

STRIKE! ^(A)

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HERE COMES THE SUMMER

THIS SUMMER is likely to see the biggest upsurge in working class militancy in many years, mostly over pay. This spring has already seen strikes in the docks, London Transport, London Underground, the BBC, on North Sea oil rigs, and amongst building workers (some of them Teessiders) working in London. Disputes are ongoing on the railways and in local government.

We welcome this rebirth of militancy, and the confidence that it shows exists amongst the rank & file. And we don't want to see it wasted by useless bureaucrats sat in union head offices. Take for example the situation in the docks. After the government announced its intention to scrap the National Dock Labour Scheme dockers were ready to strike. But the T.G.W.U. leadership put things on hold until after negotiations had been held with the employers. In accordance with the law they held a strike ballot. There was a 3 to 1 vote in favour of strike action, and still nothing has happened. Union bureaucrats are totally paralysed by fear of the Tory anti-strike legislation. To save their union funds from sequestration union bosses will delay action so long that people will lose heart for a struggle. This is "new realism" in practice.

The unofficial strikes on the tube in London show that it is still possible to strike effectively, despite the anti-strike laws (which make legal strike action virtually impossible). The Tories are so worried about wildcat strikes that they intend to introduce legislation in the autumn to outlaw unofficial strikes and make the unions liable for them.

We must build a different kind of unionism, one that fights instead of retreating all the time. We must break down artificial barriers between different firms, trades and unions. We must ditch the bureaucrats, not elect new ones. We must create structures which are accountable to us, giving us control over our officers, our funds, our solidarity and our politics.

ALIVE & KICKING

Our more clued up readers may have heard about the C.N.T., the anarcho-syndicalist union in Spain. In the Spanish Revolution of 1936 the CNT was biggest union, and the main impetus behind the social revolution and the workers collectives.

The CNT thwarted the fascist generals' coup attempt in July '36 and sent workers militias to the front to meet the advancing fascist armies. The CNT's leading militants were even invited to join the Republic's government, such was the influence of the CNT. Some of them foresook their anarchist principles and participated in government. Of course they made ineffectual statisticians and were completely out-manoeuvred by the stalinists, who gradually took control of things. At the same time as they were fighting fascism at the front, CNT workers had to fight stalinism in the rear. As the stalinist stranglehold tightened the militias were militarized and the workers collectives were dismantled by the Republic. The Republic fought on till 1939, but eventually succumbed to the forces of General Franco.



CNT

Today the Spanish Revolution is largely forgotten. Despite the fact that the Spanish Revolution went much further than the Russian Revolution, and the workers put self-management into practice on a massive scale, it's largely ignored. You can find books by learned academics which tell you what colour socks Lenin was wearing when the Bolsheviks took power in Russia. But you'll struggle to find material on how the workers in Barcelona ran the trams, factories, electricity etc. without the guidance of any government. The peasants in Aragon worked the land collectively. Their standard of living increased in spite of the country being in the throws of a Civil War. Some of the collectives even abolished money, and managed quite well!

Marxists will dispel the experience of the Spanish Revolution with a cursory comment about how "the anarchists joined the government". In fact the Spanish Revolution is a vindication of the anarchist contention that social change must be rooted in the people, and no government, not even a "workers State", can institute socialism. The Spanish anarchists made mistakes. But to their credit they weren't a party to the building of a monstrosity like Stalin's Russia, even though they had the numbers to take State power.

After the defeat of the Republic the CNT was forced underground for nearly 40 years. But after the death of Franco in 1976 and the return of bourgeois democracy to Spain, the CNT could once again organize openly. It grew rapidly till it became a real threat once again. The "democratic" State responded by imprisoning, torturing and even killing union militants. Agents provocateurs were used, as in the La Scala case, when a nightclub was firebombed and the authorities sought to blame the CNT (even though some of the workers killed were CNT members!).

The authorities even took advantage of a split within the CNT in 1979 in order to sow confusion and disillusionment within the ranks of the anarcho-syndicalist movement. At a time when the other unions were being compensated for the buildings and assets stolen off them by Franco in 1939, the government used the CNT split as an excuse to not return the CNT's assets. The CNT went through some very hard times in the early and mid eighties. But now the Confederation is growing again, as witnessed by its leading role in strikes. In April the Supreme Court in Madrid had to admit that there was only one CNT, and that the State-sponsored splitters could no longer use the CNT initials.

