owner, one of the strikers was a 10% pay increase, another a 10 pence an hour pay rise. The TGWU called in the NGA running behind them. No mass meeting of 4,000, no picketing. We learnt that, had they that had often worked 13 hours a day.

Of those that remained inside the premises after a picket was set up on the 21st, twenty twenty cutters were offered a meagely 10p extra on each garment. They rejected this and along with 35 Turkish women workers joined the picket outside. They agreed an overtime rate, holiday pay and full union recognition, all of which they won at the beginning of the dispute when Tekin conceded defeat.

Other sweatshop workers in the area have been fighting for their basic trade union rights can then be mobilised. It should be noted by Ross. Not surprisingly the police arrested.

Besides the DHSS has also refused to the 21st, twenty Bangladeshi garment workers. Up till then they had never been more productive, but largely ineffective consumer activity took no coherent form. This offensive by the bosses has been a success. In the lampshade factory there are no guards on the machinery and workers have fainted due to glue fumes as the extractor fans don't work. In the 2 factories - one making lampshades and the other making televisions are appalling. In the lampshade factory there are no guards on the machinery and workers are left vulnerable as the extractor fans don't work. In the television factory this could affect babies carried by pregnant women. In its worst conditions the factory dust levels are 12 times the permitted limit.

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**Psychological War in Maghaberry**

"You are alone in an atmosphere of hostility, you are stripped not only of your clothing but every attempt is made to strip you of your self-respect. Your body is scrutinised inch by inch, hands are run along the sides of your feet and the back and palms of your hands, around the neck and through your hair, every articles of clothing and closely scrutinised. If menstruating your sanitary protection must be removed and given up for inspection - you must stand there throughout the procedure without sanitary protection. There is no degree of decency preserved throughout a strip-search, no revolting practice." - Statement from Maghaberry Prisoners, September 1988.

Over four years ago, on November 11th 1982, systematic strip-searching of women prisoners was introduced in Armagh Jail. Prior to this, regular and extensive strip-searching had not been used. Women prisoners are strip-searched on entering and leaving the Jail. This means that remand prisoners (in women who are held in custody awaiting their trial) are strip-searched as they are regarded equally as affected as they often make regular court appearances. Women are strip-searched on leaving and entering the prison. During their trial, women prisoners may be strip-searched twice daily, five days a week, for the duration of the trial.

Women prisoners are not strip-searched for security reasons. On a court appearance a remand prisoner is strip-searched before leaving prison. She goes to court in a van where she is locked up in a cubicle on her own. At times she is in contact with any member of the public. On her return to prison, maybe thirty minutes later, she is strip-searched again. A woman who refuses to remove her sanitary pad or tampon will have it forcibly removed.

Strip-searching is an act of violence against women prisoners. It is an act of State violence designed to psychologically "break" the women. The section which pervades our society is heightened in a prison where a woman is isolated and vulnerable and her sex can be used against her. Levels of violence against women in society generally are very high - rape, incest, wife-battering, etc. are all everyday occurrences which women are fighting against in many different ways, but women should not have to strip-search before entering or before being strip-searched.

The recent court case, in which an Oxford student attempted to prevent his former girlfriend from having an abortion, represented a direct attack on the right of women to control their own bodies.

It was also the latest attempt by the so-called "freedom-of-will" movement which has grown alongside the new right, to reverse the 1967 Abortion Act.

The student was trying to force the woman to have an abortion, even though he would have been under no legal obligation to support it. The entire responsibility would have been hers alone.

If he had succeeded it would have meant that rapists, incestuous fathers, or, as in this case, an ex-boyfriend, would have had the final say in the birth of a child.

When a women gets pregnant it is her health that is potentially endangered and her life that faces disruption, not just for nine months but for many years of their lives, whether or not she chooses to have an abortion. Even Labour die-hards must believe that he's turned socialist?

Over 3,500 strip searches have been carried out on women prisoners not exceeding approximately 35 women over the last two years. One strip search was a violent and traumatic experience for a woman. And women never become "less dangerous" for "more used to" such acts being perpetrated against them. One woman, Pauline McKinney, has been strip-searched 230 times. Nothing to en-

Over the last few years, the construction of an anarchist world.

