



DIRECT ACTION

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FREE THEM!

**Amnesty
for
miners
in
prison**



The plight of the imprisoned and sacked miners is a sad comment on the weak state of the labour movement today.

Ignored by officials of their own union, anxious to 'get back to normal', and without practical support from the rest of their movement, an unknown number of trade unionists remain incarcerated.

Perhaps ten years ago there would have been a mass movement in defence of these brave men. But not in Thatcher's Britain, and not with Willis's union movement.

The newly-formed National Rank and File Miners' Movement the remaining strike support committees, and groups such as the Fitzwilliam Prisoners' Aid Committee are struggling for amnesty.

But an amnesty won't be won by demonstrations. It won't be won by waiting for a future Labour government--Kinnock has made his position quite clear.

It can only be won through DIRECT INDUSTRIAL ACTION. This always has been and still is the only realistic policy.

FREE THE CLASS WAR PRISONERS!

To get details of prisoners for adoption, write to Direct Action, with a SAE, and we will send them.

LEAKED: BIG EEC COAL JOB CUTS

Direct Action now has in its possession a document from the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology of the European Parliament discussing revelations of the drastic measures planned for the coal industry throughout Europe. The information originally appeared in German and has been translated by the Committee's secretariat.

Below are extracts, giving some idea of the energy pol-

icies planned for the future.

*The abolition of all subsidies on European coal, leading to the loss of 100,000 jobs in the EEC.

*Coal production reduced by 15% through pit closures by 1990. Total jobs lost around 300,000.

*No subsidies for coke or coking coal.

*Probable end to German coal production.

*Drastic removal of import restrictions on coal. If demand for coal increases, imports may double by the end of the century.

*Need for a competitive, small-scale coal industry is stressed.

*Less emphasis on coal as

a source of electricity.

Here is yet further evidence, if any is needed, of the cold-blooded planning behind the government's attack on the miners. The combination of imported fuel, massive unemployment and the inevitable increased reliance on nuclear power adds up to a vast boost for them in terms of the power to control society, and a huge loss for us.

The only answer is to fight back. Not just nationally. Not even throughout Europe. We must fight back all around the world.

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DIRTY FOOTBALL

DIRECT ACTION FOOTBALL VIOLENCE:

Football is in the news as media coverage of soccer violence reaches new levels of hysteria. Here, Dino Marcone traces the real causes of trouble at football matches.

I had been looking forward to the European Cup Final for a long time. On May 29th I switched on the TV in anticipation of a good match, with the cup being lifted by the best team (which I hoped would be Juventus). Instead the match, when it eventually kicked off, turned out to be irrelevant, overshadowed by the deaths of 38 fans in the Heysel Stadium.

THE FACTS

The picture of what happened is confused, and despite the events having taken place before the TV cameras the media coverage has been characteristically superficial.

About an hour before the scheduled kick-off fighting broke out between Liverpool and Juventus supporters in the predominantly Liverpool end of the stadium sections X and Y



Who's to blame?

38 people died due to a combination of the mindless tribalism that capitalist society fosters and the incompetence of the authorities

last season, before the hang 'em and flog 'em brigade could install electric fencing in grounds around the country, otherwise we might have witnessed hundreds of deaths, rather than scores.

RULE BRITANNIA

Football hooliganism isn't a specifically British problem. In Argentina for instance the government suspended the championship last season because of repeated crowd trouble.

Nevertheless it has to be admitted that British football fans on the continent are known for getting into trouble. This is not due to some facet of the "national character" that reduces British workers abroad to drunken barbarians. I believe it stems from the particular strength of chauvinist feeling in British society.

This "Rule Britannia" mentality originates at the top and has for centuries been instilled into the lower classes. The Channel dividing us from Europe is only 22 miles across, but sometimes it seems like an ocean. British business interests belatedly took the UK into the EEC because new markets were needed now that the Empire was only a fond memory. The majority of those who opposed UK entry did so not because it is a bosses' common market which holds nothing for the workers of Europe --but because they objected to being governed from Brussels or Strasbourg rather than London ("sovereignty" they called it). Pathetic.

THE FALKLANDS SPIRIT

No doubt National Front-type fascists also had a hand in the events in Brussels, but this scum only prey on the prejudice, chauvinism and racism already deeply ingrained in society.

Some of the best players in the English League are black, and at every match they are subjected to racist abuse by sections of the crowd. The football authorities

broke out between Liverpool and Juventus supporters in the predominantly Liverpool end of the stadium. Sections X and Y were full of Liverpool fans, but neighbouring section Z was mixed and predominantly Juventus. Some of the Liverpool fans uprooted the flimsy fence separating them from section Z, overwhelmed the handful of police patrolling the divide, and charged into the opposing fans. In panic, Juventus fans fled to the front of the stand trying to escape onto the pitch. In the stampede 38 people (mostly Italians, some Belgians and one Briton) were crushed to death as the retaining wall onto the pitch collapsed under the weight of numbers.

