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**THIS WEEK:  
PART 3 OF SUPER  
BOOK OF  
ROBOTS**

# REACTOR

**BULLETIN**

**PROG 8  
14 MAY 1980**

**IN ORBIT EVERY  
TUESDAY**

**JUDGE DREDD TO JUSTICE H.O. ... RIOTERS IN SPACEPORT  
HAVE IGNORED MY WARNINGS ... STAND BY FOR CASUALTIES!**



**EVERY  
DAY IS JUDGMENT DAY  
IN MEGA-CITY ONE!**

**STOP PRESS!  
Rats terrorise  
London!  
See  
inside!**

Boss Evans in front of his membership on the Day of (re)Action.

LONDON WORKERS BULLETIN No. 8 JUNE 1980

Inside: Print/Post/Rail/D.A.M/P.I.C/L.W.G/I.D.B/more stupid initials/The REAL debate of the decade/C.N.T Congress resolutions/atrocious duplicating/and more.....

London Workers Group - Aims and Principles

The London Workers Group is an organisation of non-party militants working in the London area. Our aim is to establish and encourage communication between workers in all industries, in order to:

- (1) learn from each others experience and increase our understanding of industry and trades unions within capitalist society.
- (2) seek out and maintain links with other anti-capitalists and anti-authoritarians. While recognising the importance of organised struggle in all areas of life, we choose to concentrate on the workplace struggle. We believe that the formation of autonomous workers groups within each industry is vital. The function of these groups is to spread revolutionary ideas and create solidarity among fellow workers. We would also encourage the formation of local workers groups all over London, to complement the industrial organisations.
- (3) devise and produce effective propaganda including a bulletin covering industrial news, workplace reports, analyses and theoretical articles.
- (4) and provide support where asked for.

Our aim is the establishment of a non-governmental, classless society of producers/consumers in free association. It is clear that unions and left-wing parties serve to perpetuate capitalism, not destroy it. We are opposed to all hierarchical organisation and political dogma, hence our opposition to all political parties. We support all actions that tend towards complete workers control and autonomy as has been experienced through workers councils.

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Once again production delays have held up the appearance of the bulletin, which has meant that events have overtaken some of the contributions.

The LWG meets weekly at the Metropolitan Pub, 95 Farringdon Rd, EC1 (two mins. from Farringdon tube). All meetings are open and participation welcomed (except for party recruiters). Every 4-6 weeks we hold a public meeting on a previously advertised subject.

The bulletin is open to all contributions. Apart from the aims and principles and unless otherwise stated views are those of individual contributors.

Contact us c/o: Box W, 182 Upper St. London N.1.

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If we're to put an end to our misery and exploitation and to change society and ourselves, first we've got to unite as a class. We must organise according to factory and firm, irrespective of trade, and according to neighbourhood outside of capitalist parties and unions.

All those who claim to "represent" us: Tories, Labour, Leftists, Unions, are united in one thing at least; they are all committed to managing capital. If and when we move on our own, without "representatives" and seek to change the conditions that enslave us, all of them will oppose us violently. AS THEY DREAM OF ENSLAVING US WE MUST ORGANISE TO DESTROY THEM. (From leaflet for T.U.C anti-cuts Demo.)

Report:

PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPERS' WAGES STRUGGLE

All the print unions are currently in dispute with the Newspaper Society (the employers' organisation which covers provincial and local newspapers) and the Printing Industries Federation (which covers the general printing trade), over wages, hours of work and other conditions. It is often forgotten in Fleet Street, London, that the rates of pay on provincial newspapers (outside Manchester) and general printing establishments outside London and Watford, are not on the same level as the "Street of Lies".

Compositors Claim Following lengthy negotiations with the employers, the National Graphical Association (compositors, linotype operators and some machine operators), has started a national guerilla campaign to get the employers to improve their wages and hours offer. The current offer from the employers is to increase the basic rate to £75 a week and 37½ hours by July, 1982. The union, on the other hand, is claiming a minimum of £80 a week and a 37½ hour week within one year as the basic national minimum rate. The employers claim that their offer is equal to a 20.5 per cent increase (around the current rate of inflation). This has been turned down by the union membership on the grounds that the offer only keeps pace with the cost of living and gives no improvements. Other unions are also discussing the offer and are in the process of balloting their members on whether or not to accept the offer. In this respect the NGA is making the running and if they obtain their demands, then the other unions such as Natsopa, Sogat, Slade, etc., will put in new demands. (The constitutions of the various print unions differ as to how proposals offered to the unions are accepted or rejected by the membership).

Guerilla Action Since the printing industry is a "closed shop" industry, all printworkers belong to their unions and, at

this stage of the class struggle, there are no autonomous printworkers groups working "outside" the union structure. Indeed they could not do so at the present time. Those who think they can -- as some so-called revolutionary groups think they can, just don't know the present situation in most of Britain's major industries. If the militant or even more "advanced" groups are to come into existence, with revolutionary perspectives, they will not come about as the result of the "intervention" of political party organisations

trying to set up sympathetic circles or groups outside the existing structure of the existing reformist unions. But, within the framework of the existing reformist unions, such autonomous workers' groups, genuinely initiating their own struggles, can be brought into existence and gradually build up their strength for future battles. The idea that "mass assemblies" of workers will conduct the struggle shows a lamentable lack of understanding of the problems facing revolutionaries in British Industry. Anyone who has seen so-called mass assemblies" taking place such as in the docks or at British Leyland, must be aware that these can never be fully democratic decision-making bodies, but are in effect the "domain of the demagogues". No fruitful democratic discussions can take place at such assemblies. We have to

learn how to concretely build a movement with revolutionary perspectives without being programmed by so-called ideologically advanced "vanguard" elitist groups of a Bolshevik character.

House Negotiations As soon as the national negotiations are completed, then it usually is followed up by a second stage negotiating round by the union chapels. This is where the real strength of the workers resides, where militancy pays off and where the real struggle takes place, where everyone is involved in meetings, discussions and actions where they become necessary. This chapel structure is basic shop floor organisation, which can have an objective line of development in a revolutionary direction.

