



DIRECT ACTION

THE VOICE OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

Paper of the Direct Action Movement - International Workers Association

IWA

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CLASSLESS SOCIETY

Direct Action is the newspaper
of the Direct Action Movement,
British Section of the
International Workers Association,
which has sections in France,
Spain, Italy, Norway, Germany,
Japan, Australia, Argentina,
Brazil, U.S.A. and Finland.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Teacher: "You should have been here at 9 o'clock"
Student: "Why, what happened?"

Traditionally education in European culture has taken the form of a 'did you know?' book. Intelligence has been seen as having the ability to memorise endless lists of facts and figures to be repeated parrot fashion on command. The ideas you want to communicate are seen as secondary to how well they're spelt.

"They hate you if you're clever and they despise a fool"

Using my own experience of school as an example, at school I could have memorised every king and queen England ever had, but I found there were better written and more interesting fairy tales that demanded my attention. How can you expect children to develop an interest in history when it's presented as being as interesting as a dry cream cracker, when a limited number of historical figures are viewed in isolation from the societies that created them?

Even apart from the verbal/analytical areas of traditional education other areas of intelligence are still presented in a very stifled atmosphere. In the arts, correctness has become of primary importance and expression and creativity are only permitted within certain parameters. What should be the most open forms of communication are turned into little more than painting by numbers kits where the

status quo has the authority to decide what is "right" and what is "wrong".

It is said that school prepares you for the outside world. That may be true. What we then have to look at is what sort of world we are preparing our children for. It's all very well for the ruling class if we're working in shit jobs for the best part of our lives and we accept the authority of history that the stuff of kings and queens is not for us. It's not so good for them when the true authority of history shouts that those shits could never have existed without us.

The education our children suffer at the moment reflects the society they have been born into. Power not only comes from the barrel of a gun. It comes from people, from knowledge and from the human ability to adapt and evolve through struggle, art, science and the innate creative hunger to push forward the barriers of human experience.

At a time when trends in education are moving it to the most reactionary position it has been in for some 30 years it is the responsibility of socialists to fight for more than the degradation of tests and acceptance of the status quo being dished out in today's schools.

It's time to stop education being a barrage of etiquette and conformity and look at it as a vehicle to explore ideas and creativity.

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

In response to the letter published in DA77 from Alan Robertson which supports the IRA and Irish Nationalism.....

Nationalism has nothing to offer the working class except division and defeat. As we watch what used to be the USSR and Yugoslavia collapse into a bloody chaos of Nationalist and religious conflict what could be clearer?

We are told that we must "take Sides in the Irish war". Perhaps AR is one of those who also thinks we should have "taken sides" in the Gulf war and supported the fascist regime in Iraq. Perhaps we should also "take sides" in what was Yugoslavia, select one of the competing Nationalist butchers and cheer them on from the sidelines.....

AR tells us that we must give our political support to "Irish revolutionaries fighting for a 32 counties workers Republic". And what if the IRA wins its war of National Liberation and establishes its "32 counties workers republic" (read: State). Will he then support it and its cops, its jails, its politicians, its bureaucrats, its army? Will he support it in the war that it will fight against the Northern Protestants who will then be fighting their own "war of National Liberation", engaged in their own "struggle for self-determination"?

The whole of the working class in 'Northern Ireland' suffers extra repression and exploitation as a result of the intervention of British Imperialism. The working class response to this has included rioting, the formation of no-go areas and rent/rates strikes. These we should support and learn from. Also we should support Irish prisoners as we support all prisoners, we should oppose the racist harassment of the Irish community on the mainland and the oppressive PTA etc, etc.

What we must not do is fail to attack ideologies (such as Nationalism) which confuse and divide the working class and tactics (such as

terrorism) which cannot lead us forward to liberation. Now more than ever we need to argue that the working class has no country and that its interests lie in a global struggle against capitalism and all its States.

Yours for libertarian communism, Steve

Dear DA

Good god Alan Robertson, what a load of wank. I don't know what made DA publish your letter or you write to DA in the first place. The RCP show enthusiasm in selling their publications, so what, my dog shows enthusiasm chasing a ball round the park, neither of these are going to build a constructive revolutionary movement.

If you're so happy living in the lefty ghetto where politics is about minuscule groups discussing the nature of their own arses I suggest you stick to that and leave Direct Action to produce a newspaper that reflects the development of socialist thought.

Dan Barking

Dear Comrades

In recent issues of DA (75 & 76) you've taken to criticising the work place strategy of the Anarchist Communist Federation, along with that of Class War. You state that we a) imply that all shop stewards are traitors; b) do not have any particular strategy or tactics on how to organise workers independently; c) "too often" are "found chasing the coat tails of the Socialist Workers Party".

In actual fact the article on 'The Life and Times of a Shop Steward' was quite reasonably with good criticism of the 'Broad Left' and 'Rank & File', and stated that "it is the shop steward with one foot on the ladder of union hierarchy and the other on the shop floor, in whom the contradiction" of the existing unions is strongest.

You say we have no particu-

lar strategy or tactics for organising workers independently. We had a very fruitful discussion at our last national conference on work place strategy. To make sweeping and ill-informed statements about the ACF's workplace strategy just isn't good enough.

As for tailending the SWP, just what evidence do you have for this? We've always criticised the SWP's politics, and in particular their 'National Rank & File Movement', and their tactic of attempting to pressurise union bureaucrats, and we certainly didn't let them off the hook on the Poll Tax (see our two pamphlets on the Poll Tax).

Hoping for a more constructive approach, Yours in struggle, Ron Allen London ACF

In your letter you criticise us for making "sweeping and ill-informed statements" about the ACF's workplace strategy. It is, as far as I can see, simply a fact that the ACF has no strategy for building workplace organisation, merely a series of examples of what not to do! We would be more than glad to receive the minutes of your conference's discussion on strategy, and would be pleased to review it, as the anarchist movement in Britain today (ourselves included) has been far too slow in developing workable strategies.

By tail ending the SWP, it was not meant that ACF and Class War followed the SWP's politics, but followed the agenda set by the left, and competed for members with their organisations. Hence concentrated leafleting of SWP events, and the recent joint ACF/Class War leaflet advocating students to join them and not the SWP. Fair enough, I suppose, but rather missing the point. We can recruit students till the cows come home, but will not even begin to have an effect until we have an original, fresh strategy which appeals to other workers.

If the ACF really want to organise for class struggle anarchism I recommend reading the DAM pamphlet

'Winning the Class War', a strategy which is beginning to bear fruit, and is similar in tactics to the strategy being employed to regenerate the IWW.

Dear DA

How unbelievably arrogant (even for them) for the SWP to relaunch the Anti-Nazi league when their party line on Anti-Fascist Action activities has always been "ignore the fascists and they'll go away" or "you're just encouraging them". Presumably fascists enjoy their propaganda being exposed as nazi lies, their heads being kicked in frequently, their meetings disrupted, etc....

How hypocritical of them to turn their backs on the working class community based approach of AFA in favour of sponsorship by assorted bureaucrats and MPs. Their sole reason for the ANL relaunch is because their entryist politics would never be allowed to work within AFA and they realise this. The SWP will now start to claim ANL 'victories' in their paper, and use anti-fascism as a recruiting issue.

It's just the same sort of turnaround they expected people to swallow over the poll tax and the Gulf war. The SWP originally condemned non-payment as a way to beat the poll tax, preferring to call for Labour Party and TUC action! Similarly, their original 'military but not political' support for Saddam Hussein presumably proved so unpopular they had to water it down somewhat.

I don't enjoy slagging people off when there's much more constructive things I could be doing, but some things need to be said. The SWP/ANL will probably be largely irrelevant in the genuine fight against fascism, but they may succeed in drawing well-meaning revolutionaries into the mire of Trotskyist politics, as well as diverting attention away from genuine anti-fascist activities.

To its credit the DAM has always supported AFA in the name of defeating fascism. to the SWP fighting fascism will always be sec-

ond best to building their precious party. In solidarity, Mr B Wright, Norwich

Dear DA

In an effort to relieve the boredom of a long coach journey back to Liverpool after the recent AFA march, I read a copy of 'Workers Press' (the paper of one of the fragments left over from the WRP split. After wading through news of the latest inter-Trot squabbles I was surprised to see an excellent piece on the Kurdish uprising in Iraq during and after the Gulf war.

The initial success of the rising created a large area where the writ of the Iraqi state did not run by a network of 'shoras' (workers councils) which maintained food supplies, ran essential services and organised industrial production and distribution. In Sulimaniya alone, 58 shoras were at work. Needless to say, this grassroots movement was seen as a threat by Kurdish political parties, who attempted to take over or close down the shoras. Interestingly, the article mentions that Kurdish anarchists were active in the struggle to keep them free from party control.

After the Gulf war, Iraqi government forces were able to regroup and bloodily suppressed the Kurdish and Shia uprisings, thereby bringing this tantalising glimpse of a stateless society to an end.

However, we shouldn't leave it at that. Is the IWA in contact with Kurdish anarchists (or any anarchists in the Middle East for that matter) and if so, why are we only discovering news of their struggles through the chance reading of a lefty rag? I'd like to urge the IWA to do all it can to develop contacts in the region, firstly to find out how the rest of the International can be of assistance to them and secondly to give us a libertarian slant on the complex politics of the area.

In solidarity, Keith Hughes, Liverpool

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control) to free communism
(common ownership and no state).*

The Great Christmas Turkey Shoot

Christmas is a time when people tend to do rather silly things. The good folk of Ilford could have enjoyed some early festive laughter on December 18th when Newham Anti-Nazi League (ANL) was relaunched by the Socialist Workers Party. Unfortunately, absolutely no one apart from the SWP bothered to show up. This universal lack of support would have put off any serious attempt by any other organisation to build such a campaign in isolation from the community. Not the SWP — whatever grasp they did have on reality has surely been lost.

