Nelson Mandela's release from prison and imminent canonisation, along with the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress (PAC) and the Communist Party (SACP) mark a watershed in South African political history. Today in South Africa, as in the Soviet Union, a political revolution from above is being staged, potentially as significant as that experienced 70 years ago.

In 1920 the South African boss class smashed a strike by white miners in the Rand gold fields, an action which was the reformist wing of the white working class — the deeply racist South African Labour Party (SALP). The resulting Pact Government (1924) between the South African Party (big business) and the SALP, established in law total job segregation in the mines, skilled jobs for whites and excluded blacks from the very terms of definition of an 'employee'; thus outlawing any attempt at black labour organisation. This period laid the economic basis for 'grand apartheid', which was created 25 years later. Today, capitalism in South Africa is seeking to engineer a new political and social contract in order to exploit black labour power more efficiently, using the ANC, just as in 1920 it used the SALP.

As Anarchist-syndicalists we stand with our class. We denounce personality cults which are designed to disarm the working class, whether they are in Poland or South Africa. Every day that sees Mandela and the ANC manoeuvring remorselessly to sacrifice the workers on the altar of a political settlement with apartheid capitalism, makes it more urgent for internationalists and revolutionaries to state clearly what is going on. Although the ANC is the immediate beneficiary of de Klerk's glasnost, the recent events are a coup for the ruling class. The regime has initiated and is in control of the process. The ANC's external leadership must now stamp their authority not only on Mandela in his diplomacy with the political/military establishment which has descended on Soweto like a plague of locusts in the weeks following his release, but also on the liberation movement inside South Africa. Already the logic of the situation leads the ANC to turn what was formerly their minimum demand for 'one person, one vote' into a maximum demand, one of which Mandela has indicated is 'negotiable'.

At the same time the ANC are making a great deal of their refusal to renegotiate the armed struggle. This is a highly symbolic stance intended to distract radicals in the liberation movement from the very real oppression which is going on in backroom negotiations with the ruling class. The armed struggle, in the sense of the military campaign established in the black areas by the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and by the PAC, has always been a red herring, providing targets for the South African Defence Force (SADF) and quite unable to launch a sustained military campaign even as successful as the IRA's. Umkhonto we Sizwe are modelled on elite military units, the armed struggle is not for the masses in the ANC's view, as the Young Comrades found out during the 1985-7 township uprisings when they requested arms from the ANC and were refused. The ANC's military wing can never be a credible threat to the SADF, yet, could however be used against elements in the liberation movement who pose a danger to the acceptance by the working class of any deal which emerges from the ANC/government talks.

It is particularly galling for South African syndicalists to see the compromises being made by the ANC. Since the 1972/3 wildcat strike wave in Durban, syndicalists have been in on the forefront of organising workers, fighting some of the most bitter and industrial disputes in South African labour history and making sure that the independent unions stay independent and belong to their members. Through out the 1970's and 1980's they were slandered by the South African Confederation of Trade Unions (SACTU), the ANC's trade union front, as agents of the ruling class, for daring to challenge the ANC's so-called 'leadership' of the working class — in truth SACTU was a shell by the mid-1960s with no real shopfloor organisation and whose Stalinist leadership was either in prison or in exile. The SACTU line during this period was that South Africa was a 'fascist regime' which could not tolerate 'independent' black workers unions. They repeatedly told the new union federations FOSATU, CSUSA, and then COSATU that if successful they would be co-opted by the state, if they refused to be co-opted they would be smashed. In fact, the new unions have not been co-opted and have not been smashed, despite the introduction of the State of Emergency. Now that the ANC is showing every sign of being co-opted into the state's political strategy, syndicalists are asking what about the working class strategy. The organised working class is essential to the ANC's strategy of pressuring the government to 'normalise' political relations. Since 1966/7 the ANC have launched a drive to control the leadership positions of COSATU and its constituent unions. They have also sought to have their political platform, the Freedom Charter, adopted by COSATU. Despite this co-optation of syndicalists and communists in many unions such as the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) to a 'cross-class' political perspective being foisted on workers' organisations, rank and file members of COSATU know that the ANC for all their talk of a 'two-stage revolution' want to bury any notion of worker-led revolution and socialism as fast as they can shovel on the dirt.

At present there is an emerging liberal consensus in the West around a moderate/reformist ANC with Mandela at its head. There is no common interest however, between these envoys of western capitalism who are eager to give the working classes assurances of goodwill from Mandela and the railway workers of South Africa who recently won the longest and bloodiest strike in the history of the industry. The political crisis in the state is being managed at present by the government, if it induces a political crisis in the liberation movement and particularly in COSATU we will see a battle for the political soul of the unions. In many respects COSATU is still a syndicalist union federation — its emphasis on industry-wide org...
There has been considerable debate on the way forward for the anti-Poll Tax movement, which has been accelerated by the Militant rally massiquering as an anti-Poll Tax conference in Manchester on November 25th. However, much of this debate has been portrayed as being a simple argument between two different tactics: mass non-payment and non-implementaton through industrial action.

The primary task facing the movement is not to convince people not to pay, but to organise the resistance that will inevitably occur. Organising those who can’t pay into the strongest possible force will mobilise those thousands who won’t pay more effectively, and encourage more people to join the non-payment campaign.

Resistance takes many forms. Street level organisation is essential for building a mass non-payment campaign. Each street should be aware of their collective strength, and those able to do so should support the weaker parts of their community.

Isolated individuals can be picked off by the legal machine, but where they have the full backing of their communities, the law back off. This has been shown time and time again in Scotland, where Sheriff Officers have been kept out and defeated by community resistance. In fact, there has not yet been a successful warrant sale in Scotland since the Poll Tax was introduced in April.

There also needs to be the fullest possible activity undertaken in the workplace. The most encouraging activity so far has been the CPSA members in seven London Social Security offices, who took up to a week’s unofficial action against form NH106(c), which grassed claimants in. The CPSA Community Charge Officer Registration Section.

Anti-Poll Tax groups should be formed in all workplaces, across union boundaries where they exist. Most directly affected are council workers who are already facing wholesale job losses, as well as a tax most of them can’t afford to pay. Moreover, certain groups of council workers are especially directly involved in implementing the Poll Tax. Community Charge Sections should be organised well enough that when the Poll Tax is unfair, they will be able to demand, and win, transfers to useful jobs with protected salary and grade.

DSS workers have already taken limited action over the Poll Tax in London; that has to be spread. Judging from the prime movers of the NH10 action, it will be rank and file militancy who push for that. Postal workers should organise to boycott mail connected with the Poll Tax, and banking and finance workers should refuse to work.

However, it is not just a limited section of the working class which has a role to play in the fight. The threat of wage arrears and victimisation will be used against many who defy the Poll Tax. We must build a movement in the factories, shops and offices which is so strong that the bosses don’t dare dock any worker’s wages for fear of the action it would provoke.

What is most crucial about all forms of resistance to the Poll Tax, though, is that they should build self-confidence. All participants have the right to be heard, and that participation is what will make us unbeatable. Unlike some political groups, we see class action as being the key to defeating the Poll Tax. We neither make a fetish of industrial action, nor dismiss any tactic but mass non-payment.

In London Militant controlled many DSS CPSA branches, yet action taken by CPSA members in DSS was not organised by the Militant-dominated Broad Left, but by rank and file activists, and received only half-hearted support from Militant. The extent to which Militant are out of touch with organised workers was illustrated by Steve Nally’s main speech at the South London Trades Union Conference, which focussed solely on the hundred million non-payers in Scotland.