Stop Works In the current round of struggle the members are taking action in various kinds of way, depending on the tactical situation. In some places the most effective action is by banning overtime, particularly where shift working is the norm. In others, print workers call mandatory chapel meetings. These consist of officially called chapel meetings which everybody attends "in order to give consideration to the employer's offer". If the meeting is unsatisfactory, then of course the meetings can go on for a very long time. Sometimes, when negotiations are resumed on a "meaningful basis" the chapels go back to work for a time, and then, to consider further improved offers, or a lack of offers, "further mandatory meetings take place" - all in the employers time. You are not on strike, you are not locked out. You are "just considering the proposals". In these cases the employers are usually forced to pay wages during the hours lost. If they don't then the meetings are prolonged even further, until they do pay. (My last chapel meeting took three days in "mandatory chapel meeting"). We were paid in our absence.

Hardly ever in national unions do printworkers allow themselves to be forced outside the building on to picket lines. They only do this when they are physically locked out - for the most part they make sure they are not locked out this way and they sit in. If pay is however suspended, then strike pay is paid and it is usually substantial in the case of the NGA., e.g., during the lock-out at the Sunday Times, the compositors were paid £70 a week while on the picket line. Natsopa found alternative part-time jobs for their members).

Upgrading Under a parallel but separate agreement, Natsopa and Sogat have negotiated an agreement on upgrading, covering machine assistants, bookbinders, photogravure, etc. The grading gives increases after special training on larger and more complex machines, approx. two years. When trainees are sufficiently advanced they are to get 95 per cent of the full rate. Machines are to be re-classified into six major categories for this purpose.

Clerical Rates Natsopa has obtained new rates for clerical workers, ranging from 30.7 per cent for provincial dailies, to 33.2 on weeklies.

Nathanial Soper.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The second paragraph refers to the ICC. For the benefit of those of us not at recent public meetings, this little group of letter day saints have fallen into the sordid habit of coming along to interrupt, direct and monopolise our discussions, and bang on the table to convert us to their superior thinking. Some of the reasons that we cannot oblige are printed above. Others are their conceit, lies and elitism.

NO APOLOGIES ARE EXTENDED TO ANYONE. (Typist)

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## GPO REPORT.

### WHAT ABOUT FRIDAYS ?

Last year, April '79, guerrilla stoppages around the London area sorting offices wrecked a GPO/UPW executive attempt to bring in 'efficiency' measures as part of a wage deal. Although the London District Council (LDC) of the Union supported and semi-co-ordinated that action, the initiative was in the hands of the shop floor, and after 2 weeks it began to spread beyond London. A UPW ballot was called and the executive defeated 6-1, but the action subsided. Everyone thought we'd proved our point.

This year we have a virtually identical wage/efficiency deal. This year the propaganda to submit has quadrupled. The press has gone to town about GPO 'inefficiency' and blamed us, the workers. The GPO has been putting up posters urging faster work in true wartime style, and has sent a personal letter to all 200,000 of us. This year the LDC has accepted and pushed the deal.

#### Response.

Union meetings have been held all over the country, and voting was, unbelievably 7-1 in favour of the deal. Such, is life! The issues have been deliberately confused from above, and by lack of confidence and understanding in the offices.

In our place, 20 out of 70 of us (a normal percentage) turned up for a meeting. I'd expected the worst and was going to go on about the economic crisis, the role of Unions and how working conditions and wages were being undermined all over the country (and world). However, when the 'small print' was read out by the branch secretary, people were unanimous in condemning it.

So we have a deal - a 5% cut in real wages (15% 'rise'), coupled with the 'temporary emergency measures' to deal with lack of staffing (due to shitty wages), attacking our industrial strength.

It looks as if there'll be a Leyland situation, and little resistance for the present. When I collared the two top Union reps at the huge Islington office, I suggested that the 'frighteners' were being put on lower level officials by the upper hierarchy - they told me to 'get out!'

#### Now what?

Whatever the reactions, the attack will continue - to break the GPO monopoly (a main source of our strength), to speed up mechanisation etc. And the 'measures' will bite in early summer, inflaming passions and dispelling some illusions.

Most postal workers aren't really interested in all this till it affects them personally, preferring to let the Union sort it out 'as they're supposed to do', or just saying 'there's fuck all we can do anyway'.

Meanwhile, I have kept up my involvement with a small, loose grouping in London - Rank and File - which has had 2 meetings lately. Involving about 15 people, a few are in the SWP, and over half are on their branch committees. It's informal enough to have some potential, but although most agree with the need for activity and organisation outside (not against) the Union structures, most still wish to 'democratise' or agitate within the Union. In fact it was the SWP members who tried to put down what I was saying, and convinced the rest of the need to 'mobilise the members' for a lobby of the May UPW Conference, a useless task.

#### Revolution begins at home.

On April 18th, a colleague was sent home, and 3 of us walked out in solidarity after a big row. 3 others got disciplinary papers. This seems to have stirred things up in our normally humdrum place, but it was difficult to involve more people. They were unaware of the facts, and had the attitude 'well it's nothing to do with me anyway'. This is how the Employers win using Divide and Rule. No-one ever expects the Union to step in. It is seen as an outside body. However there is rarely any collective get-togethers for decision-making on the floor.

This is the dilemma for me, and other militants. The minority have to stand up and be counted, and this goes throughout all areas of life. It's no good substituting great slogans, rhetoric or explanations as an excuse for inactivity. Nor just 'working through Unions' which do NOT unite or represent working-class people. Whilst arguing for collective action and organisation, people wishing to take action should do so, as an example to the rest..... (cont)

Below is the text of a leaflet I distributed at a 'Rank and File' meeting on the 19th March. Can anyone who agrees with, or is interested by what it says, please contact me at the address below, so that we can discuss the setting up of a Postal Workers Network in London and around the Country (contacts have tentatively been made in Bristol, Wolverhampton, Reading so far).

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THIS IS WHAT WE FIND

THE JOB

Most people work for the wages at the end of the week, and only care about the conditions of their work secondarily. It rarely crosses our colleagues minds about the whole nature and reason for the GPO and alternative ways of running it, and society in general, the world over. We have to encourage such a discussion, arguing against the wage-system, money itself and hierarchical control of our lives at work (and everywhere else). Wage struggles are not enough.