The entire point of this meeting was to 'build' (Trot-speak for do what we say) a demonstration outside a Jewish cemetery in Stratford. The justification being that this had been the site of recent desecration by Neo-Nazis. The SWP organised this demonstration without consulting or gaining the support of anybody directly concerned. Of more concern to genuine anti-racists and anti-fascists is the question why has the ANL been relaunched? The ANL was a product of its time, a time when the working class and the left were a lot stronger and more influential than today. The relatively new SWP had some influence among young working class people and were seen as 'untainted' by the failure of the Labour Party and the Communist Party. In the seventies it enjoyed a relatively credible reputation which has been squandered by Stalinist-style expulsions and Grand Old Duke of York campaigning. (He marched them up to the top of the hill, and he marched them down again...)

Today's SWP look back at the ANL as some mythical golden era which can be recreated. They unquestionably believe that the ANL destroyed the National Front. They also believe that they can just walk back in and pick up where they left off. The reality is different. It was the victory of Thatcher in 1979 that finally broke the NF electorally. The new right wing Conservatism absorbed the membership and exploited the agenda of the Fascist NF to its own end. With Thatcher's demise the Far Right within the Tory Party is becoming disaffected. With a possible general election defeat the Tory

Far Right are looking for new directions and expression. They are looking to develop a 'legitimate' racist and fascist organisation of their own, to emulate the success of Le Pen in France. Their interests will no longer be served by supporting an electorally defeated and more moderate Tory Party.

The obvious candidate for this task is the British National Party. The

Should Major lose the election and the right of the Conservatives fail to gain control in the ensuing in-fighting, many will desert. These potential recruits are especially desirable to the BNP because of their 'legitimate' background. A Labour victory will not prevent the recession from grinding more working class people into poverty and unemployment. This will be exploited by the BNP and the racist media. La-

fascism for a number of years. Less than six months ago, 'Socialist Worker' claimed that Fascism was not a threat. At the same time Anti-Racists and Anti-Fascists were organising pickets at Brick Lane, a 10,000 strong Anti-Racist Carnival in Hackney and a National Demonstration Against Racist Attacks. The latter was even claimed by the SWP on local radio to have been organised by themselves. They hadn't

tute a strategy to defeat fascism, and clearly Stratford SWP have no strategy other than these pathetic gesture politics. They also proved completely ignorant of known racists and fascists operating in Newham. A relaunch of the ANL does give the SWP a chance to exploit their own narrow sectarian agenda, at the expense of those who have been confronting racism and fascism at a time when the SWP denied there was even a problem. To relaunch the ANL without reference to experienced and proven organisations like CARF, AFA and Searchlight is at best a mistake, and at worst sectarian arrogance that can no longer be tolerated. The ANL has been set up as a front, so that the SWP can recruit more paper sellers — fighting fascism and racism is very much a secondary consideration. What other reason apart from a hidden agenda can explain the poor but paranoid secrecy, splendid isolation from existing organisations, centralised undemocratic control and built-in political ideology.

While such as the SWP persist in dividing the anti-racist movement along sectarian lines, there is little hope for genuine progress. It is only when we break with losers like the SWP and their outmoded Machiavellian ideology, we can possibly hope to defeat Fascism.

The SWP's isolation and weakness is understood by the BNP who are deliberately targeting them in a campaign of violence that the SWP seem unable or unwilling to deal with. A number of their paper sales have been attacked. A 600 strong meeting in York Hall was attacked by 40 fascists. Even with odds of fifteen to one the SWP failed to beat them. Why line up an entire Anti-Racist movement behind an organisation that cannot defend itself, let alone anyone else?

The national launch of the ANL at the House of Commons on January 14th was even more dismal. Despite all the media hype they were unable to answer four simple questions: 1. Will the ANL confront the BNP or play lip-service to anti-fascism? 2. Will the ANL be democratic? 3. How will the ANL be organised? 4. What will be the relationship between the ANL and existing organisations such as CARF and AFA?

Until these questions are answered satisfactorily, the ANL is, quite frankly, bullshit.



BNP certainly see themselves in this light and have already attracted some disillusioned Tories. However, many of the 'respectable' fascists are presently unwilling to back Tyndall's motley band of narks, second-rate bombers, perverts, jailbirds and thugs. However, the BNP continues to grow steadily in both membership and influence. As most racists and fascists are not card-carrying members of any party, there is still the opportunity for a completely new racist or fascist party to arise.

From the BNP's point of view the future is ripe for exploitation.

bour's failure will be presented as the failure of the Left and in terms of 'British' versus 'Immigrant' worker.

Luckily for us, the BNP are too stupid and far from legitimate enough to be able to exploit this situation fully. But they would have to be mind-bogglingly incompetent not to gain anything from it. With the growth in the BNP, parallel to and feeding into the growth in racist attacks, an effective response is necessary. Existing organisations such as the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (CARF), Searchlight and Anti Fascist Action (AFA) have predicted the resurgence of

been involved at all but why let the truth get in the way?

So what will the ANL contribute to the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement? The answer is little or nothing. Organising stunts outside cemeteries in the middle of the night without solid local support is a waste of time. The cemetery authorities condemned both the desecration and the demonstration as the work of extremists. The demo involved no more than 40 people, all SWP and attracted no local support. Nothing has occurred except for marginalising the issue.

A handful of stunts do not consti-

At a recent Newham Nalگو meeting about the strike going on in the Poll Tax section, the SWP proposed a motion calling for support for a march they had organised, as the Anti Nazi League to protest against the murder of a Tamil refugee, Panchadcharam Sahitharan. They claimed they had the support of his family. Panchadcharam was attacked on 29th December by a gang of racists, and beaten about the head

in a senseless racist attack.

At the branch meeting, a speaker from Newham Monitoring Project (who, as our readers may be aware, have a long record of over ten years of fighting racism and supporting the black working class) countered this, denying they had any support from the family or the black community, or local Tamil refugee groups. A vote was duly taken, and passed,

to support this march and affiliate to the ANL. Once again, SWP members avoided answering questions about the democracy and organisation of the ANL, instead harping on about the seventies as if they were a golden age.

That evening, local Tamil and other refugee and black groups, the family of the murdered man, and NMP met to discuss the murder and what could be done to protest it. When they were informed of the ANL march, they decided to write a strong letter

demanding it be called off. The ANL finally acceded to the demands of the local black community. Any march to protest this racist murder will now be on the terms of the black community, not those of the (largely white) SWP.

NEWHAM ANL AGAIN

On Saturday 30th November, Glasgow's annual day against racism and fascism attracted 2,000 marchers. As usual, it also attracted the local fascists. Around 20 British National Party members protected by the police tried (unsuccessfully) to disrupt the march. After the police were forced to move them on, they marched into the City Centre, Sieg Heiling as they went. They kicked and beat a passing woman who protested at their antics. The next day, according to the papers, Argyle Street in Glasgow erupted in a "Race Row". The truth is very different.

The BNP tried to hold a major na-

FASCISTS RALLY ROUTED IN GLASGOW

tional rally in Glasgow that Sunday. THEY WERE STOPPED. Their leadership were holed up in their 'secret' meeting place, the Gallery Bar on Argyle Street, for several hours, cowering behind the pub doors and the police, in fear of the 200 strong group of anti-fascists which had surrounded the pub. While Tyndall, the BNP's 'Fuhrer', and his followers escaped through a tunnel like the rats they are, many of his local brain dead followers were being confronted physically on the streets, and persuaded of the error of their ways.

Direct Action stopped the rally and flung both the local and imported nazis into total disarray.

These events were just the latest in a long line of defeats for the BNP in Scotland. Fascism will not be tolerated in Glasgow or Scotland. Hopefully, some of the BNP's younger followers will have learned their lesson and in future will have nothing to do with the anti-working class politics of fascism and the BNP.

Glasgow Anti-Fascist Action (AFA)

played a key role in stopping the fascists. AFA is a non-sectarian organisation that unites individuals and working class organisations in the physical and ideological struggle against fascism. We encourage all anarchists and readers of Direct Action to follow the example of Glasgow and other local DAM groups and join their local AFA group (or set one up if none exists). It is essential that all working class anti-fascists that accept the need to confront the nazis to work together, and AFA is the best means to do this.

class and try to deepen them in order to scapegoat minorities for the problems created by capitalism and the state. They weaken our fight against the boss class and their sick system. Fascism offers the white working class nothing. The working class youth that fascists try to recruit have to be shown that there are real solutions to the social problems of capitalism, that CLASS solidarity is what counts and that there is a real, working class alternative to labour and patronising lefty parties.

Anarcho-syndicalism is a vital part of this alternative. As anarcho-syndicalists we say build unity between black and white workers; racist scapegoating offers no solutions.

Only a revolutionary working class movement can totally root out fascism from our class. The likes of the BNP use the artificial divides in our

ACT UP

Fifteen members of Norwich ACT UP (Aids Coalition To Unleash Power) zapped the Benetton store in Norwich city centre on Saturday afternoon to protest at the use of a photograph of aids activist David Kirby taken at the moment of his death.

Three members of ACT UP were ejected from the store as they attempted to hang a banner with 'the true colours of Benetton'; turning

death into dollars, with "Boycott Benetton" written on it. The protest continued noisily outside the shop as activists handed out leaflets, blew whistles and shouted; "Fight AIDS! Fight back! ACT UP!"

David Kirby courageously fought AIDS when he was alive and he wanted that fight to continue after his death. Therese Frares' powerfully moving photograph is a graphic illustration of the suffering aids

cause both to those who are infected with the virus and the people who love them.