The strategy portrayed as the opposition to Militant’s ‘non-payment alone can win’ is the ‘let’s leave it to the TUC/the Labour Party strategy’ of the rest of the left. The Socialist Workers Party consistently ignored the growing community campaigns in Scotland during 1988-89, arguing that only the industrial might of the working class had role to play in defeating the Poll Tax. It had to wait until the Poll Tax became an issue in England and Wales before the SWP realised that workers live in the community, and not in barracks at their places of work.

This concentration on the workplace alone ignores the role that many people in paid work have to play. The potential of the community for fighting as a community is best shown by the Miners’ Strike, and initiatives such as the Women Against Pit Closures. The community campaigns can provide the inspiration for workers, through working both within and with them. Links between the community campaigns and workplace organisations must be built now, and will become of vital importance in the struggle to come, especially if wage arrears are threatened.

Militant’s approach to organising non-payment is equally disturbing. When they set up an Anti-Poll Tax Union, they usually call a small meeting of sympathisers, ‘select’ a committee, and then ‘go public’. The committee keep control of finances, correspondence, membership and any external relations (e.g. delegates to conferences). The end result of this structure is that potential activists are excluded, and what little action the APTU’s are willing to take is narrowly based.

Militant retain control despite their few members because they alone know when committee meetings are, and members meetings are so boring no-one can stick them. One Pepsy Estate resident who had been fined composed a poem. Pepsy APTU in Lewisham talked about everything but the Poll Tax. Much of Militant’s support in London takes this form, and it is no wonder.

In Scotland Militant claim that there would only be 100,000 non-payers without them. Interpreted at this level of non-payment is not in some Militant stronghold in Scotland, but in the mass of Western Isles! There 48% have refused to pay. Despite all their grand claims about leading the ‘army of non-payers’, Militant still do not get their paper groups like Fling in Edinburgh, which exist solely to elect Militant supporters onto committees.

After the Manchester ‘conference’ many activists all over Britain are now completely pissed off with Militant. They have acted to minimise involvement at every step, and have put forward some pretty handrannelled ideas. One of their full-timers in Lewisham once stated that the way to involve people was to take them to the National Conference in Manchester - forget about any work on the ground.

They have shown that the thing they fear most is autonomy. They set up the London Steering Committee because they could not have controlled the democratic London Federation in which they were never involved. Their last minute reversal of their policy of excluding the London Federation from the organisation of the 10th February ‘unity’ conference represents a victory for the principled position of the Federation - it was Militant and, which will cause them immense difficulties in the long term. The key factor in this is the leading role being taken by Anarchists-Syndicalists that are developing a trades union and workplace strategy, in conjunction with the trades councils. Having failed to control the union activists, Militants are being forced to tailor them.

This campaign is too important to become the property of any one group - the Labour Party. One of the things Militant and the other opportunists do to control the threat of an autonomous anti-Poll Tax movement is to beg it down in reformist politics by involving the Labour Party at a decision-making level, so that members of the Labour Party have a role to play, but as anti-Poll Tax activists, not as party members.

The Left in Britain is still stuck, ostrich-like, with the traditional demand. Call on the Labour Party to do something even worse, ‘milk’ it, and suddenly ‘the workers’ will be politicised. Never mind advancing the campaign, that from the start, ‘the workers’ need to be ‘taken through’ the experience of a Labour government.

The involvement of people who do not represent the fight against Poll Tax, i.e. political parties, will reduce the popular orientation of the movement to sterile politics, and it will lose its relevance to ordinary people. As that is the strength of the movement, we will fight bureaucratisation of our campaign on the basis of genuine organisations of working class people - in the workplace and the community.

Red Herrings from Front page

Harriman, rank and file control of union structures and reliance on tactics of solidarity, direct action, not parliamentary power politics.

In 1944 the Progressive Trade Unionists led by Daniel O’Keeffe split from the Congress of Non-Communist Unions, its SACP-inspired support for the war effort. The PTU soon collapsed, as the level of repression of the black unions which followed the second world war. The revolution in the textile industry in Western Europe was difficult. There the capitalist unions were in a much stronger position to resist.

In 1944 the event of an economic crisis precipitated by a recession or a political crisis resulting in the ANC attempting to lead the working class into a social contract to reconstruct capitalism in South Africa, COSATU will become the crucial test of the ANC’s authority. The ANC hopes that their call for nationalisation of major industries will take the sting out of the movement for workers’ control in the unions.

South African workers do not need to be warned of the false pretence of reformism, there are few countries in the world where the prospect of a workers’ revolutionary revolution is so real, or so necessary. This is no coincidence, but a vindication of the belief that revolutionary politics at the heart of workers’ economic organisations can be a formidable threat to the stability of capitalism. The belief in non-socialist unions is one of the beliefs in the International Workers Association, this is why we call by Anarchosyndicalist.
LOCK UP YOUR DAUGHTERS

Recently, the South Yorkshire Police Force handed out a pamphlet which is very telling about their attitudes toward violence against women. The pamphlet, entitled Safety First, Advice to Women on Personal Safety, is certainly not very comforting. There is no doubt that many women are worried about becoming victims of violent crimes, a fear constantly reinforced by the TV and newspapers' regular sensationalist coverage of sex attacks.

This pamphlet does nothing to reduce that fear. Instead it only encourages women to become prisoners in their own homes and cars. Be a 'private person' it advises women afraid of violence. 'Don't advertise the fact that you live alone'. Of course, everyone's neighbours know if you live alone, your workmates know if you're single and if you join a club or society people soon find out about your marital status. All of this is irrelevant anyway as most crimes committed against working class women are opportunistic burglaries of homes and cars, not mad axemen or rapists who search telephone directories looking for the title Miss, Ms or Mrs.

Nowhere in this pamphlet does it mention the fact that most rapes and sexual assaults are carried out in the home of the victim by a person she knows. It does give half a page over to so-called 'domestic violence' which, when compared to the page and a half given to property crime and photographing your valuables gives a good example of where the police's priorities lie and what the police are all about.

This pamphlet encourages women to become cut-off and anti-social, who advises 'when in your car, lock yourself in'. 'There is no question of danger you could be in in an accident. 'Don't stop to help others' - and if your car breaks down lock yourself in and wait for help, no doubt from a copper as you can't trust anyone else.

Interestingly, the pamphlet states 'a woman under attack has every right to defend herself with reasonable force'. You cannot use an offensive weapon but you can use things you might normally carry such as hair-spray, umbrella, car keys. But beware - the law says you must be attacked first, and, more importantly, make sure if you get into a fight that the attacker can't take your weapon and use it against you.

Lastly, the pamphlet goes on to perpetuate perhaps one of the worst of the media myths - the Myth of the Open Curtains and the Peeping Tom. Predictably, it says that you should draw your curtains and not 'encourage' Peeping Toms. No mention of the fact that people should be able to prance about however they like in their homes (or else where) and that it's the pervert's right to be there.

This myth is particularly dangerous because it basically says 'women with open curtains are at fault for attracting perverts'. This myth is just one step away from 'women who dress provocatively are at fault for attracting unwanted attention and even rape'.

Women should not, as the South Yorkshire Police would have it, need to stay in, locked up, wearing sack cloth and with the curtains drawn (even in London). We do need to feel safe wherever we are, because for the vast amount of time our fears are unfounded. If anyone cares to look at statistics, on the streets, the person with the most to fear is the young man (in New York City over 60% of violent street crimes are committed by young black men against young black men - i.e. gang violence due to poverty).