THE UNION

Unions exist to negotiate with the employing class and to mediate between workers and rulers. They do not and can not question the existence of the ruling class, or organise to overthrow it. They are part of the System and try to convince us that we are too. Unions can not be controlled by the members, and to make that our aim is a mistake and demoralising.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The function of Parties is to try to take over the State, and this has proved disastrous for working people in the past. In the present they are hierarchical, authoritarian institutions which manipulate their members, try to take over autonomous libertarian movements (womens', anti-nuclear, community groups, anti-fascist etc.) in order to recruit and 'lead'.

THE ALTERNATIVES

Blueprints and dogmatic opinions are NOT what we need! But the world needs to be changed radically with the abolition of armies, all ruling elites, States, money, police, prisons etc., and the creation of a free, classless society based on human need and love.

In this struggle working people have to organise independantly and oppose all authoritarianism - Unions, Parties, Managements, laws etc, and in personal relationships. We need to create autonomous workers groups in every industry and locality, towards a truly revolutionary movement with diversity, sensitivity and effectiveness.

FORM YOUR OWN INDEPENDANT GROUPS or contact Postal Workers Network (London),  
Box PW, 182 Upper St., N.I.

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NB. My application to Harlech College for a years release from work to study, was turned down. 2 reasons - first, because I have 2 A-levels, and they preferred 'unqualified' people. Secondly because I was confident and specific about what I wanted to study (psychology and history - or what motivates people at various times to resist oppression and control) and they preferred to teach a syllabus of 'basics'. Their attitude, even though we were 'mature' students, seemed to be the same as all teachers - 'superior'. These colleges seem to be merely a release valve for getting working-class people into a middle-class education conveyor belt. The others applying were approx the same age (mid-twenties), from various backgrounds, mostly working-class.

Report:

Direct Action Movement Conference

The Direct Action Movement (DAM) is a national membership organisation of anarchist syndicalists. It was formed just over a year ago from a previous loose federation of groups (including the London Workers). Its last conference was held in Leeds at the end of April. An LWG observer attended.

Activity About 25 people attended from 6 DAM branches. Group reports were heard. Levels of activity varied - in Manchester (10 members) they'd held successful public meetings, leafletted local T.U.C marches and felt they were better known than any other recent anarchist/syndicalist group in the area. Other groups by contrast had little DAM activity to report, people working mostly in other campaigns or general anarchist activity. (e.g: 2 Cardiff members were involved in the police dragnet after the firebombings and Cardiff DAM initiated the Welsh Campaign for Civil and Political Liberties now protesting against the harassment.) DAM membership nationwide was down to 80 (from 100) apparently due to isolated members not in branches falling away. DAM itself had come under a lot of official scrutiny - mail disappearing and phone taps - it was suggested due to the similarity of name with a French group which specialises in blowing up computers.

Resolutions The need for a programme of action, outlining how DAM proposed to get to the society outlined in its aims and principles was agreed and a working party arranged to draft it. The need to establish industrial groups within DAM linking members by industry was agreed. (Arguments were put for and against linking members by trade union, i.e: Rank and File groupings - but this wasn't resolved.) The need for a DAM newspaper was discussed - some felt this was a priority if DAM was to grow. It was felt DAM was as yet incapable of sustaining one - however a commission to examine the possibilities was set up and a press fund with a 10% levy on dues started.

The May 14th T.U.C day of action was discussed and generally condemned as inadequate and opportunistic. Tactics on marches were briefly discussed - various opinions being expressed about anarchist tactics on the March 9th London march. The only concrete proposal was speaking pitches at assembly points. It was agreed to organise a concerted political levy campaign at the end of the year. The next conference will be in Cardiff at the end of July.

A Personal Response: The conference left me with mixed feelings. The DAM has managed to unite people holding a fairly wide spectrum of opinions, under its aims and principles. The most noticeable feature of the weekend was thus the lack of political discussion. Obviously an organisation dedicated to direct action, which regulates itself by its quarterly conferences, can't afford to waste conference time in abstract debate. But I was left with the strong impression that DAM was unwilling to confront the differences of opinion within itself. At the moment that's maybe not very important in most instances (though if it should attract a large membership it may be planting the seeds of endless dispute c.f: the CNT). However in some matters this failure to even argue about political positions raised doubts in my mind as to the revolutionary nature of the DAM.

Trade Unions This was most apparent in the discussion of a draft "provisional programme" that had been circulated with the agenda. DAM is Syndicalist - its committed to fighting for gains here and now while aiming for the creation of a free and classless society, through workers taking over the means of production and distribution. Their aims and principles state: "We believe the only way for the working class to achieve this is for independent organisation in the workplace and community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies." This could obviously encompass anything from rank and fileism, dual unionism, the creation of revolutionary unions, workers councils to autonomous assemblies linked by delegates. However the draft provisional programme stated: "We prefer Syndicalist unionism to trade unionism but we do not specifically aim create the former as both are a means to an end and not an end in themselves, and neither is necessarily the correct way. Unionism serves to organise the workers to fight the bosses and bureaucrats and to educate the workers. They should promote the seizure of production and

(cont over.)

DAM Conference cont.

distribution and the self-management of such by the workers themselves and not by 'professionals' or 'leaders'. " Later on it urges members to join their appropriate trade union and to participate. Members are expected among other things to "change the structure of the union to or to promote more libertarian structures of organisation". If adopted this would clearly commit DAM to engaging in the dead end of Rank and Fileism on the one hand, and on the other to an astonishing (and as far as the LWG is concerned, entirely false) view of the role of unions under capitalism.

No Discussion. It should be noted the draft was not adopted. However discussion of the draft focussed not on its content but what form an "action programme" ought to take. Though the need for a document setting out the DAMs strategy for direct action and outlining tactics was agreed - there was no concrete discussion of what it should say. It was argued that it was foolish to lay down all-purpose strategies - different situations needed different responses. Needless divisive terminology (e.g: Syndicalism) should be avoided it was argued, and it should be written in clear english. (It appeared that some of these comments were intended as oblique criticisms of the draft.) When it came to actual content there was no discussion at all. An Observer from Solidarity suggested that they ought to clarify their attitude to unions with regard to their role in capitalism. The response was a snorted "its not us thats confused" and silence. Still from what little was said it was clear, as it has been at previous conferences, that this 'we know what we mean' attitude hides wide-ranging differences. While activity is that of individual militants this wont cause problems - that wont be the case if the factory groups DAM invisages materialise.