A spokesperson for ACT-UP told DA: "We do not object to the image, but we do deplore its use by Benetton as a naked marketing ploy. Their refusal to contribute to the Terrence Higgins Trust last year shows that Benetton are not sincerely concerned with raising awareness about AIDS".

DEFEND THE DEANE FAMILY

On 4th November 91 two Newham shopkeepers, Mr Deane and his son Tony, were abused by police officers. Tony was then viciously assaulted. When Mr Deane, a 53 year old severe asthmatic, pleaded with the police not to kill his son, they attacked him too, resulting in him being hospitalised. The Deanes were subsequently charged with assaulting the police.

This attack is typical of the police, and Newham police in particular, who remain the rotten barrel full of racist apples they have always been. The myth of British justice has already been exposed by such cases as the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and the Tottenham Three. We fully support the right of the black community to self defence against the reality of racist attacks in Britain today, whether by the police or anyone else.

DEFEND THE DEANE FAMILY
March for Justice
Assemble 12.30pm Sat 28th
March Plashet Park
Plashet Grove
London E6
(East Ham tube)

Defend the Deane Family, PO Box 273, London E7. Tel 081 555 8151.



RIGHTS NOT CHARITY!

Trying to survive on crap wages or low benefits in the middle of a recession is no laughing matter for most of us, but to be both working class and disabled is to be double discriminated against. There is a growing and vocal disability rights campaign in this country today; disabled people are organising themselves and demanding their rights, not the conscience-salving, cheap advertising and token gestures of one-offs like Comic Relief. Below is an interview with Peter, a disabled rights activist from Norwich.

DA: Peter, what do you think about the attitude of able bodied people towards the disabled nowadays?

Peter: Well, it's improved since I was born 30 years ago! People still talk down to you, but not as much as they used to. People are more aware today.

DA: How do you think things can be further improved?

Peter: Disabled people and able bodied people need to talk more, that's not just people with physical disabilities, but those with mental disabilities too. The attitude of people with disabilities must improve, we mustn't just regard ourselves purely as disabled, but as people like everyone else. We should have more

pride, more self-awareness and be more vocal. Of course, the attitude of able bodied people needs to improve, but with a lot of them, they won't look at people with disabilities in a new way unless we get out there with a bit more self respect and get up and go.

DA: How much do you think the Government does for disabled people?(!)

Peter: Not a lot. The impetus for change is going to have to come from disabled people organising ourselves and stating what we want. We must demand what we need, and not put up with charity and condescension.

DA: Do you feel that class is an important factor when it comes to disability rights?

Peter: Yes, of course. Say you came from a family with lots of money, you can just go out and buy an expensive electric wheelchair, and improve your mobility just like that. You can buy aids and appliances that the rest of us have to wait months or years for. Anyway, to sum up, what disabled people can't do is sit around waiting for Labour or the Tories or anyone else to do them any favours; we have to organise ourselves and demand what we want.



COLCHESTER 15 UPDATE

On 20th January the case for the prosecution of the remaining 15 stitched up poll tax demonstrators finished and the defence began. It's hard to imagine a shakier collection of evidence than that presented by the state prosecution — bent coppers apparently with unfortunate memory lapses and eye-witnesses who revealed more about police brutality than the supposed criminal actions of the defendants. One witness, a steward on the original march in Colchester mentioned numerous events which the police had advised him to miss out of his statement. These included his witnessing a copper hitting a 12 year old boy, and the fact that the witness had himself been assaulted and pushed into a ditch by a cop.

That the prosecution evidence is in tatters is obvious to anyone who has visited the court in the last two months of the trial. Equally obvious is where the judge stands on this case. To say he favours the prosecution is putting

it mildly; to say he tends to do their job for them is more accurate. Apparently this is the same pompous old fart who sent down Brian Moore, a black man who had the cheek to defend himself against a racist attack in Norwich. Maybe the judge will learn something from Moore later being released after an appeal.

Of course we can never expect justice from the courts, that isn't their purpose, but the Colchester defendants need the support of all of us. Solidarity is not only a means to an end, it's an end in itself.

— Weekly pickets of Norwich Crown Court, Bishopsgate, continue throughout the trial, every Monday from 9.30 am.

— Send messages of support to Colchester 15 Defence Campaign
c/o AEU Halls
Barrack Street
Colchester
Essex

Much of the establishment of this and other European countries see working class youth as both a potential threat and a sector ripe for super-exploitation. Much of what passes for youth policy in education, training and benefits seems to have those two ideas behind it. The bosses, political elite and their media mouthpieces play on the fears of the middle class and the more prosperous older workers by building up an almost totally negative image of young people. Working class youth are presented in the media as reckless, drug-taking thugs prone to joyriding, squatting peoples homes while they've gone to the shops, holding all night raves next to old folks homes etc, etc. The more 'liberal' commentators present youth as victims who can't help themselves and must be saved from drug pushers, exploiters and criminals by trendy social workers and vicars. The right image of amoral, work-shy hooligans is used to justify slashing benefits, introducing more brain washing disguised as traditional education and forced labour on government schemes.

Young people aged 16 to 18 now have no automatic entitlement to any benefits. They are given a 'guarantee' of a training place, but all the signs are that in most of Britain the TEC's will be unable to guarantee even this dubious promise for vast numbers of young people. Across the country many young people have voted with their feet and stayed on at school rather than leave at sixteen; "if they're going to treat you like a school kid until you're eighteen you might as well remain one" is the logic. The staying on rate has massively increased. But the conditions in schools, sixth form colleges, and FE colleges continue to deteriorate. There is over crowding, lack of basic books, equipment and teachers in key subjects. Those working class youth who make it through 'A' levels or national diplomas are now discouraged from entering higher education by the rotten loans system, poverty and overcrowding amongst students.



YOUTH TRAINING

The government continues to try to ram the market into every nook and cranny of the education system. The latest brainwave is to separate local colleges off from local authority control and 'encourage voluntary' partnership of councils and TEC's to run the careers service. It is not clear what will happen to those who decline this generous offer, but it is clear that partnership is a move towards full TEC control of the careers service (or privatisation). The TEC's are to have their sticky fingers in every educational and training pie. With funding of sixth forms and colleges will come (political) control. It is clear that many TEC board members would like to see the careers service as a mere recruitment agency for their crappy jobs and schemes, or even abolish it altogether.

With the recession many of the reasonable youth training places with good training leading to a job have disappeared to be replaced by 'training' run by hucksters and cowboys. The new qualifications offered under the NVQ (national vocational qualification) system are training on the cheap, being judged by employers on the job! Major exploitation (no

pun intended) is taking place, and as usual some real scum are making a killing. Sewing and hairdressing training are good examples. Almost without exception hairdressing trainees are paid the bare minimum of £29.50 a week at 16 and £35 at 17/18. 'Employee status' training was supposed to be an option for employers who wanted to keep trainees on by giving them encouragement to stay. This meant a topped up wage similar to a normal employee and perhaps even a contract! However where I live loads of hair dressing trainees are 'employee status' — they get no top up (ie. £29.50 a week), no job guarantee and no contract. What they do get is told that because they are an 'employee' they can no longer claim travelling expenses and are 'allowed' to work more hours than under normal YT. Good joke eh!

Or take sewing — a local swanky git businessman (big flash car, jewellery, cigars, you know the sort of bastard) runs a sewing 'training scheme'. The conditions are similar to hairdressing plus the trainees in the 'training centre' (sweatshop) are producing saleable items that make big fat profits for you know who.

And a job at the end of your training? On yer bike! Not when there are other kids you can pay £29.50 to. If you leave Y.T. under 18 you are only eligible for a pittance of £15 a week for eight weeks — the so called 'bridging allowance'. The government left a tiny loophole by saying that some young people might be eligible for 'severe hardship payments'. After all, starving young people who have no parents or who have fled physical or sexual abuse are not good publicity, even for this government.

Dissident careers service and DSS staff have been allowing young people to claim bridging allowance even if they don't want youth training and have been encouraging as many young people as possible to claim severe hardship payments even if they don't meet any of the criteria. This has clearly got the government miffed — there are now thousands of young people claiming severe hardship — a clear indication of government failure, despite these young people not appearing on the official (fiddled) unemployment figures.

Basically the establishment treats young people like shit and wants to

use workers in benefits, advice and education as torturers rather than the soft cops they are usually expected to be. It is time young people organised and fought back. It is also time for education and benefit workers to make a real stand beyond the current clandestine direct action and challenge the idea that they should be used to dragoon people into slavery and dead end jobs. It is time to halt the march of privatisation and tell the bosses what they can do with their American marketing jargon of 'clients', 'cost-effectiveness' and 'partnership'. A start should be made by exposing and organising against the slave masters on government money supported by the TEC's.

Youth should be a time of hope, optimism and solidarity — and it can be!

**TEC's — Training and Enterprise Councils — Employer led organisations taking over the role of the Training Agency (formerly MSC) to oversee Youth Training (formerly YTS) and ET.*

NEWHAM COUNCIL POLL TAX STRIKE

Sixty plus Poll Tax staff in Newham, London have been out on strike since 7th January over job losses. A ballot resulted in a 55 to 6 margin for the strike, and only high Principal Officer grades (senior management) are scabbing. The strike was over 20 proposed job losses, including 8 redundancies. Workers were also angry at the way the eight were going to be chosen.

Originally this was to be on a points scheme, 20 in all, with 10 allocated for performance (to be marked by the line manager!), and 5 each for attendance and discipline. These

were all unacceptable, especially as union activists tend to be disciplined in Newham. Chief Personnel Officer Linda Van de Hende made it clear. "We want to pick and choose who goes" she said.