The majority of strip-searches are carried out on political prisoners. It is done for political reasons and is obviously an attempt to force the women into submission by attacking one of the prison authorities otherwise cannot touch - the psychological well-being and solidarity of the women.

It is also important to mention that strip-searching has been systematically used against Irish political prisoners in jail. Recently, two Irish women, Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson, spent 10 months in Brixton Prison on charges of resisting the strip-searching order. While in Brixton, Martina was strip-searched up to 248 times and Ella 227 times. Occasionally strip-searching has been used as a political weapon - for example the women in the Protestants, anti-terrorist protests, etc.

The British state has employed a number of repressive measures in the north of Ireland over the years in opposition to it by various anti-imperialist groups - internment, Diplock courts, "supergrass" trials, etc. Strip-searching of women prisoners is another weapon in their arsenal.

Stripping is a form of violence against women prisoners. It is a form of State violence how it is used. The prison authorities otherwise cannot touch - the psychological well-being and solidarity of the women.

It is important to recognise that inside capitalist society, capitalist relations of power and profit of the labour organisation and will be used in maintaining it, as the writer argues. It a single, collective, non-hierarchical organisation of people, he or she can be a non-profit making basis as such a group is a socialist anarchistic form of organisation. Basically the writer says that the Clarke's ideas about what cooperative parentage is the new form of socialist idealism as are the writer's own ideas about what capitalist relations between bosses and workers but they are not anarchistic as anarchists would see or live them.

I'm not sure I'd think anarchism was such a good idea if I took Kenneth Clarke's view of what it meant as a definition.

In solidarity,
Robin London.
News from Italy....

**GENOA DOCKERS**

During January and February there has been widespread unrest at the port of Genoa, north west Italy. The rank and file have been in a struggle against the agreement made between their "leaders" and the employers, a so-called "re-organisation of the work crews", cuts in numbers. At various times the port has been closed and violent actions have thrown port activity into disorder. The union Confederazione CNVU, CGIL* has been severely attacked by racket and file workers for its collaboration.

**ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS**

Up till now illegal immigrants have not been punished by the Italian government but in the spring there will be a census of these clandestine workers, and those without the proper papers will be deported to their countries of origin (mainly North African states). There are reckoned to be one million non-EEC immigrants in Italy, mainly in Milan, Naples, Perugia (where there is a university for foreign students) and Rome. In Rome there are 105,000 foreign workers with papers, plus an estimated 60,000 working without papers and another 50,000 completely clandestinely. It is part of the MSI-AF (Italian Syndicalist Union - International Workers' Association) policy to contact and organise these workers, who until now have been marginalised by the union confederation (CSIL, UIL, CGIL*).

**SECURITY**

The latest six-monthly report by the Italian state security services continues to identify the Red Brigades (BR) as the biggest threat to the state. Not surprising as the mass workers' movement has been made harmless by the union confederation's "no strike" deal with the government last year, (see D.A 33)

* CSIL - Catholics
* CGIL - Communists and Socialists
* UIL - Republicans and Social Democrats

**MILITANTS ARRESTED**

On February 18th the Bolivian government arrested 20 members of the militant Bolivian Workers' Confederation (COB) (mainly North African states). There are reckoned to be one million non-EEC immigrants in Italy, mainly in Milan, Naples, Perugia (where there is a university for foreign students) and Rome. In Rome there are 105,000 foreign workers with papers, plus an estimated 60,000 working without papers and another 50,000 completely clandestinely. It is part of the MSI-AF (Italian Syndicalist Union - International Workers' Association) policy to contact and organise these workers, who until now have been marginalised by the union confederation (CSIL, UIL, CGIL*).