It is often hard for people to believe that these fears are exaggerated. Women are using media glorifying over every assault and the police exploiting this fear to help justify its existence. We must become less isolated - not more - to gain confidence. By getting involved in neighbourhood and workplace groups - such as with the Anti-Peep Tax groups - a feeling of community can be rekindled, something useful to help overcome fear. The powers that be want our class to be splintered and isolated, divided against itself. The only solution to anti-social crime is to build solidarity within the class and to therefore combat the exploitative relationships that sometimes exist between men and women. Therefore it is questionable that our common enemy is the boss class and the State, not each other. Such solidarity needs to be developed through mutual aid and in action via work class organisations.

As Anarchist-syndicalists our aim is to build such organisations, build revolutionary unions. People often think in terms of narrow trade unification, thinking meaningless branch motions, of bureaucracy and of token gestures towards women, black people, gay people, etc. To us unions - revolutionary Anarchist-syndicalist unions - are preparation for changes to come and therefore all members must play a full and equal role NOW, based on need and ability, with no party/election of people simply because they're lesbian or token. It is the mass majorities or whatever. By always being vigilant and challenging any tokenism or leadership (no matter how right-on someone is) we will ensure that any manifestations of racism and sexism can be dealt with as they arise. But we must be both vigilant against the leftist feministic (or black nationalistic) attitudes which foster the kind of guilty self-flagellation so prevalent amongst the working class (white people in general) on the left and in some parts of the anarchist scene in our mags. After all, these things are education and not just working toward an understanding of the realities of society and not just interpreting it from the right or the left; and mutual aid meaning working together for the benefit of our class.

HUNGARY '56

Given the importance of recent events in Eastern Europe, the re-publication of Andy Anderson's Hungary '56 is timely indeed. First published by Solidarity in 1964, the book proclaims 'For years to come all important questions for revolutionaries will boil down to simple queries: Are you for or against the programme of the Hungarian Revolution? Are you for or against workers' management of production? Are you for or against the rule of the workers' councils?'

Anderson gives the background to the Communist takeover in Eastern Europe, and the situation in Hungary under Stalinist dictatorship. In 1953, workers had rebelled in Czechoslovakia and East Berlin, and in 1956 Poland erupted. Gomulka, the Polish Communist Party chief, was able to secure concessions from a reluctant Kremlin because it had the backing of the people. Those tried afterwards for their part in the rebellion received noticeably light sentences. These events in Poland gave the green light to the intellectual ferment in Budapest.

On October 23rd, a demonstration, mainly of students in Budapest, made several demands. Among these were a more equal relationship between Hungary and Russia, the running of the factories, the workers themselves, the removal of Rakosi (the then party leader) and free and secret elections. A delegation from this demonstration met with Kadar, the secretary of the Party, to demand that they be heard. Kadar refused. But the demonstration proceeded. The police tried to stop the demonstrators, and the students, workers and students decided to lighten the situation by a peaceful march to the Kremlin. And it was exactly this which gave Kadar a chance to explain that there would be no chance for a demonstration.

On October 30th the Red Army withdrew with assurances from Nagy, the new Hungarian leader, that they wouldn't be back. On November 4th, all the Hungarian workers were arrested, the barricades were cleared, and the revolutionaries were whipped out of the town. This was the beginning of the collapse of Hungary. Nagy was exiled, Rakosi was arrested, and the Kremlin was serious about crushing the revolution. Members of the workers' council committees were arrested, and workers generally strike called. The programme of the councils died, but they all had basic points in common: abolition of the AVO, withdrawal of Russian troops, political and civil liberties, workers management of industry, independent trade unions and freedom for all political parties. The工人运动 was a 'fascist counter-revolution'. However, resolutions from the free trade unions revealed that the workers understood that the bureaucracy was just another class of parasites, just as the capitalists had been before.

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However, trigger-happy secret policemen, the AVO, barred their way, and then machine gunned the crowd. After the massacre the workers armed themselves and the battle began. Anderson emphasises that the uprising was spontaneous. Given conditions in Hungary, it couldn't have been organised by a hierarchical party or group, because any leaders would have been picked off immediately. The workers relied on completely different methods of organisation. The lesson spelt out is that 'if revolutions organise like those... they seek to overthrow, they are defeated before battle is engaged'.

On October 24th, Russian tanks entered Budapest. The resistance of the workers and soldiers defeated them, and Anderson's book shows that the Hungarians didn't just fight with courage and heroism, but also with humanity. Many Russian troops fraternised with the revolutionaries, and some even deserted simultaneously, workers' councils were formed, and a bridge from the bridges over the Danube. Janos Kadar, the Kremlin's new puppet (Nagy had been abducted and executed in Romania), admitted the people do not always know what is good for them'. In this he was echoing Trotsky who had said the same in his battle with Stalin in 1921. Of the Kronstadt Soviet, Trotsky said they have come out with dangerous slogans! They have made a fetish of democratic principles! They have placed the worker's right to elect representatives above the Party'. As Marx said, the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself'. This statement is as true today as it was in 1921 or 1956. Hungary '56 is an inspiring picture of how the workers can emancipate themselves, and totally destroys the Leninist myth that workers left without a Party are only capable of a 'trade union ominonousness'.
The end of 1989 saw neo-Stalinist regimes in Central Europe fall one after the other under the pressure for reform from the people. Gorbachev came to power in 1985 with a programme (‘glasnost’ and ‘perestroika’) to reform the USSR in order to get the moribund economy moving. But in making peace reforms he opened the way for the slow but steady process of disintegration of the Russian empire. And it isn’t stopping at the USSR’s borders, as the events in the Baltic States and Transcaucasia show.

The popular movements in Central Europe which have thrown the Stalinist despots politically immature, not surprisingly after so many years of dictatorship. They tend to have illusions about Western-style parliamentary democracy (Though at least some of the activists in Eastern Germany, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria say they don’t want to exchange one form of oppression for another).

And of course, cast iron cold warriors like Thatcher in the West are busy making capital from the disintegration of the Russian empire. Another worrying development is the re-emergence of neo-nazi groups riding on the wave of German nationalist sentiment (calling for a united Germany with its pre-1939 borders, and even a chunk of Poland!).

But on the whole anarcho-syndicalists welcome the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the neo-Stalinist monolith. It opens up the way for what should be on the agenda East and West... Social Revolution.

At school in the ‘Free World’ we were taught that NATO was created to defend the West from the ‘communist’ hordes. They never told us that NATO was set up before the Warsaw Pact, and that the USSR tried at first to join NATO! Stalin wasn’t the only one responsible for the Iron Curtain coming down for 40 years. Churchill and Roosevelt had a lot to do with it. And now that the Warsaw Pact is crumbling before our eyes, what possible justification can there be for NATO and the obscene billions spent on armaments while half the world goes hungry?

The last flicker of the revolution was extinguished at the Kronstadt naval base in 1921, Lenin had called the Kronstadt sailors ‘the flower of the Revolution’. The last flicker of the revolution was extinguished at the Kronstadt naval base in 1921, the Kronstadt sailors ‘the flower of the Revolution’. Amidst all the euphoria surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall, why weren’t we also told about the failed ‘democratization’ demonstrator run down and killed by a police car in Florence (the newly ‘democratic’ Italy) at almost the same time? How many people know that in 1988 an anarchist demonstrator in Berlin had to scale the wall near the Brandenburg Gate and take refuge in East Berlin from a police charge?