After a few days this scheme was revised to a 35 point scheme, with performance "marked" over 7 categories by the line manager, with a right to see what had been written and a right of appeal. This change was seen as a small victory, but the workers still wanted a commitment to no compulsory redundancies. The jobs are to go as part of a

cuts package to save £167,000. But the Director of Finance, Tony Ellison, gets £60-70,000 a year, plus a bonus of £16,000, and a promise of a further £20,000 if he can reduce Newham's Poll Tax level. Giving him the boot would make a hefty saving. What do these scum do anyway, apart from identifying which workers to crap all over? The socialist Newham council are blaming poll tax non-payers for the cuts, yet have themselves happily implemented a system (the Poll Tax) which has cuts inherent in its logic.

Poll Tax Workers must be supported, even though we may not like their job. A strong workplace organisation will enable these workers to demand and get jobs in other sections when Poll Tax is finally abolished.

The council has also changed the

redeployment policy to one offer only, without protected grade, so workers could face huge pay cuts when they are pushed into one of the many low-paid council jobs. The idea of putting Poll tax work out to an agency has also been mooted. Another back-door privatisation by your caring Labour Party! This has not so far happened; it is after all, an election year.

Other Newham council workers are supporting a one-day council wide strike on January 29th, which has cross union support. This is vital, as all too often in the past, one union has fought alone, while their colleagues in other unions have breezed across the lines.

Messages of support and donations to Poll Tax Strike Fund, c/o 47 Eve Road, Stratford, E15. Tel (081) 519 7457





WHOSE EDUCATED?

Paulo Friere, a Brazilian educator said that education is "the process of becoming critically aware of one's reality in a manner which leads to effective action upon it". How does the present education system measure up to that concept? Not very well could be considered an understatement. In general schools neither help us to understand society or how it works, nor do they assist us in discovering the cause of social problems. Albert Hunt points out in "Education for Democracy" that schools in the main only teach alienated knowledge and that the separation of learning from other activities is one of the fundamental and most serious errors that schools make. Instead of learning occurring naturally through encountering real world problems, the world is conveniently divided into subject matters apparently bearing no relation to one another. The following extract illustrates the situation.

"When the child is very young, he acquires skills as part of a total experience. He hears other people around him talking and begins to form words. He learns through practice, in his own time and in his own way, how to make one foot follow another. Later in his play, he adds new techniques as he needs them. His learning is part of his everyday life.

At the age of five, he is drafted into an institution. At first this institution may seem to be like the situation he has already experienced. He will be given materials and allowed to develop skills through play. But at a certain point the institution will intervene. For part of the "body of knowledge" that is common ground is the certainty that the child will be able to read by a particular age.

At this point the child is introduced to his first subject - reading. Until then, he has been acquiring skills. A skill is a useful technique; you acquire it when you need it for a tangible purpose. A subject is some-

thing educational tradition says you ought to learn, whether it is immediately useful or not.

You may have reached the stage when you want to learn to read, you are tired of having to ask other people to tell you what the balloons in the comic say, and so you are eager to learn. But on the other hand you might have quite different interests. You may be too busy drawing, or inventing new games, or learning how to play draughts. But the system says that in either case you are now at the stage where you ought to read.

Moreover the material you are given to read - The tools you learn with - are very often completely divorced from any possible reason for wanting to learn to read. You are wondering what Batman said to Robin. You are given a book with a picture that shows a boy in dark trousers, a white shirt and a neat tie; a girl in an equally white dress with a yellow cardigan and a white bow in her carefully brushed yellow hair; and a docile retriever on a lead. "Here is Peter", you read. "Here is Jane, there is a dog. The dog likes Jane. Jane likes the dog, and Peter likes the dog. Reading has become a subject. You see it as 'work', something separate from your normal play activities. Soon, other subjects are added. By the time you reach secondary school you are confronted with a bewildering array of them. They take up most of your day and they tend to come at you in 45 minute slabs. You are expected to be equally interested in all of them. But not to be interested because soon the bell will go; "put your books away and get ready for the next lesson".

At the end of five years, if you collect enough certificates you will be recognised as an educational success. But what will you really have learned?"

Because learning in secondary school is primarily directed toward the requirements of exams the approach is generally to cram as much knowledge as possible into the heads of students so that all the "right"



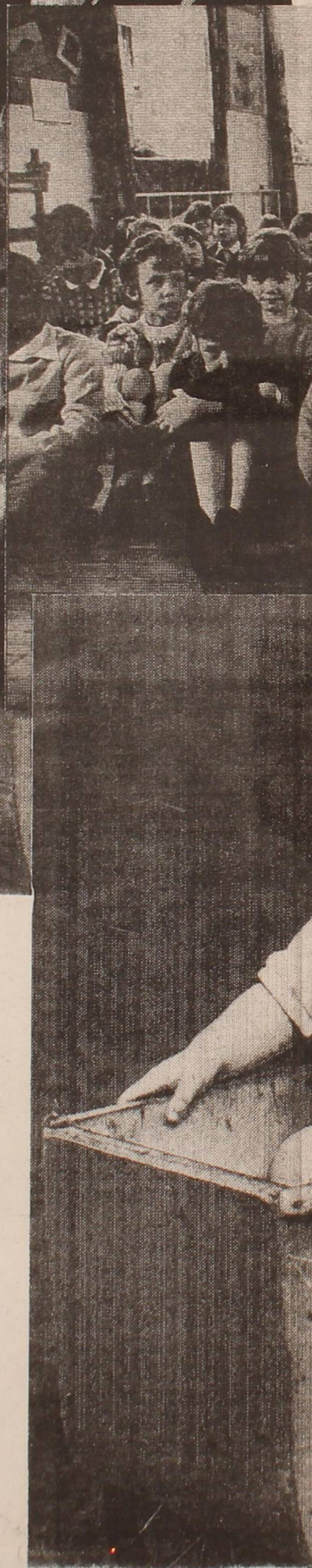
facts may be regurgitated on stacks of exam papers. The emphasis is on rote learning and convergent thinking. The key factor is higher education for a minority.

Schools may try to develop personality but they realise that they must compete for places in higher education, and the tension that this engenders ensures that the devaluing of the unsuccessful and the straight jacketing of the successful. From an early age students are encouraged to compete and forced to specialise. The apparent limitations of the timetable and resources mean that after the third year of secondary school you may learn, for example, biology or music - but not both; or one subject from languages, chemistry or art. You must make a choice when a choice is absurd because you don't really know the alternatives. But the exams are only two years away, so you must pick your particular subjects now or you won't be ready. If you enter 6th form you must elect to go for on the 'arts' side or the 'Science' side, as if it is somehow unhealthy or abnormal to profess an interest in both the laws

of magnetism and the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud. The whole process is convergent, one of early specialisation and if the wrong choice is made, that's tough. The quality of the teacher is largely measured by the number of certificates their students amass and so they're constrained as well.

Because of the nature of exams the same ideas are passed on, no time for diversions. The student who constantly asks questions, queries conclusions, or puts forward ideas of their own are often regarded as a nuisance, since they are holding up the 'progress' of the class.

Before the exam there is a careful analysis of old papers to determine which questions are likely to come up, so you know what to learn and what not to bother with. Unless students conform they are less likely to succeed at exams. So haunted by the thought of failing exams and thus losing the opportunity to go on to higher education, the student discovers that it is easier to co-operate with the system. This resignation breeds conformity and apathy. People are schooled to accept a society; they are educated to create or re-create one. So how many of us are educated?



A TOUCH OF CLASS

EDUCATE FOR A CLASSLESS SOCIETY

According to Kenneth Clarke, Education Secretary, "we are giving access to degree level courses to people from families who have never contemplated higher education in the past. The classless society is going to be a better educated one."

His optimism is based on the fact that there has been a spectacular rise in student numbers in polytechnics, universities and colleges, which in total accounts for a 58,000 rise in numbers. Polytechnics have experienced a 16% increase and universities an 8.7% rise as against last year's figures.

REAL EDUCATION

As anarcho-syndicalists we would certainly applaud any attempts to increase access to education, especially if that education was of a real kind that equipped people for daily life. However, of course, the increases in students to higher and further education reflect no real desire to educate people in skills. That is, apart from fitting some predetermined position in a society increasingly based on use of skills for its own ends.

Whilst in some departments lecturers have been faced with a 25% increase in students, learning for example, Spanish, there has been no proportional increase in resources, physical buildings to accommodate increased numbers, or staff.

MASSIFICATION

Britain is, therefore, heading rapidly towards a system of "massification" along French or Spanish lines, where students fill corridors as they overflow from classrooms.

At the same time, lecturers are told to accept the changes, respond to "market forces", get into the spirit of increased competition between institutes offering similar courses and, at the same time, further their research, the rating of which funding is partially dependent upon. What we shall see then in the very near future is increased marketeering, money grabbing and squabbling between institutions. All this will do is increase the stress on both staff and students, increase the emphasis on creating courses that are "marketable" and undoubtedly result in lower stan-

dards and less care and attention on the things that matter to education workers.

THE UNIONS

In the meantime, our unions in Higher and Further Education, ie NATFHE, NUPE, T&G, AUT etc, have done little to fight these moves and stop the rot.

Occasionally there are movements within the unions to do something positive to halt the decline. On February 12th, there was a national demonstration called by the National Union of Students (NUS) of a general nature, but specifically against the rise in student numbers and student finance (ie loans instead of grants).

In December 1990, there was a desultory national demonstration called by the Association of University Teachers (AUT) in London, which did little but parade around the richer parts of the capital. The AUT never even thought to invite other education unions along. Consequently a lot of potential power was lost, as it was on the February 12th NUS demo.