Oil workers struck on February 6th, demanding wage increases to compensate for Bolivia's raging inflation and were joined four days later by health service workers. Teachers have also joined the strike, refusing to prepare for the school year which begins in March, until minister Fernando Bertelheyn then ordered the arrest of 18 leaders of the teachers' section, the LTO, of the COB (Brazilian Workers' Confederation, the Brazilian section of the IWLA). The LTO organised a series of strikes bringing urban transport as well as the country's railways to a standstill. In attempting to repress the strike the so-called 'New Republic' with the help of the militantly organised愈 has had to change the laws of the former military dictatorship in the most authoritarian way possible. The workers held mass assemblies at stations across the country and demanded improvements in pay and conditions promised 10 years before. The strike wave was declared illegal by the Brazilian Labour Court, Leonardo Morelli, CGTB general secretary and other members of the CGTB have been arrested for their activities and organizing illegal strikes and stand to receive up to a year in prison as a result. In December more arrests took place when a second strike was called this time joined by the reformist unions. Regular troops as the Brazilian army were used against railway workers with extreme severity. The COB has appealed for protest and solidarity action. Financial assistance and letters of protest which should be sent to:

- President Victor Paz Estensio, Palacio de Gobierno, Plaza Murillo, La Paz, Bolivia.

New Republic? New Dictatorship?

Some copies of D.A. 36 had a leaflet attached detailing the struggle of the railway workers' section, the LTO, of the COB (Brazilian Workers' Confederation, the Brazilian section of the IWLA). The LTO organised a series of strikes bringing urban transport as well as the country's railways to a standstill. In attempting to repress the strike the so-called 'New Republic' with the help of the militantly organised CNT has had to change the laws of the former military dictatorship in the most authoritarian way possible. The workers held mass assemblies at stations across the country and demanded improvements in pay and conditions promised 10 years before. The strike wave was declared illegal by the Brazilian Labour Court, Leonardo Morelli, CGTB general secretary and other members of the CGTB have been arrested for their activities and organizing illegal strikes and stand to receive up to a year in prison as a result. In December more arrests took place when a second strike was called this time joined by the reformist unions. Regular troops as the Brazilian army were used against railway workers with extreme severity. The COB has appealed for protest and solidarity action. Financial assistance and letters of protest which should be sent to:

- President Jose Sarney, Palacio do Planalto, Esplanado dos Ministérios, 70.160 Brasilia, DF, Brasil.
- Engenheiro Jose Reinaldo Tavares, Ministro dos Transportes, (same address as President).

Send donations to: Direct Action, Box DA, Raven, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2U.

**South Africa:**

Unemployed Organise

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has suggested the idea of organising a union for unemployed workers in 1991. In December 1985, it took a step towards implementing this idea by forming the Congress of South African Unemployed, to begin to hold meetings in Johannesburg in January, Delegates from unemployed workers' groups met to decide on what to do. COSATU leaders have been involved in union activities including the organisation of co-operatives. For instance Metal and Allied Workers' Union members have organised a building firm. In November 1987, the newly formed Sarscom workers' union was formed.

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**Dutch Dockers STRIKE BACK**

The 15,000 strong Dutch syndicalist union, the OVB, were involved in the strike of 5,000 port workers in the Rotterdam docks on the 19th of January. Thousands of other workers attended a meeting of the port workers' union. The dockers have been struggling against the bosses' announcement of more redundancies with a further 500-600 jobs having to go up to 1990. The dockers have long been against the agreement made only a year ago which promised no further forced redundancies until 1990. To get this agreement the workers, also represented by the reformist FNV and CVC (Christian union federation) had to hand back their Christmas bonus plus 15% of their wages thereby forgoing shorter working hours. The bosses also want so-called "flexibilisation" - the introduction of compulsory night shifts and weekend shifts, etc.

The dockers, who through past struggle have got 100% pay for strike action, have no work during slack periods, are also facing a struggle against the bosses who try to force the workers to work harder for less money. Dockers are determined to fight until victory, FNV leaders have organised a series of lightning strikes with up to 1300 workers on strike every day over a period of 3 weeks. In fact the militancy and determination of the workers has been such that the FNV has said it has been more difficult to keep the workers at work than to get them out.