Nuclear Power An example arose in another context, during discussion of a proposed leaflet for the Torness occupation. It emerged that some members were pro-nuclear energy (nuclear power was necessary for an industrialised society it was argued - the only problem being one of control.) The leaflet thus couldnt be issued in DAMs name - only in that of a DAM anti-nuclear caucus. In the discussion it was clear that very diff-

erent conceptions of the role of technology in a free society, and even of the nature of that society, were involved. One line of argument seemed to suggest a free society would be the present society under the control of the workers not the bosses. Indicating that for some DAM members the analysis of capitalism goes no deeper than, for example, the superficial critiques offered by any middle-class trotskyist group. (I.E: that its all a matter of production and property relations, and socialism equals "workers control" so called.) Given the fragmentary nature of the actual discussion this is perhaps unfair.

Syndicalism On the surface however the DAM seems to reflect the ambiguities of the British syndicalist tradition - combining both revolutionary and reformist perspectives within one organisation, through focussing attention on the form of the syndicalist organisation, or of the future society, as opposed to its content. And though an appeal to the anarchist tradition could once have been in itself some form of guarantee as to that content; given the debasement of notions of class struggle anarchism in the middle-class 'anarchist' currents in the sixties, that can no longer be enough unless what is meant is clearly spelt out.

Hopefully the proposed Action Programme when produced will make clear some of these apparent ambiguities and contradictions, and if not dispel them as merely apparent, then help the DAM itself to confront the problems involved.

DAM can be contacted at Box 2, 164/166 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BN

Des Tributive

N.B. A number of controversial issues are raised by the DAM conference. We hope members of groups (incl. DAM itself) and individuals will contribute to the discussion of them, either at our meetings or through the bulletin. The views of all would be very welcome.

B.R.B. TRIES IT ON

British Rail have decided to attempt to run a 'skeleton' service on May 14th when the T.U.C. has called for a day's strike and local 'actions' after assessing the response to a quiz/questionnaire sent out to all its 180 000 staff. It said;

"We wish all our staff to know that there is no industrial dispute between the British Railways Board and the Trade Unions and the Unions have not called on their members to strike against their employer.

"The Board therefore expects all its staff who would normally be required to report for duty on 14th May to do so and wishes it to be quite clearly understood that any member of the staff who fails to do so will be treated as absent without leave and will not be paid for that day.

"I am sure you realise that the Board has an obligation to its customers to provide a service and any disruption or diminution of that service puts the Board's revenue at risk and, moreover, gives rise to a loss of confidence which places that revenue even further at risk.

"To enable us to plan the workload and rosters will you please let us know by Tuesday, 6th May, whether you intend to report for your rostered turn of duty on 14th May."

Of course it is important for the bosses to reassure their loyal servants that they can get to work and show the world how the tide of public opinion is turning against those nasty 'Unions'. Hence the great importance of unity amongst transport workers in making a general strike effective. But obviously we do not have that. And for the unions to 'urge' their members to strike rather than make it official can be seen as a deliberate policy of divide and rule.

The management technique of sending out questionnaires appears also to be an attempt at thrusting forward as trade unions become ideologically unbalanced (i.e. of upholding the rule of law at the same time as 'opposing' the Conservatives), and emulating perhaps the much heralded management technique of balloting the workers at B.L.

There is no doubt that B.R.B. is working on a get tough approach with its workers as the tightening money supply forces them to implement quite far reaching productivity (i.e. technology and understaffing) proposals. The rail unions have always been a soft touch as far as selling conditions and jobs for peanuts (how do you think we got the twenty percent increase so easily) is concerned. It has always been, and will always be up to the membership themselves to resist moves towards speed-ups and increased productivity. We must have coordinated workers groups, totally independent of union bureaucracy, to keep up and extend this resistance with a mind towards complete workers control through revolutionary workers councils:

A Railway Worker.

Correspondence:

Letter from Pour une Intervention

Communiste (France) We have received your letter as well as the two issues of the LWG Bulletin. We have made photocopies of the latter to circulate amongst as many comrades as possible. We have also translated into French the declaration of principles.

1. Impressions of the Bulletin. We found the rift between the Aims and Principles, (which you could define as councilist, or more or less anti-syndicalist) and certain articles of a clearly anarcho-syndicalist orientation rather confusing.

How can you say that the "unions...serve to perpetuate capitalism" and want to form anarchist unions? This would imply that the unions do not perpetuate capitalism by nature (organs managing wage labour) but because they have 'bad' leaders. In this case you would only have to replace these leaders by 'good' leaders (anarchists?) and everything would be fine! The example of the CNT is there to show up what this means - purges and purification from May '37 to the last congress...what an example!

In this connection we note that the information in issue No.6 of the bulletin (CNT: An Assessment) is largely either mistaken, or long since out of date (for example concerning current tendencies). In particular it attempts to convince the reader that the CNT is still the arena for the regroupment of radicalised workers when in fact (especially after recent splits and expulsions) they are largely outside the CNT and some of them are trying to create the forms of genuinely revolutionary organisation (autonomous collectives).

To return to the positions of the LWG, we are interested by the wish to contribute to the "formation of autonomous workers groups within each industry". But again it is essential that these groups are not understood as the nuclei of a new mass organisation, which would only amount to the formation of new unions under a new name. It is also necessary to understand that the formation of these groups does not depend on the wishes of this or that particular group (though they can contribute) but on the movement of the class itself. Concerning our position on this point, see 'On Workers' Autonomy'.

2. Perspectives. We have contacted LWG following a suggestion by Solidarity to engage it in an international debate which

a number of groups participate in (see the English edition of the International Discussion Bulletin edited by Kronstadt Kids/ Authority). We would like to know if the LWG - or its councilist tendencies is interested in such a debate. Anyway, we are open to discussion with you individually, or with the group.

- We hope to continue to receive the Bulletin. We will keep you in touch with Jeune Taupe. Fraternally, for the PIC, Michel.

The PIC are a French left communist group and produce the paper Jeune Taupe (c/o Librairie Paralleles, 47 Rue Saint-Honore, 75001 Paris, France.) A translation of their article 'On Workers' Autonomy' and the english version of the International Discussion Bulletin referred to are available from Bpx 666, 182 Upper St. London N.1. About 40p inc. postage.

The PICs' letter and the International bulletin raise a lot of interesting and extremely contentious issues. All views on them (perhaps most appropriately through contributions to the bulletin) very welcome needless to say. Below we print one persons reply to the letter and on the next page another persons impressions of the International Bulletin.