INDEPENDENT EDUCATION NETWORK

As syndicalists then, organised in the Independent Education Network, we believe that the best way forward is creating horizontal links (ie between rank and file members) in the unions so that the real problems affecting us as workers in education are finally attended to. The advantages of joint organisation are clear - unity makes strength - but it cannot mean organisation for the same old goals of a few touch up jobs here and there. We must develop an organisation whereby we as education producers and consumers can begin to set our own agenda, on our own terms and for our own benefit. Only then can we make substantial gains which will last and only then can we begin to make the necessary links to build an organisation that is going to make those changes and sustain them.

Salford University Branch, Independent Education Network, PO Box 29, SWPDO, MANCHESTER M15



THE INTERNATIONAL

A new series of articles looking at the history of the sections of the International Workers Association.

This month:

USA — THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLI- ANCE

This section of the IWA in the United States was reorganised in late 1984. Formerly it was the Libertarian Workers Group based in the New York area, but after holding a national conference they decided to expand their organisation and attempt to organise other like-minded syndicalists into the movement.

The history of syndicalism in North America is really the history of the Industrial Workers of the World, a General Union founded in 1905 in Chicago. The American comrades never used the label 'syndicalism', but preferred 'industrial unionist'. Nonetheless, it was the same idea. And the struggle in North America was just as fierce as anywhere else. The great syndicalist folk hero, Joe Hill, was a militant of the IWW and an early victim of the Mormon church.

The IWW set about building an international. Sections were set up in Chile, South Africa, Australia, Britain and to a lesser extent Sweden. They always stood apart from the IWA, even when their largest organisation, the Chilean IWW, joined. In the early years this was not a problem, but with the decline of the IWA and the IWW, it was absurd to have two 'internationals'. Anarcho-

syndicalist comrades in the USA applied to join the IWA and soon a small section was formed in New York in the late 1970s. This was the LWF.

Much useful work has been carried out by this section in the field of propaganda and solidarity work, but the great size of the union states has made it very difficult for them to organise.

The IWA has friendly relations with the IWW and is presently negotiating with the IWW following their recent application to join the IWA. We look forward to the day when there will exist one regional section comprising of the comrade of the IWW and WSA.

(originally published in pamphlet form as 'The IWA Today' in 1985 by South London DAM-IWA)

U. S. A.

This past spring and summer New Jersey government employees were having the fight of their lives maintaining their collective agreements and health benefits. In an effort to get rank-and-file members to push their unions to make mid-term contact concessions, the State of New Jersey pulled out all plugs in an effort to get the workers to concede.

One such tactic was to call, by the commissioner of Labour, a 'captive audience meeting' with employees at the Department of Labour. Such

meetings are regularly used by bosses to discourage workers from joining unions.

This would not seem all that strange if the Commissioner came from the ranks of management. Instead Commissioner Ray Bramucci came from the ranks of organised labour and was a one-time leader of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. For anarcho-syndicalists this comes as no surprise, given the fact that union leaders more often than not act in the same way and fashion

as capitalist bosses do (surely there's some connection...?)

In any event, the workers took the commissioner up on his offer. He was greeted by a standing-room-only audience. Angry workers confronted Bramucci and forced him to leave the room, but not before angrily stating that he would prefer to answer questions and chat with "regular people, not union advocates" (In the end the workers won; they maintained all of their standards, benefits and conditions of employment)

First the
good news—



—your pay
is linked
to profits!



The bad news
is —



—we've made
a loss!



Evans

"Strikes will be a thing of the past"

So claims the chief negotiator for Magma copper Co. who recently reached agreement with a union coalition representing some 3150 workers. Union, management and copper industry officials all claimed that the new long-term agreement is "revolutionary" as well.

How can a long-term, no strikes allowed agreement be "revolutionary" for Magma workers? It can't, that's how. The only thing revolutionary about this five year agreement (with the potential of running for as long

as 15 years straight) is that it guarantees no strikes for the employer and sets a precedent for the industry. What this contract represents to Magma workers and copper workers in general is an admission that the once militant tradition of the copper miners unions has been broken once and for all. It is an admission by

the trade union bureaucrats that it's better to surrender than to retreat and wait for another day to wage war. If the defeat of the Phelps-Dodge copper strike of 1983 was the last battle, then the Magma contract surely represents the long awaited funeral service.

It is likely that this Contract will open the door for other similar settlements in the industry. Other copper workers (who work in both the mining and smelting operations) can expect to see such things as more labour-management teams, Gain sharing plans which ties the wage increases to the price of copper and binding arbitration (after 5 years) that would resolve all disputes arising over the renegotiation of wages.

The agreement could run for 15 years unless arbitration is invoked more than twice in a five-year period, according to union representatives.

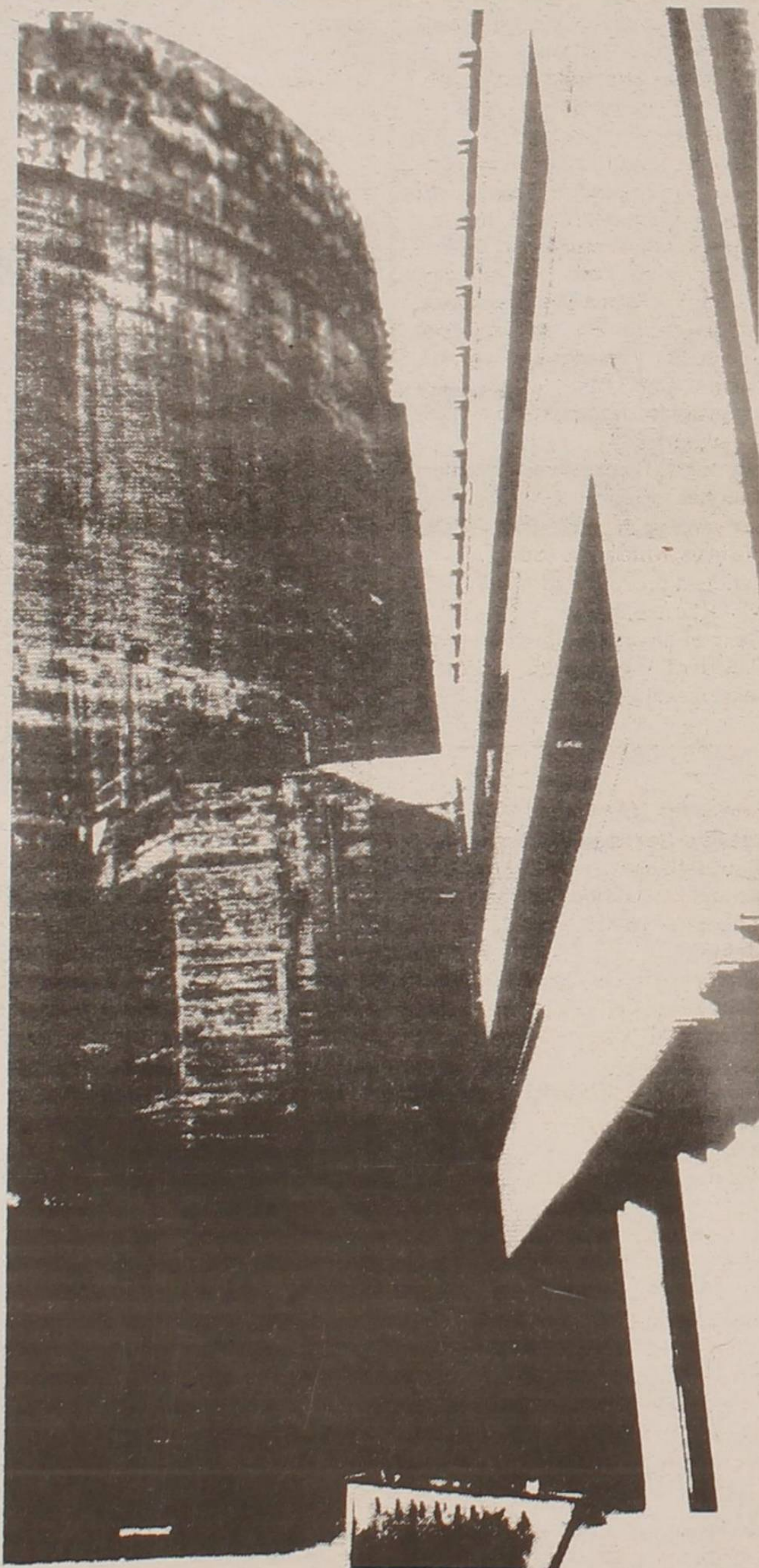
This sure doesn't sound very revolutionary to us.

EXPOSING THE EXPO AND 1992

As DA readers may know, 1992 is going to be a big year for official celebrations in Spain. The EXPO will take place in Seville, the olympics in Barcelona, Madrid is now cultural capital of Europe and around the country there will be various activities to commemorate

rape of natural resources" ('CNT' Dec. 1991).

The Spanish 'socialists' and others in power wish to present Spain as an up and coming European country ready for the fin de siècle pillage of world capital. Police and authorities



the fifth centenary of 'the discovery' of America by the Spanish in 1492.

have prohibited and repressed meetings and demonstrations against the fifth centenary.

The DAM's sister organisation in Spain the CNT-IWA, is one of the main organisers of the alternative and anti-fifth centenary events, as well as protests against the Olympics and the Expo which can suppose increased rents and an increase in the cost of living for Spaniards.

The CNT has been one of the principal organisers behind the boycott of the fifth centenary and several acts of protest were held last year to expose the "Genocide and subjection of the people who inhabited the Latin American continent, as well as the destruction of existing cultures, with the forced evangelisation by the church and the destruction and

Recently in Seville 12 people were arrested for staging a spoof landing of conquistadors in Seville and the town authorities of Miranda de Ebro prevented the Committee against the fifth centenary from having a public meeting in the local cultural centre.