Our rulers in the West are rubbing their hands with glee at the prospect of new markets and cheap labour in the East. But the collapse of the Russian empire opens up prospects for the international working class also. The Western Working class has been disarmed. When we agitate in the West no longer fought alongside, who are now getting ‘back to Russia’. And no longer will the authorities in the East be able to label dissidents as ‘Western agents’.

At the same time state socialism comes out of all this in an even more weakened state, with more than 70 years in the USSR and 45 years in her former Central European satellites, which failed to build a communist society what are the heirs of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin busy doing? Why they’re bringing back the very things the 1917 Russian Revolution sought to abolish, so-called ‘free enterprise’ (capitalism) and bourgeois democracy.

Some anarchists began to term the USSR as ‘State Capitalist’ rather than a ‘Workers State’ after Trotsky lost his power struggle with Stalin in the late 1920s. But back way in 1872 Mikhail Bakunin, a collaborator with Marx in the International Workingmen’s Association, and the father of anarchism and anti-Stalinism, warned what was the marxist programme of the dictatorship of the proletariat’ and a ‘state’ would lead to: ‘In reality it would be for the proletariat a barricade regime, where the standardized mass of men and women workers would wake, sleep, work, and live to the beat of a drum; For the clever and learned a privilege of governing; and for the mercenary minded, a vast field of lucrative jobbery’.

In 1917 the Russian anarchists took an active part in the Revolution, which then collapsed in 1918 by the Bolsheviks they’d fought against. Today they are new busy liquidating opposition on the Left and building their ‘workers state’.

In the Ukraine of the Ukraine the anarchist peasant Nestor Makhno gave his name to a movement, the Makhnovtchina, which between 1918 and 1921 fought successive White armies and Trotsky’s Reds as it defended the free commons and the free organs of the workers’ councils. The Bolsheviks made an alliance with the Makhnovtchina three times in 1918 to defeat invading White armies, and each time turned on the Makhnovtchina once the Whites had been seen off. Lenin and Trotsky could not allow the experiment of a communist free of the dictatorship of the party.

The Stalinist states of Eastern Europe are in crisis, and their ruling classes are in a terminal panic. From the Baltic to the Balkans, it seems that the Bolshevik Empire is at last breaking up under the onslaught of People’s Power that has been building up for so long. In Hungary, Poland and even a chunk of Czechoslovakia China and Germany regard independent radical workers unions such as SMOT (Russia), Fighting Solidarosc in Poland, Munkszolidarist in Hungary, and the Non-Aligned Workers Union of China.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the situation is very fluid and changeable, but it is sufficient to note that an action campaign is to be organised in response to the situation in Russia and China. This has already been launched, but action will intensify in the new year.

Towards the 1990s! Towards a new Era!

JCB

ON TOUR

In late April, the DAM will be organizing a tour of Britain by an Anarchist-syndicalist from East Berlin. Obviously, something of this nature does not come cheap, therefore it would be appreciated if comrades could send us things to help cover the cost of the tour and air fares. For more information and sending donations write to: DAM International Secretary, PO Box 122, Doncaster, DN4 7AT. Please make all cheques payable to International Solidarity Fund.
INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY
Part 2 - Rank and Filism

The DAM was set up in 1979 out of what was then a chaotic anarchistic movement made up of tiny regionally-based groups. In fact, one of the main reasons the DAM was formed was because people did see the need for a national organisation. Since then, the DAM has changed radically, not only becoming more democratic but far more sophisticated with a fairly worked out Anarcho-syndicalist theory. But as Anarcho-syndicalists it is honest with ourselves and try to build an organisation which is not only revolutionary but is rooted in the day-to-day struggles of our class, i.e., an organisation which is both economic and political. The problem facing us is that the DAM only acts as a political organisation.

In the past, many saw the solution to this problem in building a Rank and File type organisation. Indeed, there were a number of movements calling for Rank and Files at the last conference. Of course, this is not surprising, as Rank and Files do have a number of attractions to Anarcho-syndicalists. They are more democratic, seek to cut across sectional interest and often argue for direct action. But because of the way they have operated in the past and their relationship to reformist trade unions we must question if they do offer us a way forward.

Rank and Files have appeared in different forms - the National Minority Movement, Broad Left and the National Rank and File Movement. Some have been a bad joke for a few though at various times they have been able to mobilise ordi- nary workers, Rank and Files have been dominated by Marxist sects, the political outlook of the sect reflecting the way a particular Rank and File operated. For example, the Militant run Broad Left seek to get support for their candidates in local union elections. Rank and Files of the 70's did see the need to organise independently of the union bureaucracy. Of course, they all saw Rank and Files not only as recruiting grounds but as a way of increasing their influence on the union. This followed from the traditional ideas in theory, that the unions were the place where workers organised at an economic level, whilst the more advanced would wish to organise on a political level and join their organisation.

Though the 'electoral machine' approach of the Broad Left was rejected out of hand by anarcho-syndicalists, it was the Rank and Files of the seventies that DAM members saw as model, flawed as they were, of organisations which could be adapted towards an anarcho- syndicalist perspective. The SWP's structuring their constant attacks on mistrust of the union bureaucracy, and the fact that the SWP had, at the time, constant worries that they would begin to take on a syndicalist life of their own, were all put forward in their favour. It is for this reason that we would like to look at the Rank and Files of the 70's in some detail.

The National Rank and File movement was set up in 1973 by the International Socialists (now the SWP). Two conferences were organised to attract union members, around 500 people. A number of delegates were from small Rank and Files which had recently been set up in several industries. The conference never got past being rallies, with the various political factions all attempting to win delegates for each other. The two most established Rank and Files at the time were the electricians and building workers based around the papers Flashlight and Building Worker Charter. Both were Communist Party dominated and so boycotted the conferences. In fact, the conferences were attacked on the front page of the Morning Star. Yet the NRFM never functioned as a national organisation and was dropped by the IS SWP.

While it is true to say that the NRFM failed, many based on individual industries and unions were highly successful, lasting somewhere between the union bureaucracy and the workplace. They also played a negative role. By completely arguing for changes to the union structure, the need to make branches more democratic and the need for the leadership to be more accountable etc., they not only offered false hope but channelled energy and discontent away from the real problems, the Social Demo- cratic nature of reformist unions.

Perhaps if we look at one Rank and File group in more detail, we can illustrate better some of the points already raised. The group we would like to use is NALGO Action Group (NAG), not only because it was of their paper, for example, where three main articles consisted of one arguing for the need for a revolution, another one for the need to support reform of the Labour Party, and a third one for the need to join the T&G. With political differences kept to a minimum, NAG was free to get on with the job of reforming the union. They had plenty of success, with many of the things NAG campaigned for now being part of the NALGO structure. But at the end of the day, we must ask if all the hard work put in by NALGO members and the victories they gained made NALGO any more democratic, let alone anarcho-syndicalist in perspective. The answer must be no. The net result of ten years
OUT OF PRINT

A few years ago the national newspaper printers were in retreat. The "custom and practice" of Fleet Street was smashed by combinations of technological change, political repression and business cunning that took advantage of relocation to utilise both in order to smash national newspaper unionism.

In 1926, this section of unionism, traditionally among the best organised and best paid, was smashed utterly. Their refusal to print an issue of the Daily Mail, violently assaulting the mailers because of their call for a general strike, was taken by Rothermere as a threat by the workers to take over and to use to say what should be printed, and by the government as the through years of hardship owing to the depression. But the nature of daily newspapers, which cannot be sold the day after production, made even minor strikes a major menace to capitalist profit. As in most cases newspaper production was a springboard to profits outside the printing office, capitalist accepted as a fact of life to lose a few pounds on the swings (the ability, a sacrifice the bosses willingly made.