We'd like to make clear that the London Workers Group is an open workers group - neither councilist, anarchist or syndicalist as such, though members have been/ are any or none of these. The bulletin is open to all contributions. Apart from the aims and principles, or unless otherwise stated, all views expressed are those of the individual contributors. Meanwhile back at the Batcave....

Personal response to PICs' letter: I welcome the PICs' initiative if it can lead to an exchange between revolutionaries engaged in actual workplace struggle (as opposed to armchair class-watchers). Personally I reject unionism and syndicalism. However your equation of forming anarchist unions with the replacement of present union leaderships with anarchists is nonsense. Anarcho-syndicalism may be a mistaken strategy but to ignore the qualitative difference between it and state-capitalist unionism only weakens your argument against them both. And to

(response to PIC cont.)

criticise anarche-syndicalism purely in terms of 'leadership' is to evade the real issues. On 'leadership': From one point of view unionism is an expression of working class weakness inasmuch as it indicates self-imposed limits to how far workers are prepared to go. But in the real world, in a historical situation where the working class in this country is still crushed between 50 years of social-democratic and stalinist "success" by capitalism; where the majority of workers haven't broken with capitalism to the extent of militant reformism within capitals institutions let alone any significant autonomous mass activity; then any organisation of revolutionaries or by workers is going to face the problem of 'leaders' - even the PIC. The problem of 'leaders' like the problem of 'militants' wont be solved until class struggle has generalised to the point where 'leadership' and 'militancy' are irrelevant i.e: the social revolution.

The deficiencies of the CNT article have been pointed out to us. The main reason for printing it was that there was nothing better - most articles in english being either history, mythology or misleadingly partisan propoganda. With all it's defects it gave some idea of the debates within the CNT which is more than most accounts do. It was reprinted as much for the relevance of these debates to libertarian and syndicalist strategies in this country. Incidentally our Intro. was careful not to suggest that the CNT was the "arena for the regroupment of radicalised workers" as you put it. However we know even less of other developments than we do of the CNT. Perhaps you could tell us more.

Our discussion of autonomous workers groups is part of ongoing internal debate. To take up your points - obviously working class autonomy in the full sense (as in the normal sense of workers councils) will only come into being through the "movement of the class" as you put it. But presumably your not suggesting that they will 'spontaneously' emerge without initiatives by individuals and groups of workers in the preceding period, even if equally obviously such initiatives wont be responsible for leading or producing them by acts of will. I find your remarks about a new mass organisation unintelligible due to your use of the word "union" in an apparently metaphysical sense. Unions are

historical institutions not intellectual categories. Until mass workers struggles begin to generalise they will still be the sectional acts of 'wage militancy' that unions are there to preserve. But equally until workers develop their struggles to the extent of realising the need to exceed these limitations, any autonomous activity will necessarily consist of reappropriating some of the 'organisational' functions (communications tactical analysis etc) that unionism has usurped and is no longer able to allow to be used. If this kind of 'mass organisation' is what you mean by a new unionism then you seem to have lost touch with reality to retreat into neo-marxicisms. The fact that unless struggles successfully generalise into social revolution any 'organisational initiative' will be smashed or incorporated can only be an argument for getting it right this time.  
DT.

Personal Impressions of the International Discussion Bulletin.

This is a record of discussions from a number of groups from France, England, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. The English edition has been edited by Kronstadt Kids/Authority. They are all for workers autonomy, in that they see themselves as making a contribution to class consciousness and not as bearers of it. They reject all notion of groups that prefigure the revolution becoming a focus for it. The emancipation of the proletariat is the task of the proletariat itself, and not of any separate power outside the class or indeed arising from within the class itself. Here I am making just a few observations on the texts in the bulletin:

1. General. Any international discussion between revolutionary groups should be welcomed. The class struggle is indivisible, and the revolution will be international or it will not be at all. But if the aim of these groups is to facilitate 'the maximum exchange of information on the autonomous proletarian struggles against the capitalist system where they live' surely it would be better to concentrate on actual experiences in various struggles? Only the contribution from the C.A.O (Madrid) does this. Perhaps this is simply due to

(International Bulletin Cont.)

the fact that the groups are just getting to know each other, but at any rate it gives an overall impression of intellectual separation. On the other hand the willingness to confront critical issues without degenerating into a pseudo-leftist libertarianism underlies a high level of theoretical debate. I think that LIG members should consider the possibilities for participating in such international discussions.

2. Crisis and Class Consciousness.

There seems to be a fairly wide divergence of views on these issues. Solidarity does not seem to recognise any serious "internal contradictions" within capitalism which are driving it to economic crisis (but rather a 'constant crisis in terms of social and authority relations'). Torigma (Manchester) regards a preoccupation with economic crises as extremely dangerous in that this prevents a coherent understanding of the totality of capitalist relations (alienation, wage-labour, authority etc.) - "Our critique is total or it is nothing."

PIC by contrast sees the crisis as internal to the movement of capital, and "as being a necessary condition for the generalisation of the class struggle." But the crisis is not a sufficient condition for the revolution, nor is the relationship between crisis and class consciousness purely mechanical (for example there was no generalisation of the class struggle in the years after 1929). ((not about Spain? - typists note))

But the PIC does seem to be verging towards a fatalistic point of view. How do they explain the 1968 revolts in France, coming at a time when capitalism's problems were far less acute than they are today?

What I think should be emphasised is that there is no contradiction between an understanding of objective conditions in capitalism, and at the same time of the subjective, creative role that can and must be played by the proletariat. On the one hand economic fatalism - the view that when and only when capitalism reaches its climactic crisis society will automatically transform itself into communism - will in fact only deliver

us into a third world war. The class struggle must become revolutionary before capitalism is forced to take a leap in the dark. On the other hand it is equally irresponsible, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary (unemployment, inflation, preparation for war), to deny that the crisis is deepening. This amounts to asserting that in its own terms capitalism has the solution to the problem of overproduction and underconsumption, and that it is not historically bankrupt. Again, such an attitude only breeds complacency and reformism. As revolutionaries we must avoid falling into either of these traps of partial consciousness.