The government has intervened with a so-called arbitration proposal which is designed to prevent the efforts of militant workers' movements. The proposal for the present the efforts of militant workers' movements. The proposal for the present the efforts of militant workers' movements. There is a case for all out strike action with the 5,000 other dockers not involved in the conflict sections of the docks involved in their own struggle for control of the dock area. Solidarity taking place at the Amsterdam docks there is the possibility of the strike developing into a national port strike. The example of a national strike on November 10th shows how the magnificant actions of the Spanish dockworkers organised by the anarcho-syndicalists Co-ordinadora and the recent strike by the rank and file in the ports of the east coast of the USA shows how the rank and file internationally are combating the attempts by port bosses to impose massive cutbacks in wages and conditions.
Wheeler-dealing Bureaucrats

Since November 10th four Chinese chefs have been picketing Wheelers fish restaurant in Marble Arch, London, which is franchised from Kennedy-Brooks, a large catering concern. The chefs are wealthy stockbrokers. On taking over in February last year they gave the men 50 days notice of closure. Despite the fact that the 4 chefs had been offered their annual pay rise of £2 a week, they decided that they should not be allowed back on pay rises. Subsequently when he attempted to add items to the menu without consulting the chefs they refused to carry out his instructions unless he agreed to negotiate over pay. One of the chefs was sacked and the three others walked out in protest.

Although the strike is an official TGWU dispute the union has provided little support locally. The union delayed paying strike pay for 6 weeks and has repeatedly refused to send pickets to local branches without going through tortuous formal procedures.

The workers learnt of their sackings when couriers arrived at their homes bearing letters from the chef. 'At the time of writing printworkers 40 completed were offered to the organisers, management being informed of January, both Rifkind and union leaders were seeking out Pickering's latest loss of 1,221 workers coming from groups who are most having to switch plants so often is losing him lots of money. Support local- promising. The occupation takes place on a 3 shift basis, with 90 men being present on each shift. AEU shop steward offers, have now negotiated a £22,000 redundancy deal behind the chefs back. This means they won't get their jobs back, the only consolation being the redundancy money. Once again the reformist union have allowed the class enemy to get away with murder. However, the dispute continues in London where 2 Chinese kitchen workers have not been sacked and contact is being established with them. The workers have recently from premises linked to Caterpillar.”

The job then began of finding out which plants Pickering was using to print their papers. A delegation from Scottish society, from the rest of the country, and support has come from the 1202- Uddingston travelled to the Caterpillar plant, with one exception, were cut off for a few hours but a round-the-clock picket of the plant began straight away.

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Racism on the DoLe

For two weeks in January the Department of Employment carried out an ethnic monitoring pilot survey at 10 Unemployment Benefit Offices. Staff at offices in Leeds and Nuneaton were instructed to record the skin colour of people as they gave their claim forms. The results have been broken down into four categories: Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Others (including White) or, refusing to be assessed. Staff were, however, not to tell claimants that they were being assessed. Staff monitors were hidden away on notice boards if they were noticed watching. In Hardwick claimants were allowed to choose which category they considered themselves to belong to.

RACIST SOCIETY

The government has failed to state clearly what it is going to do with the information. The government recognises, however, that they intend to use the statistics to help black people in the labour market. It is already known that black people suffer massive discrimination and are often the victims of racial profiling.

The history of the trade unions in this country is not one to be proud of - a gradual absorption into the state machinery and an endless chronicle of deal-making and betrayal of rank & file by union bureaucrats who claim to represent their members. Today are reformist, hierarchical and riddled with nepotism. Some local ethnic unions, like those in the DHSS, are in the forefront of the battle against racism. For a start they are clamping down on bureaucracy. Trade and skill distinctions are perpetuated, even within the same trade union, in the interests of the bosses and those of the bureaucrats. Trade and skill distinctions are perpetuated, even within the same trade union, in the interests of the bosses and those of the bureaucrats.

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**ADVERTS**

**Meetings**

**STOKE**

DIRECT ACTION IN INDUSTRY AND THE COMMUNITY - public meeting and talk with speakers from North West DAM. 7.30pm, next Monday, March 20th at Cartwright House (adjacent to the ABC cinema), Broad Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.

**MANCHESTER**

FREE GMORU - public meeting organised by Anarchists Black Cross with speakers from Nottingham and London. Wednesday, March 22nd at Manchester Town Hall, (Fordy Street entrance).

**DAM CONTACTS**

**North East**

Dunston-------------PO Box 66, Dunston, South Yorkshire, DN4 9QO.

Huddersfield--------PO Box 520, Huddersfield HD1 2LZ.

Leeds-------------Box DAM, 46 The Calls, Leeds, LS2 7EY.