Today the CNT has 50,000 members and workplace sections across the country. It is probably the biggest revolutionary organization in Europe. The CNT isn't something to be found in history books. The DAM's sister organization in Spain is alive and kicking despite all odds. The long-term objective of anarcho-syndicalists in this country is to build an organization like the CNT in Britain. ADELANTE COMPANEROS!

going for a song

The announcement by the Japanese car manufacturer Toyota that it plans to build an assembly plant in Europe, and that Britain is the favoured country, has got local authorities and development corporations excited. Everybody wants the plant to be built on their patch. Teesside is apparently on the shortlist.

We had the same song and dance a few years back when Nissan set up shop in the North East. Then as now local authorities and business development agencies fell over themselves to offer the best inducements. That time Tyne & Wear won over Teesside because they offered the cheapest (as in very cheap) package to Nissan.

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**PAY
NO
POLL
TAX**



W E ' R E N O T
F R I G G I N
P A Y I N G !

GOING FOR A SONG

But in all the euphoria about yet another "jobs boom" coming our way nobody stops to ask themselves why Nissan and Toyota should want to set up here. It's certainly not from the goodness of their hearts. The answer is that it's very profitable for them...

They get a foothold in the European market ("open" after 1992).

In Britain they get relatively cheap labour and pliant unions willing to sign no-strike, "sweatheart" deals. (At a recent press conference, one of the Greek shipping barons involved in the buyout of the shipyards in Sunderland stated quite openly that cheap labour was one reason for their interest.)

In the North East they are welcomed with open arms. After all the North East already has the greatest concentration of Japanese and Korean investment in Europe. It's all presented to them on a plate, with civic receptions and all manner of inducements.

There's something ironic about "great" Britain, the country which gave birth to the Industrial Revolution, scampering about after a few thousand jobs assembling Toyotas. And it will only be a few thousand jobs, because the work practices that the new plant will employ will increase productivity, thus making workers in other car plants redundant.

Capitalism is international. In order to fight it the workers must be international.

Capitalism is international. In order to be able to fight it properly the workers must be internationalist.

Jack Feeney

A MAN from Middlesbrough who refused to fight against Russian revolutionaries in 1919 and became a lifelong Communist and leading figure in local politics, has died.

Mr Jack Feeney was 89 when he died in South Cleveland hospital after a long illness. His eventful life began in Portrack and in 1917 he fought against the Germans, before being taken prisoner.

But in 1919 he was ordered to go with the British Expeditionary Force to Murmansk to fight against the Soviet Union. He refused and spent several months in hiding before judging it safe to return to his family.

In the 1920s, he was an adviser to Ellen Wilkinson, one of the country's first Labour MPs, who represented Middlesbrough, before joining the Communist Party in 1931.

Among his achievements as a Communist was the setting up of the Middlesbrough Trades Council, of which he was a long-serving president, and establishing a trades union social club in Longlands. In 1986, he was made a life member of the Trades Council.

A Communist Party colleague paid tribute to Jack, saying: "He was bursting with humanity and anger at what was wrong with the world and always thinking about how it could be put right. He was a young man all his life."



R.A.P.T.

One group in Middlesbrough which has a solid non-compliance stance is Rock Against The Poll Tax (RAPT). They organized an anti Poll Tax benefit gig in Middlesbrough on May Day, and are busy organizing another on July 6. A demonstration in Middlesbrough is also being planned for later in the year. A contingent from Teesside will be going on the big demonstration in Manchester on July 1. If any bands or anybody wants to become involved with RAPT they should write to: Box R.A.P.T., c/o 90 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, TSI 2RE.

shit for brains

A COURT called for a psychiatric report on a young SS fanatic with an Adolf Hitler haircut. Klaus Hoffman, 20, real name Andrew Waines, took his name from a nazi death camp doctor executed for war crimes.

The court heard how Hoffman had fallen under the influence of a family who are members of the National Front. Hoffman sold all his possessions to buy an SS uniform and weapons. He appeared in court wearing a bandolier of .303 cartridges over combat dress.