3. The Role of Anarchism. Torigma's defence of, and

PIC's attack on anarchism both fail to confront the critical issue. How can the PIC assert that 'the old workers' movement isn't superseded by fine words, but by radically criticising it' yet base their critique of anarchism on a string of quotations from Bakunin? Most anarchists would probably agree that while Bakunin had a fairly shrewd political insight, at least 50% of what he said is rubbish. Torigma only hints at the limitations of anarchist ideology, but avoids a radical critique.

Surely the point is that anarchism's demand for freedom in the absolute sense is based purely on the fusion of individual desires; it seeks to leave the historical terrain for their realisation in practise displaying a deliberate contempt for method. Anarchist ideologues still see the revolution in terms of canvassing majorities for the 'idea' of anarchy rather than as a historical process carried out by the conscious acts of the revolutionary class. Revolutionary action is now invariably condemned by anarchists as 'non-libertarian'. Anyone who doubts this need only look at the correspondence in Freedom concerning the intervention at the 'Debate of the Decade'. PIC and some of the other groups have elaborated on this elsewhere but the exchange of views in the International Discussion Bulletin about it is unconvincing.

E.D.

## THE LONDON WORKERS GROUP...THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1980

(by Dave, a personal view)

It's largely been a case of a great deal of discussion, some activity as a group, but a lack of consistent presence in most industrial areas.

There've been some very interesting public meetings:

'INDUSTRIAL TRAINEES'. People delved into their own experience as printers, fitters, toolmakers, etc., and contrasted the conditions of industrial training for skilled labour, with the training of university students for their future in the managerial class in society. The National Union of Students was seen as useless, and trainees encouraged to educate themselves and each other through lunchtime clubs, meetings and general involvement in the class struggle.

'THE STEEL INDUSTRY'. On the steel strike. It had to spread to be able to win - the Unions were condemned as divisive and concentrating on controlling the strikers. The autonomy and imagination of the pickets was enthusiastically supported. Our only contact with them was through friends squatting in the Kings Cross area, who were socialising with the pickets in the local pubs and inviting some of them back home.

'DEMONSTRATIONS' was a popular meeting, when run-of-the-mill protest demos were condemned as manipulated by the Left and Unions (and police), and just symbolic releases of energy. Both the form and content of these demos should be challenged with anger being expressed by seizure of the streets and by revolutionary ideas instead of crap like 'Tories Out!'. All stewarding should be opposed.

'CREATING AUTONOMOUS WORKERS GROUPS' is one of our main aims, yet the reality has always been more complex. Many people were working in isolated or unorganised places. The Unions and Left are all the time trying to institutionalise and control any independent struggles and ideas, and autonomous groups are only just beginning to counter this. But there is a long way to go, and our ideas are only in formation.

The meetings have brought between 15 - 25 people together every few weeks for a range of open discussions. Unfortunately, very few women have been coming along or working within the group. There's one group who 'send' members to our meetings - the International Communist Current (ICC), a 'councilist' Party. While not a usual Leftist outfit, they are Leninists. They have some interesting ideas - anti-left, anti-Union, for workers assemblies and internationalism, but like all Leftists are primarily concerned with 'building' their Party. Although we don't allow manipulative groups at our meetings (in order that open, collective discussion can take place), they have tended to contribute to, rather than dominate discussion. But they try to polarise things to sloganeering and their political lines. We would encourage people to come along as equals and individuals, not sheep, not hacks!

### THE T.U.C. AND THE LEFT

Apart from meetings, some of us took part in the TUC demo in March, and with other groups (Kronstadt Kids, Rising Free, Xtra! collective, Oxford Anarchists, Ecology and Anarchism, and others) wrote and distributed 5,000 leaflets attacking both the world-wide Capitalist system and all its institutions, as well as the TUC and the way it controlled marches. We tried to incite some of the 80,000 marchers to break out of the TUC stewards control, but although our leaflets were enthusiastically received (honest!), no-one made any attempt to use their initiative, and refuse to queue like sheep, instead spilling out onto the streets. We made our own way to Traf. Sq., were chased round the backstreets by pigs, and heckled Union bureaucrats.

A week later, a similar alliance of 35 - 40 of us went to the 'Debate of the Decade' between various high-ups in the Labour Left and Trotskyist Parties. We printed our own tickets, and attempted to oppose the organisation of the sterile and manipulated event, to bring revolutionary ideas into it, and direct debate. We managed to drown out some of the lectures from the Platform - public school types like Paul Foot, Peter Hain, Wedgewood-Benn. We were threatened by stewards but left in disgust anyway.

LWG activity, cont.

On May 14th, the TUC 'Day of Action', 3 of us with about 20 others, went along to Central Hall, where 500+ people subjected themselves to the speeches of various Union leaders - Alan Fisher (NUPE), Alex Kitson (TGWU), etc. We heckled, opposing the reformist, nationalistic and hypocritical rhetoric. Some workers (apparently from SOGAT) joined in. Then we were viciously attacked by a score of stewarding thugs, dragged from our seats, kicked and thrown from the Hall. So much for 'free speech'... only if you're a bureaucrat, and fuck the rest. We have no intention of being beaten into submission... by anyone.

For the first time in 5 years, our efforts paid off and it didn't rain on May 1st, so we could celebrate workers' day in true fashion - at the Mayday Anarchist Picnic. Over 100 people turned up in Regents Park. The by now traditional re-enactment of the Siege of Kronstadt on the boating lake was very successful (unlike the original in 1921) - Trotsky and his Red Army were all machine-gunned and only 3 of us fell in! (Or were they pushed?)

AUTONOMOUS GROUPS

There are various independent workers' groups around that we know of or are involved in, and presumably there are more in various industries, workplaces and areas that we don't know of, but which may be anything from informal discussion groups to active resistance. A genuinely autonomous group would be against all Union and Left structures, but there is confusion on these issues.

Groups we've been involved in include::

PRINTWORKERS. There's an autonomous network in Fleet St., which I believe is largely informal, participating in Chapel organisation, pushing for radical action. In some papers they are pressing for a 4-day week.

RAILWAY. An attempt to form, out of the ruins of previous Left-dominated Rank and File groups, a Railway Workers Group with a more independent, collective activity. It's <sup>not</sup> clear how it will develop.

POST OFFICE. After 4 years of various Rank and File groupings, with the SWP constantly trying to gain control, a Postal Workers network is being formed, at this stage for communication between different offices and towns, but specifically opposed to Unions and Political Parties.