With the recent sentencing of a CNT member to six years imprisonment for burning a Spanish flag, it is quite clear that the Spanish authorities intend to keep the wraps on the real significance of 1492 and the Expo.

USSR?

Serguei Andriouchin, A member of the SMOT in the Bielorussian city of Minsk, has been sacked from his job for participating in a free independent union.

Following a strike in spring last year Bielorussian authorities allowed workers to draw up proposals for a collective agreement on working conditions.

The Proposal included Union control over production and hiring and firing of the workforce.

After the august coup the authorities implemented their own proposals and declared the independent unions illegal. Andriouchin and other activists, refusing to accept this started campaigning for the original demands. In response Andriouchin was sacked and all Smot activists in Bielorussia have had the phones cut off.

The SMOT are asking for international support.

Letters of protest should be sent to: Belarus, Minsk 220 050

Leninski prospekt, dom 58

MPO Lenin, Biellar

General director Mamai

President of State Union, Maslouskaia Nina

Comrades from the SMOT are appealing for material support to enable them to continue their struggle to build free independent unions in what was the Soviet Union.

Photocopying Material:

Rank Zerox 3100: Tonar and Lamps. Cannon PC-35 and Cannon FS-3: Tonar cartridges

Electronic Stencil Duplicator material:

A Rank-rotator

Paper

Ink

Various materials

Audio Cassettes

Accumulator battery chargers and

Rechargeable batteries

Answerphones

Send all material to Alexander Tchoukaev, SMOT representative, 145 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France.

Renewed interest in the ideas and work of Peter Kropotkin in what used to be the soviet union has led to the restoration of a museum dedicated to his work.

The museum is appealing for as many different editions of Kropotkins writing as have been published and material relating to his life, particularly from 1917 to his death in 1921. The museum also wants modern anarchist literature and propaganda.

They are willing to pay for contributions but this presents a number of problems not least the lack of a available, practical currency in the country (countries?). We suggest materials are sent free to:

141 800 Dmitrov, Moscow region. Istoricheskaya ploschad 12.

Istorigo - Hudozhestvom nuy muzeum.

Hohlov Romuald Fiodokovich.

On the 17th June 1991 the National Mineworkers Federation (FMN) called the Fourth National Strike, which shortly afterwards was called to a halt. From an interview with the vice president of the federation, Victor T, we hope to be able to understand the nature of this defeat and the present situation of mining in Peru. His declarations are clear enough for us to be able to see who is responsible for the present crisis situation in this sector.

Q: What do you see are the reasons for the failure of the fourth national strike?

VT: I think there were several factors involved. Firstly, those who assumed the role of directing the strike committed several political errors. They failed to evaluate correctly the national situation and the strength of the various union forces in the country. The Unions were on the

abandoned the working class. This meant that opposition to the government's plans was neutralised. Delegates tried to impose their parties lines and not the decisions of the membership.

Lastly, we did not sufficiently inform the workers of previous gains and this allowed parties to impose their will.

Q: Can you tell us something about the general situation in the mining sector in Peru?

VT: Several mines are being closed down. About 30 to 35% of miners are fighting to have their

spend. The presence of the state in the flotation of the mines has brought us nothing but problems. The only way of doing it is to get the mines certified as bankrupt or abandon then occupy. For example, Minas Canerias was declared bankrupt and a decree authorised workers control.

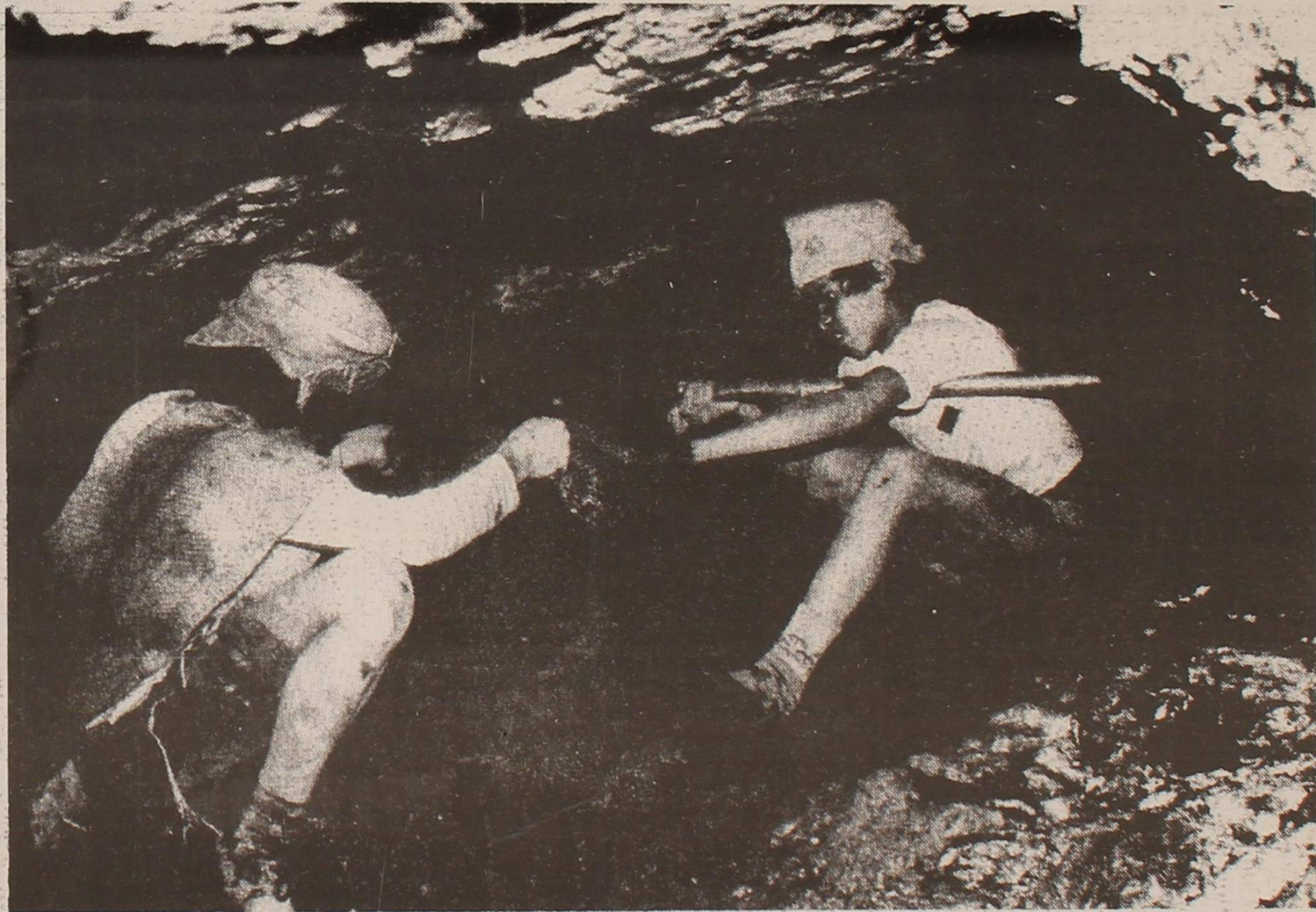
Q: But bosses and the supporters say that workers are not capable of administering firms....

VT: Workers have shown that

goes into other areas and they are not interested in the industrialisation of Peru. As for health and safety, things are getting worse. They talk of 'modernisation' in order to introduce new managers and exploit us more.

Q: Which bosses are worst, them or foreign companies such as 'Southern'?

VT: They are all pretty much of a muchness. If the union is less powerful, the bosses take advantage. They have broken collective agree-



defensive and therefore the strike was isolated. Political control fell to one group who used the strike for their own ends. There was no organisation, no class input. Secondly, those groups who opposed the leadership were not heeded and did not manage to take up positions of responsibility in the direction of the struggle.

Thirdly, those base groups that had been used by various political parties such as the United Left (IU) could do nothing against those who held positions, and were powerless in the face of new social developments and the presidential elections, for example. These groups supported the right and

mines reopened. Privatisation has also created problems Centromin has just sacked 3,500 workers.

Q: One of the FNM's latest agreement was to move towards the self-management of the mines. We believe the Centromin miners wish to buy and self manage their mine. Is this so?

VT: This would be a difficult step. It would mean direct confrontation with the state, which just wants to privatise the mines. At most a few shares could be brought, but mining companies have much more money to

they are capable of managing production. However, unfortunately self management within capitalism only generates competition and therefore cannot be held up as an aim for the working class. For self management to take place the system must be transformed.

Q: Do you believe that mine owners are interested in developing the mining sector?

VT: No, not at all. They are interested in productivity and profits. Machinery in the mines is now old fashioned and they are not interested in any kind of improvements. Capital created from mining

ments, they have dismissed lots of people, and hunger is on the increase. They are on the offensive and it is difficult to fight back.

Q: Finally, what dose the future hold?

VT: If the federation is not reorganised we will be increasingly isolated. We must regain independence as an organisation and take up our own programme once more towards another national strike.

Q: How will you do that?

VT: We are trying to form a class based front with the base taking all the decisions.

"Free Women of Spain - Anarchism and the struggle for the emancipation of women." by Martha Acklesberg.