There is no longer a Beaverbrook to win a bet by helping his side to lose. But the situation of powerlessness will not last. Gradually the tycoons are being forced by the workers all around, despite the fact that production has changed. Some management are finding that having cut staffing to the bone, they are now short of labour to bring their products out. Since technological change has enabled more papers to be brought out, hundreds made redundant are now drifting back.

People who came into the industry for new styles of work are now organising, though the print chapels are no longer as powerful as they used to be.

The old chapels were built up on a spirit of confrontation and solidarity, but because of their official links with the labour movement generally fell prey to political negotiation (relying on parliamentary intervention) rather than industrial negotiation where the strength lay.

A fresh start is being made in the new areas, if not in print generally. Let's hope this new start will recognise that its strength lies in its own muscle, not in agreeing to go the way of conventional trade unionism. That way, history will repeat itself and the workers would also be in a position to do in reality what gave Rothermere his 1926 nightmare: be able to take over.

POLITICAL DEMO

Middlesbrough Against the Poll Tax will be having a march and rally in Middlesbrough on March 24th against the Poll Tax. Assembly at 11am at the Grantham, rally at Central Gardens.

IN DA 64 we will conclude this mini-series on the DAM's Industrial Strategy with our policy on Industrial Networks, our solution to the inadequacies of Rank and File.

The other approach we could use is by seeking to inject politics into the Rank and File. This, again, would present us with a number of problems. Firstly, as already mentioned, when political differences are raised the result, all too often, is meetings and a paper consisting of arguments and in-fighting, with time wasted and energy spent on trying to out-do other factions. If this does not result in the Rank and File falling apart, it would just end in them being seen as sectarian battle grounds, which would put people off.

The second danger for us is that the various Marxists, all of whom only see Rank and File as non-political bodies, would unite around that platform, leaving us in a minority. But before people start having visions of bold DAM members bantling it out with the Trots, let us ask how it will look when these Rank and File people reach out to workers, especially around disputes. The pressure on them there will come from the boss by raising differences, and at best we will again be reduced to trying to sell the paper etc., to militants involved in the dispute. Of course, we could form or enter into Rank and File and win the arguments, even ending with an Anarchist-syndicalist organisation, but why bother? Do we really see that the best approach is entering into pacts with Marxists, converting them to our beliefs? The answer is no. We have an Anarchist-syndicalist presence in the workplace.

How, then, do we proceed? First, there is much to learn from Rank and File of the past, and surely any future Anarchist-syndicalist organisation of the future must pass through the Rank and File stage. But if that organisation is not based on clear Anarchist-syndicalist beliefs it will be doomed to be nothing more than a militant body, at best working around disputes, at worst an ineffective shadow of the unions, with a tendency to stagnate when there are no disputes going on. And there is the rub. For too long we have gone around in a circle under the belief that countless numbers of militants who have already rejected Marxist and reformist politics are just waiting to bump into Anarchist-syndicalism. A bit like getting God. Of course, this is not the case: there is plenty of disconcerting evidence that not only is there no alternative the Marxists will. We are not going to put our policies in any clear way by entering into Rank and File groups. The way ahead must lie in establishing networks both in the community and workplace, backed by our organisations, to enable the day-to-day struggle with revolutary politics. Only after these are established can we move to a genuine Rank and File based on networks which would be the embryo of a future anarcho-syndicalist union.

As this has been pinioned (even if we are called "anarchist") the above is not meant to be a personal attack on any individual or organisation. It is meant as a general statement on how we see the future of the union in our workplaces.

In any case, the cogs of the wheel of scientific socialism were cut to the bone; activists were blacklisted. How the proprietors rejoiced! Almost all followed Rothermere’s "bold lead". But not all. Lord Beaverbrook went round quietly picking up all the skilled staff for even higher wages than they had before and cornered the market on an unskilled staff well paid. The following when within a few months the effect became apparent.

The accepted wisdom that proprietors ‘gave work’ to workers for which they should be grateful and that they needed the capitalist but the boss did not need them, was seen as bullshit. The union went in another way. The most ruthless employers in the land, who incurred other capitalists on the need for toughness, had to go into the market and try and outbid for staff, and within a few years the workers weren’t just back where they had been, they were considered in advance both as regards wage levels and industrial muscle. This did not apply to other workers, the miners for instance, who, went national press) and gained a fortune on the roundabouts (the products they boosted, television, publishing, political power, contracts they influenced). Some, like the coca-cola Quaker Cadbury family, gave up their Liberal organs the News Chronicle and the Staur, with enormous advantages, to concentrate on the fortunes coming their way from the book publishing and TV sides.

Others carried on with newspapers, i.e. the means to manufacture public opinion, as an end in itself. It was left to a new wave of tycoons, for the most part from outside the traditional industry — first of all Eddie Shah, who fell by the wayside corporately but with huge personal financial betterment, and then Rupert Murdoch — to take advantage of the new technology and smash the print unions, and make national newspapers profitable in themselves once again (they were already making a profit even without advertising, but they still have it as well).

As in 1926 hundreds have been put outside the industry, hundreds have been blacklisted, hundreds have had wages cut or stabilised, hundreds more, enticed to redundancy or pensions, have had their stolen at the price to pay for this profit-
MANACLED MUTINEERS?

The struggle against discrimination and for national liberation in Ireland is entering its fourth decade. As retrospective looks at the ’80s are used to consign them to the past and to look forward to the Euro-’90s, even older ghosts are returning to haunt British imperialism.

Back in November ’Peter Brooke, British direct ruler of the North of Ireland, made it clear that the IRA could not be defeated militarily, and hinted that the United States and other organisations which the British state might negotiate with the Republican Movement. Although he stressed the old chestnut of talks before negotiation, and an unilateral renunciation of violence by the Republicans, he pointed to Cyprus as an example of a political declaration that the British would never talk to the EOKA nationalist guerrillas, and then have to eat his words one year later.

In justifying his statement by reference to Cyprus Brooke has displayed a rare piece of honesty. He has, in effect, admitted that the war in Ireland is, as far as the British state is concerned, a holding operation. He has also put it in its proper context of the longer process of decolonisation of the British Empire, and in doing so conceded that even in Ireland today’s terrorist is going to become tomorrow’s statesman at some stage in the future. The shit promptly hit the fan.

None of the reactions were particularly surprising. The Unionists were livid, the 26 County establishment and the SDLF (the Catholic minority party in the Six Counties) welcomed the statement and called for the IRA (unilaterally) declare a cease-fire.

Opportunism was also the order of the day for the British Labour Party (Smith/MacDowel). They used it as an opportunity to attack the government and curry favour with the Tory back benchers and the Unionists. He wanted Brooke to go farther. It is clear that no-one can force their way to the conference table by violence, or threat of violence. Hardly surprising that Norman Tebbit is scared that a soft line on immigration from Hong Kong will deliver the racist vote the Tories have up to now been working hard to undermine Labour and Labour’s base of support.

Rather than drawing the obvious conclusion that thousands of lives have been wasted in a war the British state knows it cannot win, and that it should declare its intent to withdraw, the politicians used Brooke’s statement to attempt to undermine the Republicans’ base of support.