PUBLIC SERVICES. A 30 - 40 strong CPSA Anarchist network, including a London group, has been active for a year now in the strikes and struggles in that sector.

Groups we've been in some contact with;

Hospital Workers group (Oxford), Ford Workers Combine (lost contact), Catering Rank and File (formerly independent but now merged into GMWU Catering section).

There's also the 2 Direct Action Movement groups (South and West London), and an attempt to form a Greenwich Syndicalists (no contact).

If anyone has information about such independent activity and organisation can they contact us?

For a small group of 10 - 15 people, we seem to be doing quite a lot, but we have to recognise that the extent of our influence and ideas in London workplaces is miniscule at present. But we're just one group trying to inspire a whole host of others - a movement. Our strength has been the support we give to each other, and our efforts to develop our ideas. Our weakness is that we have failed to respond to London struggles outside our own experience - hospital occupations, steelworkers pickets, and various strikes and organising attempts.

We would welcome anyone to come to our meetings. We have no formal membership or leaders, or fixed ideology, but are an open collective trying to contribute to the class struggle.

MEET EVERY TUESDAY..8 pm.

THE METROPOLITAN PUB, 95 FARRINGDON RD, ECI....(Farringdon tube).

5th. CONGRESS OF THE CNT - AIT (National Confederation of Labour - International Association of Workers) Held in Madrid, December 1979

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

Introduction: In the last three years, anarchists and syndicalists working in Spain have been recreating the National Confederation of Labour (CNT), the anarchist-syndicalist union almost 2 million strong during the revolution in the 1930's. It had been smashed, along with the entire working class, by Franco's fascist army, although groups had managed to engage in guerilla resistance over the last forty years. Founded in 1910, the last Congress was in May 1936, when the outbreak of the social revolution 2½ months later was foreseen and prepared for.

However, there were (and still are) problems of policy and structure, and arguments over the role of the Confederation. One of the disasters during the revolution was the way the CNT was gradually incorporated and used by the Republican State, through which all the liberal, socialist and communist parties tried to destroy it.

This is no academic historical discussion because the same dilemmas exist today. With a fluctuating membership (about 200,000), the CNT members are trying to resolve fundamental problems: How can the local federations and unions of the CNT today remain independent and revolutionary organisations, whilst aiming to 'represent' workers in day-to-day struggles? We all know and experience how Unions control us. Their structure is hierarchical, their policy is one of cooperation with the capitalist system, hoping for reforms or crumbs which are no longer even negotiable. Their role is 'representation'; that is, they pretend to speak for us on the shop floor while in fact they collaborate with the employers at all levels and help them impose their programmes - today these are increased discipline, wage-cuts and the rationalisation of industry. It is when we reject 'representation' and speak and act for ourselves that we begin to discover our strength and desires.....Which brings us back to the CNT.

Although a Union, it is undoubtedly different from the organisations we have experienced and we can learn a great deal from it. Some questions you should ask yourselves while looking at the 'resoluciones' below are: What will prevent the CNT going the way of all unions, and becoming a permanent representative structure above its members? How do you best try to encourage working class unity, yet recognise that you are only a minority in most industries and localities? Is the relationship between CNT unions and general assemblies of all workers positive or divisive? How can struggles spread without bureaucratic structures and decision-making? What is the relationship with members of the now larger reformist Unions in Spain? How do struggles at work link up to the whole of social life, avoiding being a collection of compartments, campaigns and slogans?

And finally, what conclusions do we draw for what we all should be doing here in London and in various industries, so that our ideas can make a more effective contribution to the struggles around us and so that we, as a class, are capable of abolishing exploitation.

Notes on the text:

a) There are problems in the translation of the meanings of certain words. An important example is the word 'sindicato', which we have translated as 'Union' (leaving in the inverted commas to remind ourselves of the differences with Unions here). Also 'empresas', which we have translated as 'enterprises' - a word we don't normally use much in English, but which in Spain covers a company, firm or nationalised industry. 'Ramo' has been translated as 'department'. Its literal meaning is 'branch' and in this context we assume it to mean a shift, line, shop or section within a large workplace.

b) These resolutions don't cover all aspects of CNT organisation and policy - for example, being a class-wide organisation a member joins and remains in her local federation ('Union') whatever her job, but is active in her industrial 'section', e.g. construction, entertainment, communications, transport, etc.

c) There was apparently a conference held soon after of members who disagreed with aspects of the Madrid Congress and general CNT activity, especially its concentration on workplace activity.

d) Recommended reading: A. Meltzer, "A New World in our Hearts"; "Wildcat Spain"; J. Peirats: "Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution".

### Summary of Resolutions

#### 'Union' Action in Workplaces

\* The first priority of 'Union' (Syndical) Action in workplaces ('Empresas o centros de trabajo') must be in the interests of the CNT 'Union' section, bearing in mind that a permanent interrelationship must exist between the 'Union' section and the 'Union'. CNT 'Union' action, for effective development, needs to take place in an atmosphere of complete 'Union' freedom which, amongst other things, means an implicit recognition of 'Union' sections in workplaces on the part of different employers.

\* Faced with generalized conflict, whether industrial or social, particular or general, 'Union' sections, in close collaboration with their 'Union', should mobilise all their resources of solidarity towards a complete resolution of the conflict.

#### Methods of Action

\* The CNT will adopt its traditional tactic of direct action, which for labour means a boycott of production which, depending on its level of application, will require the active solidarity of the different CNT bodies.

\* In the process of manufacturing, the boycott of production would be achieved through strikes and sabotage.

\* The strike, understood as a total paralisation of the productive process, must not submit itself to any predetermined form or legal constraints, given that it should end only once the stated demands have been achieved or, in the absence of this, when the strikers have reached the limit of their forces. To end a strike for legal reasons leaves it weakened as a weapon and facilitates its integration and neutralisation by the system.

\* The CNT reaffirms its support of sabotage as an effective form of pressure against the productive system, which being at the same time ideally suited to the current characteristics of the CNT.

\* The use of whichever of these methods of pressure or struggle should have been agreed by the decision-making bodies of the CNT, so as to be approved and supported by the Confederation.

#### Collective Negotiation

\* The CNT affirms its right to be present at negotiations about conditions of work which affect its members and the working class, provided that negotiations take place directly between workers and management, without any intervention by any type of organisation, whether governmental, political or administrative.