Indiana University Press USA, ISBN 0-253-30120-3. Price £11 (depending on exchange rate)

Chronicling women's struggle within the social revolution that accompanied the Spanish civil war, "Free Women of Spain" focuses on the importance of women's communities and experiences. Martha Acklesberg traces the efforts by Mujeres Libres to create an independent organisation of and for working class women that would empower them to take their places in the revolution and in the new society. Founded in 1936 by groups of women in Madrid and Barcelona, Mujeres Libres was an organisation dedicated to the liberation of women from their "triple enslavement to ignorance, as women, and as producers." Although the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement was committed to overcoming all forms of domination (including the domination of men over women), the women who founded Mujeres Libres differed from many of their comrades, arguing that women needed special preparation to take their places in the movement and the new society.

Strongly rooted in the collectivist and libertarian traditions which had developed in Spain, Mujeres Libres was committed to a vision of society in which the self-development of each is connected to the development of all. This book illustrates how the problems confronted by Mujeres Libres provide a lesson for both feminists and anarcho-syndicalists today in the struggle for a free and equal society.

"Free Women of Spain" is an extremely stimulating book, and easily read, that covers areas of libertarian thought and history rarely touched upon by others. Without doubt an essential read and an education in itself.

Freedom in Education. A d.i.y. guide to the liberation of learning. Published by Libertarian Education, Phoenix House, 170 Wells Rd. Bristol, BS4 2AG.

ISBN 0-9513997-2-1 £3.95

Freedom in Education is a useful introduction to the work of Libertarian Education. Divided into two main sections it covers both ideas for structured educational activities and a comprehensive list of books and articles concerned with libertarian education.

The articles directly concerned with learning cover a number of areas from the teaching of maths in a holistic way, as an expression for ideas and debate rather than ether abstract or a justification for capitalism, to a marvellous article on how traditional teaching methods in music has tended to negate the creativity from which music is born. "There is little pleasure in music played accurately but without feeling, whereas the emotional involvement of a musician can be inspiring even without much technique". A good book for all those interested in the practicalities of libertarian education.

Prisoners, Patients or People? Rik Henderson and Mark Wallis. Published by Freedom into Action, BM Box 37, London, WC1N 3XX. ISBN 0-095179 43 02 £5.50

Written by two ex-nurses with contributions from ex-patients from Darenth Park Hospital in Kent, Prisoners, Patients or People will certainly shock those who have not been institutionalised as staff or patients of the services described in the book.

Starting historically, the first chapter of this book looks at how people with learning difficulties have been treated, from people being viewed as an embodiment of evil during the witch hunts to the carnival and the freakshow.

By the end of the 19th century the persecution invoked by religion had been replaced by the equally fake god of a fake science when eugenics became the buzzword.

The geneticists of the day said society would only evolve if "unsavoury elements" were prevented from having children. This led to automatic sterilisation of people with learning difficulties and mental health problems and the building of the asylums that only now are being shut down. In Germany it was the nazis "scientific" basis for the holocaust.

The book goes on to catalogue the degradation of the mental handicap hospitals, both historically and today, using extremely moving personal accounts of life both living and working within Darenth park Hospital, and accounts of where people have died whilst under the supposed "care" of the

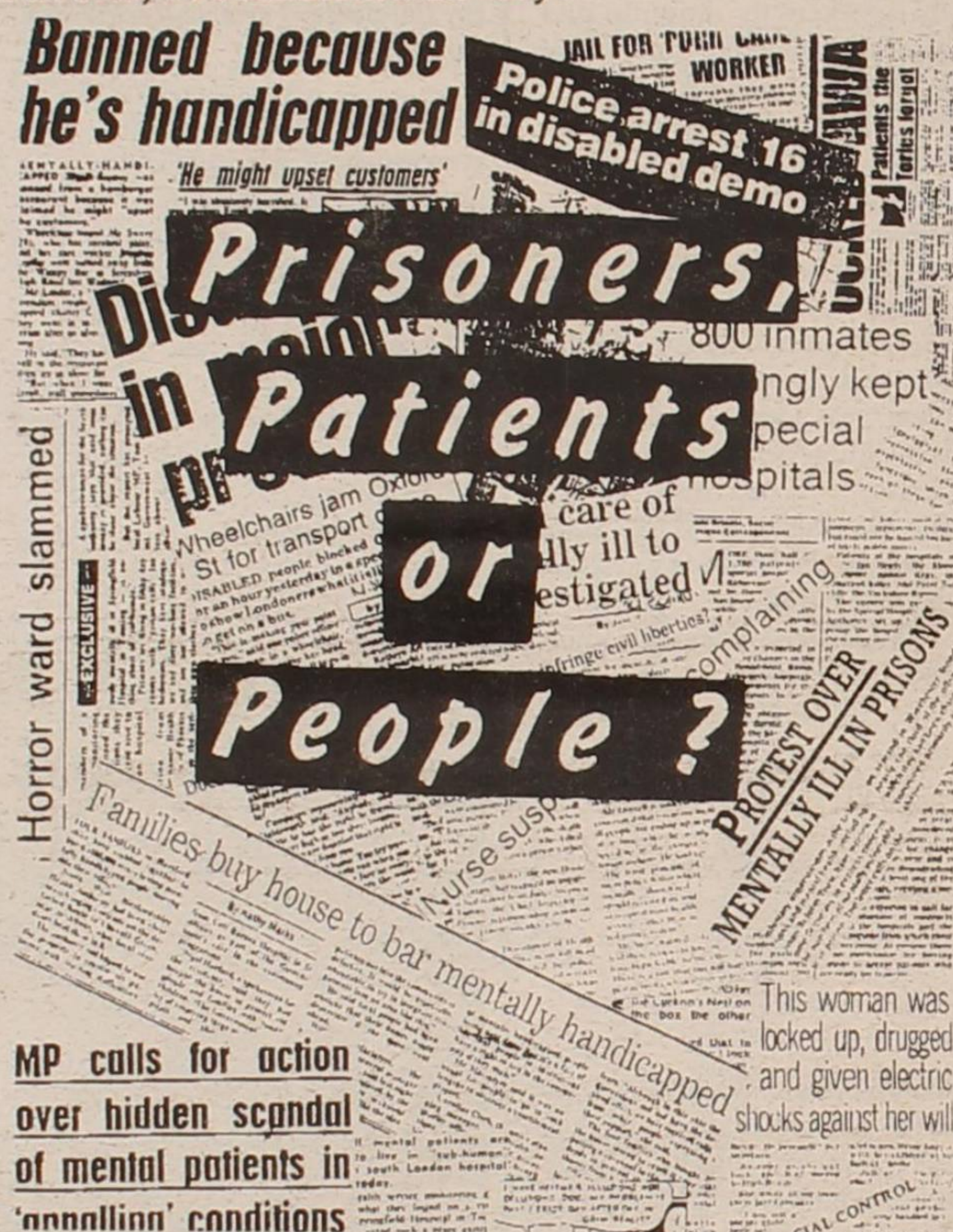
special hospitals (Broadmoor etc.).

It is written with an anger justified by the subject but I had the feeling when reading it that the sometimes vitriolic style denied people the opportunity of having positive memory's of life within a hospital, as people have positive memory from all times of their lives.

Something else I feel is missing (although it's not really in the remit of the book) is a detailed look at the

governments half arsed attempt at community care, where the closure of these hospitals has not got any thing like the financial backing it needs to enable people to return to the community. I hope the authors will consider this in the future.

I don't intend my criticisms to take anything away from the book. It is immensely powerful to read and makes you feel how obscene it is that it ever needed to be written. Buy it.



SUBSCRIPTIONS

You can help us improve DA by taking out a 'Supporter's Sub'. We don't have any rich backers, and are entirely dependant on sales and donations. If you like what we're saying, even if you don't agree with all of it, we welcome your support.

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- * a copy of either 'Miguel Garcia's Story' or 'Sans Culottes in the French Revolution'
- * details of all DAM activities in your area

☐ Yes, I'd like a Supporter's Sub. I enclose £12 (Europe - £16; Rest of the World - £24. Cheques/postal orders payable to Direct Action). Please send me 'Miguel Garcia's Story' / 'The Sans Culottes in the French Revolution'.

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LISTINGS

Saturday, 22nd February, 12 noon, St Nicholas Church, Plumstead High St, London SE18.

Rolan Adams Family Campaign march. In memory of Rolan Adams, victim of a racist attack in Thamesmead last year, and against the continued presence of the BNP in the area.

BRIGHTON ANTI FASCIST ACTION

Relaunch meeting
10th March, 8.00,
Brighton
Unemployed
Centre.

DEFEND THE DEANE FAMILY

March for Justice
Assemble 12.30pm Sat
28th March Plashet Park
Plashet Grove
London E6
(East Ham tube)

Public meeting

South East London
Anti Fascist Action

Lewisham 15 years on

26th march 1992
7:30 Deptford town hall

anti-fascist action

Monday 2nd March

Picket of Southwark
Crown Court,
Battle Bridge Lane,
Tooley St,
near London Bridge.

In support of the Brick Lane Four, four anti-fascists arrested in October 1990 after AFA took over the fascists' pitch in Brick Lane, East London.

Saturday 14th March, Independent Bookfair '92, 10 am - 6pm, Pearse Institute, 840 Govan Rd. Glasgow. Independent Publishers, Book launches and videos.

Thursday 27th February, 7:30pm, The Mutual aid center, 45 Seel Street, Liverpool. Public Meeting and video showing, 'The IWW, Revolutionary Unionism in America.'

PUBLICATIONS AND SALES

DAM PUBLICITY APPEAL

With both capitalism and communism increasingly being seen as redundant, there's never been a better time for us to distribute our propaganda. We're sure DA readers will agree, which is why we're launching a publicity appeal to enable the DAM to produce a fine selection of pamphlets, posters and propaganda in general.

Plans at the moment include pamphlets on: strike action, fighting fascism, a history of French anarcho-syndicalism, an introductory DAM pamphlet, an anthology of articles from past issues of DA, and a new anti-fascist poster, among other things.