Newcastle---------c/o Tyne-side Free Press, 5, Charlotte Square, Newcastle, NE1 4XP.

**North West**

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

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

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

Manchester-------c/o Box DAM, Aven, 75, Piccadilly, Manchester.

Tameside---------c/o 3, Stanhope Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside, OL6 9QY.

**Scotland**

Bellshill---------c/o National Secretary, c/o Cambridge DAM.

Edinburgh--------Box 83, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh, EH2 2GH.

**South East**


East London-----c/o 84b Whitechapel High St., London, E1 7QX.

South London------c/o 121 Ralton Rd, Brixton, London.

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

Tower Hamlets-----17 Turners Rd, Limehouse, London E2.

**Industrial Network**


East London-----c/o 84b Whitechapel High St., London, E1 7QX.

South London------c/o 121 Ralton Rd, Brixton, London.

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

**Others**

Bristol-----------Box DAM, 37 St.akescroft, Bristol 2.

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**Letters**

Dearest Friends,

After the latest nuclear disaster for Chernobyl public opinion is turning toward the closing down of all nuclear power stations. However, BNFL and the CEBG will be spending millions of pounds over the next few months on pro-nuclear propaganda and the Conservative government has plans to commission 6 new PW reactors in the life of this parliament, as soon as the Sizewell inquiry is completed.

Therefore we believe it is imperative for us to establish a network, that will build a campaign based on mass direct action to call for the immediate ending of the nuclear programme. At the moment it is not in the interest of the working class but was inherited from the aristocracy. It is not a true product of the working class but was inherited from the aristocracy. Dictatorship of the immense majority of the immense majority has national sections in more than a dozen countries.

Leslie, 17 Turners Rd, Limehouse, London E2, is an anarchist, feminist bookshop, food co-op and squatters' centre. We are now celebrating one year of existence. So far we have an established DAM group, a women's group and regular political video nights, but would welcome more visitors and input to help set up a cafe for example. Open Tues to Sat, 3 to 6.30.

NEW RANK & FILE GROUP

Communications Workers Group, c/o Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre, Unit 117, Box 200 Baruch, 444 Brixton Road, London SW9.

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Dear Friends,

So that's the deal. In 1986 the same deal worked in getting the Roamer book into print. The sooner the Rocker book can get into print the sooner the Pheonix Press can start work on the next title (and pay its rent.) If you want a basic anarcho-syndicalist text in print then please send money - in multiples of £20 - to Phoenix Press at: -BM Books, London, WCIN 3XW.

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

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Letters and debates on the class struggle, the direct action movement and the nuclear threat. If you agree, write to the national secretary, c/o Cambridge DAM, or to the local secretary, c/o just books, Belfast 1.

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S.T. (Manchester)

DAM Building Workers - c/o ELDAM, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London.

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

DAM Postal Workers - c/o SW London DAM, 294 Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX.

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

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LIFE UNDER A LABOUR PARTY

Recently on one of the many Wapping marches, a locked out printworker, discovering I was from Australia said "still, things wouldn't be so bad out there even if you've got a Labour government." I exploded "No!" and then started to explain. In Australia, like Britain, people still believe that Labour governments will provide salvation for all kinds of ills. The feeling in Australia was the same after 8 years of "Coo-ee" and "good old Bill" — a slightly milder form of Thatcherism. However, the Hawke Labour government had done its best to erode this illusion, attacking the conditions of the working class and a range of community interests, in the arrogant belief that people have no alternative but to support them.

In Western Australia the Robe River iron mining company locked out its workers over a number of "restrictive work practices" (actually a number of agreements covering the health, safety and other conditions that make working more bearable in the harsh north-west of the state). Despite threats from the State Conciliation Commission, workers were locked out for over 2 weeks and were forced in the end to agree to negotiate on some work practices.

The ban on mining of uranium as Labour policy has been overturned since they were elected. Australia still sells uranium to France despite the fact that France still tests nuclear weapons on Australia's back doorstep in the Pacific.