#### 'Union' Elections

\* The CNT rejects participation in 'Union' elections, a policy which is contrary to the essence of anarchosyndicalism. Union elections imply the implantation in the workplace of bourgeois parliamentarianism and are imposed by the government with the support of the collaborationist Unions.

\* Union elections are an attempt to put a break on the process of workers' organisation in their class Unions and to destroy the factory general assembly as the best expression of unity of action. This practice implies taking the guts out of Union organisations, so that union functions pass into the hands of workplace committees which, bit by bit, transform themselves into bureaucracies.

\* Union elections are conducive to a new, vertical form of unionism, based on permanent bureaucratic committees which impede direct action of workers in their workplaces, reducing their participation to a simple dropping of slips of paper into a ballot box. Further, it foments division within the working class, by granting a series of privileges to committee members, privileges which at no time can the rest of the workers take advantage of.

\* Union elections and workplace committees are only an attempt to impiant European Unionism and to impede the radicalisation of conflicts. The workplace committees are the vehicle and the guarantee of the application of social contracts foisted on the shoulders of the workers.

\* The CNT calls on those workers who are members of workplace committees, seeing their function and direction, to leave them immediately. At the same time the CNT calls on all its sections and on all workers in general to refuse the representation constituted by these committees.

\* The CNT reaffirms its non-participation in Union elections, committing itself to an active boycott of these elections on a national scale.

#### Assemblies

\* The CNT supports factory or departmental assemblies for making decisions on problems directly affecting each factory or department, in order to obtain greater strength in action against management.

\* The presence of the CNT in such assemblies will be as a 'union' or 'union' section, and will as such propose its alternatives. The organisation will never merge into these assemblies, whatever the demand or agreement, given that the only people to make decisions in the CNT are its affiliates.

\* The CNT will, however, accept the agreements of assemblies, provided that they don't go against its principles, tactics and ends. In the latter case, it will respect such agreements, but will neither accept nor defend them; on the contrary, it will try to show the errors inherent in putting them into practice.

\* CNT affiliates can only be represented, in principle, by their own CNT representatives, with the exception that in a free assembly of all the workers in a workplace these workers decide together to defend agreements which do not go against the tactics and aims of the CNT and which necessitate the direct election of representatives, mandated from the assembly to fulfill specific mandates or requirements of that assembly.

#### Economic Crisis

\* The CNT rejects measures to regulate employment and proposes as an alternative: the accumulation of economic statistics on each company; to propose restructuring of sectors without loss of jobs; coordination with workers of other enterprises in the same situation, in order to act together; collectivisation, provided that a prior study of the enterprise and the sector show this to be advisable, and the requisition, by means of capital from public funds, leaving management of the enterprise in the hands of the workers, without state intervention.

\* The theme of the economic crisis must be seen from the point of view of full employment and the defence of jobs, by means of supportive action from the 'Unions' and the workers.

#### The Workers Charter and the 'Marco Agreement'<sup>1/</sup>

\* The CNT rejects the Worker's Charter, and not only this particular one but any other, constituting as it does a government intervention in relations between labour and capital.

\* The Workers Charter, together with the mobilisation of the collaborationist trade unions, is trying to impose on Spain the European model of integrated Unionism, of which the 'Marco Agreement' is a good example, an authentic social contract laid on the backs of the workers and against their interests.

\* Based on the principles of the 'Unions' and sections of the CNT, we must use every opportunity to argue against the establishment of the Workers Charter and the 'Marco Agreement'

<sup>1/</sup> This seems to be some kind of social contract but we haven't been able to find out exactly what or how best to translate it!

## Ideological Principles

- \* The CNT is an anarcho-syndicalist organisation, by which we understand the synthesis of the theory and practice of anarchism, acting within and beyond all types of workers association and coming together in the 'Union'. It consists of a synthesis between anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism, so as to push for a change in the existing society from the world of work.
- \* We understand by revolutionary syndicalism no less than that movement which, springing up from amongst the exploited and oppressed classes, aspires to the destruction of the established system, by means of direct and anti-authoritarian action, to dismantle the mechanism of domination, placing all the means of production in the service of the workers. The workers will take whatever decisions they wish, in whatever circumstances, without recognising any other kind of mediation, imposition or power which does not emanate from those same workers.
- \* The CNT is anticapitalist; capitalism, whatever its present and future transformations, represents economic exploitation derived from the private ownership of the means of production. State capitalism (a system such as that of the Soviet Union), for its part, is the ownership of the means of production by the state and by the state bureaucracy. In neither system are the workers in control of their own work or their decisions.
- \* The CNT is antistatist. One of the ends of the CNT is the destruction of the state, representative of the dominant class, and which sustains and institutionalises the economic forms of exploitation through parliaments, elections, senates, constitutions, arbitration bodies, police and other repressive bodies and the army.
- \* The CNT is also antimilitarist, federalist, internationalist, and its activity is based on solidarity and mutual aid. In addition, following from the idea that theology is in the root of all political government, anarcho-syndicalism is against all religions and churches, as well as all philosophies and ideologies which oppose the critical development of the individual.
- \* The CNT acts by direct action, which implies going for the resolution of conflicts and contradictions straight to the protagonists involved, without intermediaries alien to the problem they are dealing with. In the field of labour, this is the relation between employers and workers, without intermediaries of any kind.
- \* Direct action, which to a superficial observer can appear as violent action, is something very different, even though it may involve and can involve, at a certain point, revolutionary violence.
- \* Direct action does not presuppose individual or isolated action by one person, but rather collective action and solidarity of all the workers to resolve their problems in confrontation with those individuals who hold power and who are the cause of these problems.
- \* Direct action leads us to reject parliaments, parliamentary elections and referendums, institutions which mediate. In the economic field, we reject all kinds of arbitration bodies between capital and labour, such as mixed tribunals, arbitration commissions, etc., showing ourselves to be in favour of direct confrontation with capital and the state.
- \* The ultimate aim of the CNT is libertarian communism. That is to say that once capitalism and the state have disappeared through revolutionary action, the workers will take charge of production and self-manage it themselves. Furthermore, we are for the free and voluntary association which begins with the sovereign individual, emancipated from all alienation, culminating in an Iberian Federation of Autonomous Libertarian Communes. This is the project of society of anarcho-syndicalism and of the CNT.