All this costs money. We're proposing a loan scheme by which people lend us money, enabling us to produce a pamphlet, which is returned to them when the pamphlet is sold. Alternatively, people can choose to take the equivalent value in pamphlets, £50 or more, but of course smaller amounts are welcome — as are donations! And if anyone out there can afford to sponsor an entire pamphlet themselves (this would amount to around £300 to £400) then they'd be guaranteed a big snog from all of us.

All loans of over £20 will receive a free copy of whatever pamphlet they're supporting, and a free surprise gift. Probably. Get in touch for more information, and to send your dosh:

DAM Publicity Commission
c/o Norwich DAM-IWA
PO Box 73
Norwich
NR1 2EB

Winning The Class War

an anarcho-syndicalist strategy

"Not since Tom Brown's writing has a pamphlet so succinctly demonstrated all that is positive and necessary about Class Struggle Anarchism"

Neil Kinnock

"Christ, we're useless"
Norman Willis

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THIS IS THE DAM

1. The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.

2. Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.

3. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self managed production for need, not profit.

4. In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.

5. We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the work place and the community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers' organisations must

be controlled by the workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers movement. Any and all delegates of such workers' organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.

6. We are opposed to all states and state institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is world wide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all states do not exist to protect the workers of those states, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.

7. We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to control their own lives and environment.

8. The Direct Action Movement is resolved to initiate, encourage and wholeheartedly support the creation of independent workers' unions based on the principles of anarcho-syndicalism.

9. The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism: a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY PROBLEM RECEIVING DIRECT ACTION, PLEASE LET US KNOW. WE ARE SUFFERING FROM A PAST LEGACY SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTION PROBLEM, SO IT'S NOT OUR FAULT, HONEST!!!!

CONTACTS - UPDATE

NATIONAL OFFICERS

NATIONAL SECRETARY, Manchester DAM-IWA, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY, Edinburgh DAM-IWA, PO Box 516, SW DO, Edinburgh EH10 5JH

SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH DAM-IWA, PO Box 516, SW DO, Edinburgh EH10 5JH
GLASGOW DAM-IWA, PO Box 239, Glasgow G3 6RA

ENGLAND

EASTERN REGION

NORWICH DAM-IWA, PO Box 73, Norwich NR1 2EB

MIDLANDS

LEICESTER DAM-IWA, c/o 70 High St, Leicester
For contacts in Leamington, Northants and Worcester, write to National Secretary

NORTH EAST

LEEDS DAM-IWA C/o Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds LS2
MIDDLESBROUGH DAM-IWA, C/o Leeds DAM
SOUTH YORKSHIRE DAM-IWA, PO Box 122, Doncaster, S Yorkshire
For contacts in Doncaster, Scunthorpe, Sheffield and York, write to North East Regional Secretary, C/o Leeds DAM

NORTH WEST

BURNLEY DAM-IWA, 12 Kingsland Grove, Burnley, Lancs BB11 3PY
LIVERPOOL DAM-IWA, PO Box 110, Liverpool, L69 8DP
MANCHESTER DAM-IWA, PO Box 29 SW PDO, Manchester M15
PRESTON DAM-IWA, PO Box 172, Preston, Lancs PR1
For contacts in Cumbria, Lancaster, Salford and Stockport, write to North West Regional Secretary, C/o Burnley DAM

SOUTH WEST

BRISTOL DAM-IWA, C/o National Secretary
For contacts in Avon, Devon and Plymouth, write to National Secretary

SOUTH EAST

SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE DAM-IWA, PO Box 245 St Albans, Herts
DEPTFORD DAM-IWA, PO Box 574, Brockley, London SE4 1DL
EAST LONDON DAM-IWA, C/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
NORTH LONDON DAM-IWA, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE

For contacts in Kent, Brighton, Sussex and Wiltshire write to South East Regional Secretary, C/o East London DAM

NETWORK FORUM

Donations or Standing Order payments in support in Industrial Networks should be made to:
NETWORK SOLIDARITY FUND,
Acc No 12282083, Sort Code 16-16-25,
Royal Bank of Scotland, Manchester Chorlton-cum-Hardy Branch,
44 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1AR

Send any donations, or notify of any Standing Orders, to Network Forum, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW

INDUSTRIAL

Council Workers Network, C/o Manchester DAM and North London DAM
Transport Workers Bulletin, PO Box 574, London SE4 1DL
Despatch Industry Workers Union, C/o 489 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AU
Independent Education Network, PO Box 29 SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW
Health Workers Federation, C/o PO Box 574, London, SE4 1DL

OTHER

IDEAS & ACTION (US Anarcho-Syndicalist paper), PO Box 40400, San Francisco, CA 94140, USA
REBEL WORKER (Australian Anarcho-Syndicalist paper), PO Box 92, Broadway, NSW 2007, Australia
ANTI-FASCIST ACTION (North/South/East/South-East London Branches), BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX

DIRECT ACTION

anti fascist action

Monday 2nd March
Picket of Southwark Crown
Court,
Battle Bridge Lane,
Tooley St, near London Bridge.

In support of the Brick Lane Four, four anti-fascists arrested in October 1990 after AFA took over the fascists' pitch in Brick Lane, East London.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM FOR BEGINNERS

LET'S TAKE IT ALL!

Why we need workers' control.

It's election time again, and we're being fed the same old shit. There are various "wannabes" screaming for our votes, and they are all promising to do the most wonderful things for us.

Unfortunately, it's still the same old story. They offer two basic routes to salvation. You can either drink them straight, or mix a nice little cocktail of them both. What are these wonder drugs you may be asking? Well, you can have your life dominated by free market gangsterism or by mind numbing state control. Or, if you're feeling particularly creative, you can mix them up so that they match whatever is the flavour of the month (as the Labour Party persists in attempting).

Modern capitalism tends to play see-saw with these methods of running society; one minute we're a free market, next we're nationalised, and sometimes half and half.

So, how do the two compare? As far as an unrestrained free market is concerned, you get some ludicrously rich bastards being able to screw us as much as they like; the idea being that in the process they "generate wealth", which then circulates around society. (Unfortunately, this circulation is usually confined to the capitalists' pockets).

This process relies on profit making, enterprise, and entrepreneurs (capitalist code for greedy, selfish, manipulative gits). These people need to maintain



a "market" for their goods. Such a market is maintained by making products DESIRABLE (though not necessarily practically useful or necessary), which can be done in several ways, but it must be done PROFITABLY.

Unfortunately for you and me, this means that they have to get more money back than they originally shell out. Conclusion: **workers have to be screwed. Wages have to be kept low. A good way of doing this is by keeping a pool of people unemployed. They call this neat little trick "ensuring the job market is competitive", basically it means making us fight among ourselves for peanuts.**

An incredibly stupid side effect of this way of doing things is that our shops are stocked full of the same basic product, which is "competitively" sold in various guises by various companies. Virtually the only differences between these "brand names" is the packaging. This is due to a rather bizarre practice known as "market research".

Basically, millions are spent on finding out "what makes us buy"; millions of pounds which could have been used to combat poverty, homelessness and starvation.

But who needs food and adequate housing when you've got nice spangly supermarket displays?

On the other hand, if we don't like our lives being run by businesses we can choose another option. Sounds fine, eh? What is this radical alternative? Well, it's actually letting another, different group of people run our lives. We allow the state to regulate things. Let the government have the major control over what happens in our society. We can have "publicly owned" utilities, "nationalised" industries; we can take control of industry away from those nasty businessmen and ... give it to the government. Some would say this is a much better arrangement, "at least we can elect who runs the government".

But is this solution any less painful for us? Well a key factor is that no matter how well a nationalised

industry is subsidised by a government, they still have to compete. They have to survive in competition with other non-nationalised industries. Their products still have to be sold within the capitalist system, which basically exists as a world-wide free market.

Consequently, the bottom line is that they too have to produce goods which are DESIRABLE and PROFITABLE; otherwise, subsidised or not, down the toilet they will go (anyone remember that place they used to call the soviet union?).

So, costs have to be kept down etc., which brings us back to where we started, workers have to be screwed. Nowadays, the Labour Party try to befuddle us even further. They want what they describe as a "mixed economy". What a great idea, let's get screwed both ways at once. Their intellectuals (yes, they still claim to have some) witter on about self-managing cooperatives, employee involvement in management etc etc. Mmmm ... self exploitation, a new form of DIY perhaps?

I don't know about you but all this nonsense leaves my head spinning.

What is needed is for us to look at radical new ways of managing an economy, where we can end exploitation, end production for profit, and begin to produce for need not greed.

The only people fit to run an economy are the producers. Workers' control must not mean simply self management and self exploitation, it must mean running industry for the benefit of those that work in it and use it, not for any elite, be it fat city slickers or state bureaucrats. The only way to set about doing this is to take back the power, take back the means of production, and set about a thoroughgoing reorganisation of society.

Next month we'll be looking at how we can organise workers' control, and at attempts to do so which were made in Spain, Russia and Italy earlier this century.

Thanks to all those who have donated to the DA Scanner Appeal. So far, £328 has been raised. That's great, but it's still short of our £750 target. So why not follow the example of these good people here, and slip us some cash. Every little helps...

£10 John London SW1; £10 Paul, Doncaster; £50 Martin, Lewisham; £20 Nick, SE London; £50 R & E, Avon; £50 Dave, Newham; £50 Paula, SE London; £10 John, Teesside; £5 Simon, Tottenham; £5 Duncan East London; £6 Pete, SE London; £40 Andy, Plymouth; £10, Keith, St Albans. £2 A.J. Romford; £10 GM, Edinburgh;