Few people in Britain realise the extent of Australia's integration in the US political and nuclear systems. Satellite ground stations at Pine Gap (which houses the second biggest concentration of CIA agents outside the CIA HQ at Langley, Virginia) Numeralla, the high frequency communications station at North Pole, Cape York, and the low-frequency Omega navigation station in Victoria are all essential to the US nuclear weapons systems. These add up to make Australia a first-strike nuclear target. Strategic analysts suggest that Australian cities are also targeted to deny the US of ports, industrial and communications facilities. The current Labour government has continued this dangerous relationship. Australian cities are still "host" to US nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered ships and planes.

CENTRALISED

One of the characteristics of the industrial situation in Australia is extensive state intervention in the form of arbitration and conciliation laws. Supposedly one of the "achievements" of the labour movement in Australia, the arbitration courts, through power over awards and penal provisions, have been used consistently to reduce wage demands and thwart rank and file action. Through this centralised, wage-fixing system the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) equivalent) has concluded a number of social contracts ("The Accord") with the Labour government. This has ensured real wages have been kept down — despite record profits in the industries. Attacks on the working and living conditions of working class people have come from number one, number two.

THE NEW RIGHT EMPLOYERS

These attacks are exemplified by the Mudgeganny dispute where meatworkers refused to negotiate a separate (lower) award with the owner of the Mudgeganny abattoirs in central Australia. This meant a year of being locked out, picketing in the semi-desert and a protege of the abattoir owner sued the meatworkers' union. The workers lost the case and the union was forced to pay out a million dollars in costs and compensation.

Pickets (former patients) supporting the nurses strike outside the Epworth Hospital.

PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS

The most significant dispute to come out of this process was the nurses dispute in Victoria. Hospitals are chronically understaffed while thousands of trained nurses refuse to work for poor wages and conditions. A new round promised increases but its implementation actually meant no increase or losses for most nurses. So they took the dramatic and unprecedented action of striking. The state government claimed they're outside "The Accord" and refused to negotiate while the nurses were still on strike. In Victoria, also, technical and further education teachers have been threatened with working public services conditions (9 to 4 and 8 weeks holidays) rather than teaching conditions (9 to 4 and 8 weeks holidays) as a cost cutting measure (ie jobs will be cut if they get this through). The teachers are taking strike action in opposition. Over 2,000 jobs in railways in Victoria are scheduled to go — meaning reduced services, increased use of private buses and the early closing of many stations.

Unwaged workers have been hit by new restrictions on lodgement of applications for unemployed and supporting parents benefits, while flying squads of inspectors are harassing beneficiaries.

The Federal government has cut funding to child care centres and tried to impose its own criteria for who gets to use them, rather than allowing communities to establish their own priorities. These measures have been rejected by the workers by taking to the streets. This pattern is repeated elsewhere in Australia in public transport, health, education, welfare, housing, etc. with provision of services, wages and conditions of workers and what little "community control" there is all under threat.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

It is in this context that ANARCHOSYNTHETICALLIFE as a Federation (ASF) operates. The ASF was formed a year ago. Industrial and unionists' anarcho-syndicalism has a long history in Australia with an upsurge after the 1890's depression and again after World War II. The experience in Britain shows that the anarcho-syndicalist action is only popular on the left for a while. Similarly in Australia, on the left, it was popular for a while but it never gained a foothold. The ASF is provisionally affiliated to the International Workers' Association (IWA) in Europe. Its monthly paper, The Worker is produced in Sydney and distributed to rank and file workers, delegates to trades councils and others through AFL members and supporters. Members have been involved in "twinning" with a BLF picket and supporting the creation of Patient, Strike, Support Groups during the nurses' strike. The Melbourne group produces an anarcho-syndicalist transport workers' paper Sparks, and distributes it to stations as well as train and bus depots. Both groups hold regular film and discussion nights.

The ASF is growing in interest in syndicalist ideas of rank and file organisation and control of industrial struggle, as well as community support for industrial struggles and vice versa.

At the recent national rally at Wapping one of the speakers suggested that what was happening at Wapping, and with the miners' strike, was the re-building of the labour movement "from the grassroots up", I hope so. Other speakers seconded, however, to hold out hopes for the TUC and the Labour Party to solve the problems of the working class. The experience in Australia shows quite the opposite. The "special relationship" between Labour and reformist union leaderships means that workers are unable to get away with vicious attacks against the interests of the working class. Resistance, however, appears to be growing.