Criticism intensified as the IRA prepared to launch the anti-state campaign, and cannot be defeated. On 18th November three paratroopers were killed at Castlebridge Down when their armoured Landrover was ambushed by the IRA. On 26th November a 1,200lb mine. A fourth occupant of the vehicle was seriously injured, and those of the second Landrover also sustained blast injuries.

IT KEEPS THEM OCCUPIED

on the Fermanagh/Monaghan border. An RPG’ rocket launcher, a flamethrower, two General Purpose Machine-guns, assault rifles and grenades were used to take out three watchtowers and clear the yard of the barracks. The IRA then called on the Parachute Commandos to join them, but received no reply. The van bomb was driven into position, and the IRA withdrew without suffering any casualties despite coming under fire from surrounding fields. A Wessex helicopter carrying reinforcements was also driven off. Two British soldiers were killed and another two injured, one critically, in the attack, but the barracks was not completely destroyed as some of the explosives failed to detonate.

The effect attacks like these have had on British army morale and recruitment is becoming increasingly clear. Two programmes on BBC’s Inside Out had details leaked to The Observer when their transmission was delayed. The programmes showed interviews, one with officers and another with ‘other ranks’, of members of the 1st Light Infantry after the August 1985 coach bombing at Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone, in which eight of their number died.

The programme not only showed the shattered morale of the soldiers, but also highlighted the class tensions in the army. After Ballygawley Major Ron Berry claimed that despite his great loss to the 1st Battalion, the spirit of the regiment is first class1. The squaddies tell it differently.

One survivor, suffering from shock, was told ‘You can’t have sick leave because we haven’t got sick pay’. The soldiers were not allowed a period of grief, were refused permission to attend the funerals, and sent straight to South Armagh, one of the most hostile areas possible. The result of this treatment was mutiny, with ‘other ranks’ refusing to obey officers’ orders for two days.

The bombing also had longer term consequences. Two suicides were committed, and there was a rash of deaths and voluntary separations from the 1st Battalion. The August 1985 coach bombing at Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone, in which eight of their number died.

The IRA was not the only organisation that was under attack. The British state was also coming under attack. In the same period financial and moral problems increased by 10%, and alcohol abuse almost doubled.

This is a direct result of IRA targeting, and recruitment is not making up for the high turnover. MOD and other sources of the apparatus of state repression are experiencing a serious and significant loss of manpower for the uniformed population, and this staffing crisis would suggest we can expect a crisis of morale among that community. It is hardly surprising that there were 100,000 replies to the 300,000 unionists predicted by Orange Order leader Martin Smythe turned out to protest at the 40th Anniversary of the Hillsborough Agreement in November.

The British government will one day sit down with the Republican Movement to negotiate a cease-fire and phased military and then civilian withdrawal. The shattered morale and falling recruitment figures of both the British army and the civilian community suggests that the war machine would suggest that the end is not far from sight. Since Brooke admitted this the British state cannot escape responsibility for the deaths of the people of this colony.

It is the duty of anti-imperialists to hasten that end by publicly articulating the realities of war in Ireland in the face of the constant stream of fanciful propaganda in the British press about IRA setbacks. We should not take the liberal line of wanting to save ‘our boys’ from a situation that we ‘— ie, the state — have created in the first place. Mutiny among the ranks of the military should be replaced by mutiny against fighting in Ireland.

The nature of the Army, in which working class squaddies are abused by upper class officers, is inherently anti- working class. Nationalist violence and inter- community rivalry among squaddies bear a close resemblance to the football hooliganism. Socialist politicians are swift to condemn. Nationalist violence and inter community rivalry among squaddies should have to die in a war we don’t understand.

While the anti-unionist community in the Six Counties have grown strong from 1972, two decades of resistance, the effects in British society can be summed up in the words of the mother of Gunner Robert Curtis, the first British soldier to be killed by the IRA in 1971: “After 20 years soldiers are still being killed. It seems pointless. Nothing’s changed”.

O’NEILL

armed struggle must continue until apartheid is completely dismantled, which was hardly criticised by the BBC at all.

What was more interesting, however, was the news item that followed. A British Army helicopter had been shot at (the British army has not admitted that it was in fact shot down) in “Northern Ireland” injuring three of the soldiers on board (one with serious gunshot wounds). Who could have shot at this aircraft? In fact, it was a brave, courageous freedom fighter; trying to hinder the occupation forces of his country. No, in fact it was blown up, according to the BBC, by the ‘terrorist’ IRA. It’s good to see a bit of impartial reporting now and again isn’t it?

The Public Transport Corporation and the Government could not tolerate this and promptly turned off the electricity supply, immobilising the trains. However, before this happened, train drivers had run all the trains into the centre of Melbourne, causing several blockages. Ten days later they were still there.

In response to this action the workers requested the train depots and set up strike committees and support groups. As we go to press (beginning of March) we hear that the strike is over, but that financial help is still needed. Send international money orders, etc., to: The Delegate, Brunswick Train Depot, Sydney Road, Brunswick, 3056, Victoria, Australia.
STRONG CONVICTIONS

The case of the Winchester Three — Finbarr Cullen, Martina Shanahan and John McCann — differs from those frame-ups of innocent Irish people, such as that of the Birmingham Six, which are presently under greater scrutiny as a result of the release of the Guildford Four. Unlike previous cases there was no IRA operation to fit them up for, no guns or explosives, and no confessions beaten out of them like in '74.

One of the charges against them set new standards of absurdity — 'conspiracy... with persons unknown' to murder persons unknown? At the committal proceedings in March 1988 (six months after their arrest) the Magistrate at Limerick had doubts about both this and the 'conspiracy... to murder Tom King' charge. Despite his comments about the lack of prosecution evidence, however, he committed the Three for trial for the second charge. The prosecution was later allowed to resurrect the 'persons unknown' charge without submitting any further evidence (ie any at all).

'gang', and creating the impression that guns and explosives, and evidence of an IRA 'plot', had all been uncovered. The SAS are the only people who are not to be tried by media, it seems.

The trial itself was held in Winchester, a garrison town where seven regiments which have served, and suffered casualties, in Ireland are based. This was hardly conducive to a fair trial. It opened on October 6th 1988, and its second week coincided with the Tory Party conference at Brighton, amid the publicity surrounding the remain silent, but Tom King, their alleged target, chose to call a press conference to announce withdrawal of the right to silence in the Six Counties — inferring that he believes both the operation and guilt — during the trial.

In spite of all this, the jury, which had been vetted by Special Branch to eradicate any sympathies with the defendants, found it extremely difficult to reach a verdict. A ten to two verdict of guilty on both charges for all three was only reached when the judge virtually instructed the jurors to do so. They received 25 years sentences.

In the absence of the hysteria created by the Guildford, Woolwich and Birmingham tragedies in 1974, when anti-Irish feeling ran very high indeed, such an atmosphere has been 'created' by the state and the press. Instead of being able to behave and fabricate confessions to actual IRA action from innocent Irish people, they have had to whip up an atmosphere of extreme British nationalism, and use show trials relying on the assumption by the public that there must be some justification for all this trouble and expense.

The purpose is the same — to cow the community and seize hostages for their good behaviour, and that of the IRA — but the implications are far more serious. 'New' evidence can no longer be found to refute 'evidence' that never existed in the first place. A frame-up machine like the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad can not be exposed. Nothing short of the exposure of the entire state/ media conspiracy, with the absence of any damage-limitation possibilities to induce another Guildford Four-style release, will get these three innocent people out of jail.