Those are the facts about the Brussels tragedy, but concerning the events leading up to it, and who's to blame, there are many versions.

ATMOSPHERE

Eye-witnesses, Liverpool fans among them, have no doubt it was some Liverpool supporters who caused the deaths. Some returning Liverpool fans however, said that they were provoked.

The atmosphere earlier in the day seems to have been good with the opposing fans playing football against each other, in spite of incidents involving the stabbing of a Liverpool fan and heavy-handed police behaviour after trouble in a jewelry store.

In the aftermath of the tragedy there were some attempts in Britain to spread the blame to Juventus fans. Scenes of them rioting, and a "gunman" were screened on TV without it being made clear that these events had taken place well after the initial trouble and at the other end of the ground.

SCANDALOUS

So, where does the blame lie? Given the history of trouble involving British football fans

38 people died due to a combination of the mindless tribalism that capitalist society fosters and the criminal incompetence of the authorities.

on the Continent, the preparations for the match can only be described as scandalous. Section Z was supposed to be reserved for neutral fans. But many of the tickets were snapped up by Italian immigrant workers in Brussels, and others were sold on the day to Juventus fans who turned up without tickets. Some Liverpool fans who had tickets for sections X and Y were nonetheless bundled into section Z by the police, so that area turned into a mainly Juventus stand in the end reserved for Liverpool fans. An explosive mixture created by the authorities' eagerness to get rid of all their tickets.

TOO LATE

There had been plenty of police outside the stadium to prevent people getting in without tickets, and there was a veritable army on hand when it was too late, but there were few at the crucial time and place. The first reaction of the police at the time of the developing tragedy had been to flail out with batons at those trying to get onto the pitch!

After the deaths it was half an hour before the first ambulance turned up. Understandably, the thousands of riot police and troops who were rushed to the stadium after the deaths were greeted by missiles and simmering anger. The authorities decided to go ahead with the match to defuse the tension and allow them time to empty the stadium without further trouble.

HYSTERIA

Even before the events at the Heysel Stadium, there had

developed a hysteria about "football violence", championed and promoted by the right for its own authoritarian ends. ("There are three sources of violence in our society: Ulster, football hooliganism and picketline violence", says Maggie Thatcher.)

So it wasn't surprising to hear the BBC "experts" for the final (Jimmy Hill, Terry Venables and Graeme Souness) give us their reasoned response to the tragedy. In their opinion, the courts are too soft, youth has no respect for authority any more, national service should be brought back etc., etc.--opinions even less well-informed than what they have to say on the subject of football.

So-called "football violence" is a social problem, with football matches merely the chosen arena at the moment. If successful, the government's proposals to combat hooliganism, such as the bright idea of identity cards for all supporters, might conceivably remove the problem from the football terraces to elsewhere. In the process, the authorities will certainly kill the game in Britain.

But this won't bother them. The new powers and legislation will come in handy for dealing with political opposition.

Someone at Chelsea FC had that other bright idea of an electrified fence around the pitch to keep the cattle in place, but this will probably be forgotten as quietly as possible in the aftermath of the Bradford fire. In a way it was lucky the disaster happened

Some of the "best" players in the English League are black, and at every match they are subjected to racist abuse by sections of the crowd. The football authorities have never done a thing to combat this.

Three years ago the "sun" could greet the sinking of the antique cruiser **Belgrano**

by a nuclear submarine, and the death of nearly 400 "argies" with the headline "GOTCHA!" To the unthinking, "argies" and "wops" are much the same. So why the embarrassment over what happened in Brussels, Maggie? The Falklands Spirit is alive and well.

The system around the world is geared to brutalising the working class, to churn out unthinking fodder for some stinking factory, the dole queue or a tour of duty in Ulster. Add to this the fact that the UK is perhaps the most parochial and insular country in Europe, and events like Heysel Stadium really aren't as difficult to understand as commentators and politicians try to make out.

NOTHING TO TEACH US

England only deigned to play in the World Cup for the first time in 1950. Prior to that it had been thought that the foreigners had nothing to teach us about "our national game". When England were knocked out of the World Cup in 1970 all the excuses were ready, as usual; the food was no good, the dirty Mexicans kept the players awake at night, the first choice goalkeeper had been poisoned, etc., etc.

Today, alone amongst major football nations, the UK thinks top class foreign football unworthy of extensive coverage at home. So the European Football Federation's ban on English teams playing across the Channel is no answer. More contact is needed, not less.

Look at the way many British people get to see Europe at first hand. No tours of France, sampling the culture of Italy,