Hoffman, of Middlesbrough, stole two tins of dog food for his Dobermanns Otto and Ingrid, and his Rottweiler Helga, and then pulled a sheath knife on the store detective who tried to arrest him. He was traced because of his unusual appearance...

Hoffman pleaded guilty to shoplifting, assault with intent to resist arrest and possession of an offensive weapon. Teesside magistrates remanded him on bail for six weeks pending a psychiatric report...

THE MASTER RACE...

WE'RE NOT PAYING !

The Poll Tax registration forms are going out across the country, and they'll try to register every adult over the next few months. The Government hopes that the fear of fines for non-compliance will keep any resistance minimal.

But the news from Scotland is more than encouraging. It is emerging that more than 100,000 Scots have managed to avoid being registered. Furthermore, only a few of the refusniks have been fined.

There are lessons to be learnt from the experience in Scotland, perhaps the most important being that trying to delay registration is an ineffective tactic. People who acknowledge the form in any way will be registered. People who ignore the form stand a far better chance of avoiding registration. The message from Scotland is **DON'T DELAY, THROW IT AWAY!**

Relatively few people have been fined in Scotland so far, and these were people who had entered into correspondence with the Community Charge Registration Office. The £200 fine (which was supposed to come after an initial £50 fine) has been suspended because there is too big a backlog of cases to deal with. There have been instances of crowds successfully turning away bailiffs. There are battles looming in workplaces if they try to arrest wages.

Take heart from this. The Poll Tax can be resisted, if people stand firm and stand together. **CAN'T PAY, WON'T PAY!**

A nazi fanzine called 'United Forces' is being published in Stockton. Alongside plugs for the nazi 'White Noise' rock bands, the general line of this intellectual masterpiece is that the N.F. aren't fascists anymore, just misunderstood patriots, who should be allowed their freedom of speech etc., etc.

Meanwhile the nazi scum of the British National Party plan to hold a rally in Darlington on June 10. Fascists are thugs, racists and class collaborators. They must be allowed no platform to air their message of hate and bigotry. All anti-fascists should be in Darlington on June 10.

back in the USSR

One of the lesser known effects of glasnost in the USSR has been the re-emergence of anarchism. A meeting in Moscow in January launched an anarcho-syndicalist organization. Delegates were present from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov, other cities, and even from Siberia. The Russian anarcho-syndicalists plan to start publishing 'Golos Truda' ("Voice of Labour"), which was the organ of the anarcho-syndicalists during the Russian Revolution until silenced by the Bolsheviks. They also plan to mark the anniversary of the birth of Nestor Makhno and the 175th anniversary of the birth of Bakunin. There is already a lively anarchist scene in Poland, and a group has been formed in Hungary, so the prospects for anarchism in Eastern Europe seem to be favourable. This is one product of glasnost Gorbachev didn't foresee.

Like Your Manifesto, Comrade

Britain's Communist Party is now down to 7,150 members. Which explains its new "policy-review" manifesto. Lots of mixed free-markets and individual enterprise. Desperate stuff. Now let's see, isn't there some other fringe group with member droop? And couldn't they perhaps mutually revive each other? Step forward the new SDCP!

Mr Walesa has his critics among Solidarity's younger members, but cleverly appealed to them at the weekend, asking them to co-operate for a while longer.

However, he is running into some opposition from radicals. When he addressed a rally at Gdansk yesterday, dozens of youths shouted "Down with the traitor" and "No talks with murderers". The disturbance was the first time Mr Walesa has met open criticism at a public rally for agreeing to talk to the authorities.

For many Poles, especially those in the union's militant wing, known as Fighting Solidarity, it is not democracy at all. One of them, Mr Kornel Morawiecki, is unrepentantly urging a total boycott of tomorrow's elections.

So the old men in Peking finally moved to crush the protest in Tiananmen Square. They might succeed in clamping down on the students and workers for now, but they cannot keep a lid on the popular discontent for long. The protest will resurface.

In the West the Tiananmen Square protest has been presented in a typically slanted way as a crusade for Western style "democracy". At the same time, by firing on unarmed demonstrators who have been singing the Internationale the Communist Party has shown its total bankruptcy.

The "Free World" is not free, and the "communist" countries are not communist.

The "Free World" is not free, and the so-called "communist" countries are nothing of the kind.

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