That might seem an impossible task, but it is under way. Clearly the state has learnt from the collapse of the Guildford Four-frame-up, and must act. These show trials are also useful to the British state as a way of promoting its anti-nationalist ideology, the key source of its legitimation. As the collapse of the Guildford Four-frame-up, and the usefulness of cold warmering, 'the enemy within' in the shape of the Irish community and 'terrorism' has become its chief target.

The Winchester frame-up must be exposed, and the pressure from the working class, Irish or not, necessary to do so must be built. 'British justice' would have a hard time claiming the trials are the work of the Winchester Three proves that it exists.

F.O'Neil

The Winchester Three Campaign can be contacted for further info: c/o Grass Roots, 1 Newton Street, Manchester 1.

VNU STRIKE

At the end of November last year 98 men and women employed by VNU Publications Ltd., (computer and accountancy publications) in London went on strike for refusing to accept individual contracts instead of the normal union negotiated terms of the past. In recent months some of the publishing industry bosses have been trying to erode the role of the unions in relations with other industries. The erosion has been more subtle than in other industries, with contracts being allowed, but shifting negotiations from the union to the individual, as News International intend to do with journalists at the News of the World and The Sun (although rumour has it that the journalists at the Sun intend to take action against this — somewhat ironic after Wapping).

As we go to press (mid-February) the original strikers have returned to work, with little change in management intent to organise a 'buyout' of the workers. VNU have been badly hit by the action, having to draft in scare freelancers and lift editorial and news items from similar publications in the United States.

The NUJ have advertised in various journalistic papers asking journalists not to work for VNU and to support the strike action. As a result of this the two largest recruitment agencies in the publishing world, Media Network and Price Samuelson, have refused to handle recruitment for VNU.

The strike is still going strong with pickets outside VNU House, Broadway Street, W1A, and contracts being burnt in public. More info as we get it.

POLAND

There has been a lively anarchist scene in Poland for several years. In October 1988 the Polish Anarchist Federation (Miedzyziatowka Anarchystyczna) was established. By any standards it is a big problem — printing. The anarchist press in Poland is badly produced and irregular. This is not a reflection of the actual strength of the libertarian movement, but is due to the fact that access to printing facilities is limited. There are only two state printing offices and the printing presses owned by the Catholic, pro-capitalist opposition, and neither are particularly interested in furthering the anarchist cause! An appeal was launched in 1988 to purchase a press for the MA, but it came to a standstill due to the difficulties of importing printing machinery into Poland. This problem no longer exists, and the appeal has been relaunched. The international anarchist movement has an opportunity to support the Polish anarchist movement at a crucial time in its history. Send donations to the account: CCP Rev 30644 G, Nantes Cheques, 44000 Nantes, France. Or money orders can be sent to the MA representative in France, who can also pass on further information: Marcin Rey, c/o Christian Veron, 6 Rue de Hauts Paves, 44400 Nantes, France.

FLINT

The Metalworkers' Union has won a strike at the Rautaruukki metal factory in Finland that had South African manganese being processed at the plant. The trade and Norway against boycott decisions and decided to take action against the action against the political interests and bosses were not interested in the apartheid regime in South Africa, so the union took industrial action to force bosses to stop using South African manganese.

The union banned manganese and so it was not removed from the harbour, forcing the Rautaruukki management to back down.

Workers are the only force that can control the boycott against the apartheid regime. The bosses won't do it, politicians neither. This is a fact proved time and time again.

Nurses are getting angry in Finland, especially in Helsinki. There are more and more patients and less equipment to handle the growing number of patients. The wages are low and so young people are not interested in working in hospitals. But the nurses demanded on a one-day strike demanding extra pay for living in the capital, where the cost of living is much higher than other parts of the country. Over 20,000 workers went on strike.

The council authorities said that it wasn't possible to give extra pay, because they couldn't afford it. There may be a big strike as a result of this in the near future.

Source: SAL, IWA support group, Finland.

PITTSTON

As we go to press, the Pittston Miners' Strike (see DA 61, The Pitts) in West Virginia, USA seems set to end.

In January a tentative agreement was reached, containing both the immediate concerns of the company and the company's right to subcontract out a press. Concessions to the strikers include pay increases and bonus agreements. The exact terms of the agreement have not been released yet as, under US law, agreements must be balloted over beforehand.

The agreement has not been put to the members yet as the details are too complex. The heavy fines (several thousand dollars) lifted. Also delaying things is the fact that both the miners' union and the company have unresolved charges from the National Labour Relations Board. More info next issue.
London-based Irishman Nick Mullen is set to become the latest victim of the discreted concept of British justice when he stands trial on April 25th. Mullen is charged with conspiring to cause explosives and aiding a crime under the 1993 Explosives Act. The charges are allegedly in connection with the arms and explosives found in a South London flat on December 21st 1998.

A few days after this discovery a warrant was obtained for the arrest of 16 people under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The lengths of detention ranged from 12 hours to seven days.

During this time Mullen was held in Harare airport in Zimbabwe with his former wife and daughter. The holiday was terminated with a dawn raid by armed police who arrested Mullen and told him he was to be deported. When Mullen asked why he was told he had overstayed his visa. Mullen then produced a letter entitling him to temporary resident status but this was taken from him and he was told that he wasn’t being deported, but that he had to leave the country anyway.

Eventually he was driven to Harare airport and forced to board a flight in complete ignorance of any charges.

On arrival at Gatwick airport Mullen was met by Special Branch police and held for seven days before being charged. Shortly after he was charged, an orchestrated campaign was mounted against him in the media. Articles appeared alleging that the house he co-owns in Harare was being used by an IRA safe house, that Mullen was party to a plot to execute three Irish government ministers and to bomb Zimbabwe, and in the meantime, that Mullen was party to a plot to assassinate King Bhumibol of Thailand.

The articles were all attributed to "reliable sources". Clearly no one was trying to give the impression that Mullen was actually involved in any activity. The aim was to create a climate of opinion that Mullen was guilty even before standing trial.

The state has substantially increased its chances of securing a conviction by charging Mullen with conspiracy charges that need no substantial evidence to prove. (see Winchester Three article).

When Mullen stands trial on April 25th he will be sentenced, 15 months in jail on charges to which he has pleaded not guilty—hardly consistent with the state’s claim, that everybody is innocent until proven guilty.

Nick Mullen’s trial will be a political trial intended to serve as a warning to the Irish community in Britain. The Nick Mullen Defence Campaign was initiated by friends of Mullen and is supported by many organisations which share his concern that he is to be the subject of another frame up.

It is our intention to thwart the British state in its efforts to convict another innocent Irish person and stop the show trials. In the words of Nick Mullen’s "Guildford Four, Birmingham Six, Maguire Family— and how many more, present and future?" The answer must be none.

DMDC

Plymouth Black Cross has recently set up to help class struggle prisoners, and to start with has produced leaflets and stickers giving out information and helping to support prisoners. There are currently about fifteen ABC groups in Britain as well as ABC’s in Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Greece, Canada, USA and Australia. For more information plus a complete ABC address list and SAE (with a donation if possible) to Plymouth Anarchist Black Cross, Box 105, Plymouth, Devon.

The AIMs and Principles

1. The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.
2. Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.
3. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery by self-managed production for needs, 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 vanguard of the working class.
5. We believe that the only way for the working class to deliver this is by independent organisation in the factories and workplaces, the workplace committee and federation with others in the same sector and locality independent of and opposed to all political and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers organisations must be controlled by the workers themselves and must not, rather than divide the workers’ movement. Any and all such delegates of such workers organisations must be subject to immediate democratic control. The working class has no country, the class struggle transcends national boundaries and recognises no artificial boundaries. The workers movement must not exist to protect the workers of the so-called "free world" but must fight the repressive arm of the ruling class.
6. We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all other organisations which stand in the way of the common struggle of all workers everywhere to control their own lives and surroundings.
7. The Direct Action Movement is resolved to international unity and wholeheartedly support the creation of workers based organisations throughout the world.
8. The Direct Action Movement is an anti-racist organisation. Individuals who believe in the principles of anarchism-syndicalism are welcome to join us wherever the workers alone control industry and commerce without the dictates of politicians, reactionaries, bosses and so-called experts.

The Daily Mail was founded in 1789 from the SFW Syndicalist Workers Federation (SWF), the Irish Volunteer Movement, and the British Syndicalist Workers Federation (BSWF). The British Syndicalist Workers Federation formed from the Irish Volunteer Movement. Enquiries for bulk orders should be addressed to: The Daily Mail, Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to: The Daily Mail. This is a daily newspaper. For a copy of its daily newsletter send an SAE, preferably with a donation if possible, to: AK Press, 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling, Scotland, FK8 2RD.

The Dam was formed in 1979 from the BWF Syndicalist Workers Federation. It is the British Section of the International Federation of Independent Anarchist-Syndicalist Workers' Federations, the Union Internationale des Syndicats Anarchistes-Syndicaux (UISAS). The Dam is also a member of the International Alliance of Revolutionary Trade Unions (IARTU), the International Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (ICRTU) and the International Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of the World (ICRUTW).

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The prison staff at Frankland Jail are determined to deny Martin Foran the medical attention he needs for his infected colostomy wound, whilst at the same time disrupting his chances of medical treatment from outside surgeons. Moreover, the investigation into his 1985 conviction for robbery and conspiracy to rob has been hindered by officers from the West Midlands police destroying material relating to his initial arrest.

The authorities at Frankland have deliberately misled the Home Office concerning the state of Martin’s physical condition, this is in fact nothing new. The authorities have also denied that the attack on Martin which took place on June 30th 1986 at Walton Jail happened. Yet on April 4th 1989, when Ken Livingstone asked the Attorney General if criminal charges would be brought against Martin’s attackers, who were members of the medical staff at Walton, he replied that ‘in the civil proceedings to which Hon. Member refers the action was stayed upon terms that £750 be paid to the plaintiff’.

If the prison is to be believed, the courts are handing out taxpayers’ money for non-existent incidents. The prison seems anxious to disguise the fact that Martin was viciously assaulted by members of staff while he was trying to recuperate from an operation, and that the resultant infection has led to Martin’s present difficulties.

Recently officers from West Yorks, police have been investigating Martin’s arrests and convictions, examining both the 1985 and 1978 cases. When Martin was arrested on September 10th 1984 his time of arrest (2pm) was altered to 10pm by officers who were trying to fabricate evidence to aid the prosecution case. Officers investigating the case now admit that it would have been physically impossible for Martin to have carried out the sequence of events on that day maintained by the prosecution.

Birmingham lawyer Mark Phillips sought the original prisoners in custody sheet from Bradford Street police station, so that forensic tests could be carried out on it. Officers investigating Martin’s case asked to see this document, but were only given a half size photocopy with red blacked edges missing. Now Mark Phillips has been informed that the original document has been destroyed.

The officer at the centre of the 1978 case, Detective Inspector Paul Matthews, went ‘missing’ from the 1978 police, Father of the Serious Crimes Squad. This elite police unit has always been silent about this officer, who rose through its ranks and then disappeared. Chris Mullan MP has received a written reply from the Home Office that Matthews was required to resign on September 23rd 1986 following disciplinary proceedings which found him guilty of failing to obey lawful orders. As well as fabricating the evidence which led to Martin’s conviction for ‘robbery and conspiracy to rob’ in May 1985, Matthews fabricated the ‘confession’ of Paddy Hill, one of the Birmingham Six, in 1974 while a detective constable.

When inquiries commenced into other cases related to the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad last summer, it transpired that other key documents had gone missing. Martin has been informed by officers from West Yorkshire that the next step in their investigation will probably be to interview all witnesses. It will be interesting to see if they are able to find the whereabouts of ex-DI Matthews.

Martin has now completed the sentence imposed on him in 1985, and is serving a second one for his conviction of ‘false imprisonment of a warder’ in November 1987. This concerned an incident in April 1986 when Martin held a screw hostage to highlight his neglected medical condition. On November 30th Martin resorted to a hunger strike for the same reasons, which he soon ended, although he still claims that he is not receiving treatment for his colostomy, and is still persisting with a case of ‘negligence’.

Martin is having to resort to this kind of pressure in spite of the fact that it is now clear that he was not guilty when he was convicted in the first place.

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Our Spanish comrades in the CNT-APT can take no direct action to force the Ministry of Labour to return the union’s "historic patrimony". That is the assets lost by the union after the victory of fascists in 1939, which the "democratic" state pretends it intends to return to the unions in proportion to their size and influence at the time of seizure. Since it includes callings and large sums of money, the refusal to return it to a union is a significant limitation on its ability to operate. The reformist UGT, linked to the Socialist Party, has had no problems, but the state does not want to return assets to the revolutionaryCNT-APT, the larger of the two unions in 1936-

Repealed court decisions have ruled in favour of the CNT-APT, despite the excuse of the phoney "CNT", now renamed the CGT, used to delay action on these decisions. Unsurprisingly, the revolutionary CNT-APT is being discriminated against. The CGT, which has no history, and no influence in the workplace, relying on its "official" network of "works committees" not union membership, has been given premises by the state. The continued discrimination against the CNT-APT merely demonstrates the futility of eight years of prolonged action through the courts.

Over the summer months the CNT-APT has been occupying premises in different parts of Spain, and also occupying the Ministry of Labour. On October 5th 1989 simultaneous actions and occupations took place in Seville, Cordoba, La Coruña, Bilbao, Alicante, Oviedo, Murcia, Barcelona and Gijon. An attempt to occupy the Ministry of Labour in Madrid was prevented by the Civil Guard, whose action in denying CNT members access was technically illegal. CNT members were arrested in La Coruna and Granada. The state will grant nothing to revolutionaries on the basis of its laws, they will have to take it.

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We’re hearing a lot these days about the historic events in East Germany. A recent episode in West Germany, in which the police killed an anti-fascist hasn’t been widely publicised through...

The police in Göttingen (Lower Saxony) had for a long time been waiting for an opportunity to get back into the lively anti-fascist movement which has developed there in recent years. For some time they had been taking advantage of skirmishes between neo-nazi skinheads and anarchists in order to attack the anarchists.

On the night of 17th Novemeber anti-fascists saw off a nazi provocation. Then as usual the police arrived on the scene to make mass arrests, and dish out the usual beatings no doubt. As the comrades tried to escape the police chased on foot and in vehicles. One of the cars that mounted the pavement ran down and killed a comrade called Cornelia, known as Corny to everyone who went to the movement’s pub where she worked.

In a mood of anger comrades staged a vigil on the corner where she was killed. On the night of November 20th the police attacked the vigil in force. After bitter clashes about twenty arrests were made.

At this point it got too much even for public opinion and the Interior Minister of Lower Saxony intervened to restrain the police and re-establish a semblance of legality. An inquiry into the police conduct has been launched. In the meantime a 24 year old comrade has been killed.

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