

ORGANISE!

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THE VOICE OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

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60p

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ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN



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FIGHT BACK

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DOCKERS

INLA FEUD - POLITICS OF
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J.S.A. REPORT

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

and much, much more

WELCOME

This issue of 'Organise! The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism' appears in a period of 'political instability' for our wee province.

The 'Peace Process' has to all appearances broken down, the IRA and INLA cease-fires are over, threatening noises are coming from the loyalist paramilitaries.

The British government has announced an election system which is an incomprehensible mixture of LIST and MCP systems!

The marching season is back with a vengeance, with our poor besieged police force caught in the middle of all this nasty tribal violence.

On top of all this the government has begrudgingly admitted that we've been poisoned for years on contaminated beef, and all in the name of increased profit!

As all this goes on the onslaught on our class continues in the form of casualisation, shit levels of pay, bad working conditions (for those of us who can get work), thousands of job losses, attacks continuing on our health service. This isn't just happening to workers here, its happening all over the world.

The continued struggle of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers for reinstatement provides us with inspiration, and a powerful example of internationalism and class unity in action, in taking on the bosses. Organise!, along with trade unionists, various socialists (not including the 'this committces not radical enough' SWP) and concerned individuals, have got together and formed a Belfast Liverpool Dockers and Families Support Group in order to raise publicity and much needed cash for the locked out dockers and their families.

This year also sees the 110th May Day and the 60th anniversary of the Spanish Revolution. Organise! will be organising an exhibition of photos and propaganda from the period, along with video showings and some discussions, to commemorate the achievements of the Spanish workers from 1936-39. Contact us for more info

Obituary



The recent death of our friend and comrade Albert Meltzer came, despite his years, as a shock to those of us at Organise! who had the pleasure to know him.

Albert, who died on Tuesday 7th of May, following a stroke, was born on 7th January 1920. He had given just over 60 years of activism to the class struggle, to anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism.

His commitments included the Anarchist Black Cross, membership of the Black Flag editorial collective from its inception 22 years ago, and membership of the anarcho-syndicalist Solidarity Federation (formerly the Direct Action Movement or the DAM) the British section of the International Workers Association. He was also an honorary researching contributor for the Kate Sharpley Library and had written, co-authored or edited several books, as well as contributing numerous articles to the libertarian press.

I do not feel that I, having only met Albert on a few occasions can do him justice in these few words, in all probability no-one could. Those seeking a tribute to the life of Albert Meltzer should read his memoirs, published shortly before his death.

'I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels', was published earlier this year by AK Press, the modesty of the sub-title, 'sixty years of commonplace life and anarchist agitation' says much about Albert in itself. In the words of his close comrade Stuart Christie anarchism had been '...the guiding star which has fuelled Albert's thankfully incurable and infectious optimism and faith in the ultimate common sense of humanity'.

We would like to dedicate this issue of organise to Albert's memory and to the continued struggle to build a Anarcho-Syndicalist international capable of fighting for, and achieving, a free society for us all.

Aims and Principles

1. Organise! is a working class organisation.
2. We aim to create a free and classless society. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery and replace them with workers control of both production and distribution for 'Need not Profit'.
3. We believe that only the working class can change society from the present system of chaos and inequality to a society based on co-operation, mutual aid and equality. This change must be achieved by the conscious participation of the workers themselves. We oppose all those who would set themselves up as 'new leaders'.
4. The only way to achieve this revolutionary change is by the formation of an independent workers organisation, the 'Anarcho-Syndicalist Union', within industry and the community, in federation with others in the same industries and localities, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies.
5. The Anarcho-Syndicalist Union is one controlled by the workers themselves, it is opposed to the sectionalism of traditional trade unionism and is open to membership of those outside and inside industry, it will unite not divide the working class. Any and all delegates will be subject to immediate recall to that membership.
6. The class struggle is world-wide and must recognise no artificial borders or boundaries. We must fight all attempts by capitalism to divide our class by setting worker against worker, employed against unemployed, man against woman and protestant against catholic.
7. The armies and police of this and all states do not serve to protect us, they exist as the repressive arm of the state.
8. At present Organise! is a propoganda group. It is the role of Organise! to support workers in struggle, to expose the weakness of traditional trades unionism and to work for the creation of an Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation in Ireland.

DON'T VOTE - ORGANISE!

April Fool's Day saw the publication of the British governments proposals for elections to a Northern Ireland 'forum' on 30th May. The message, if you are conned into casting a vote in these elections, is clearly 'more fool you'.

The election proposals may not have saved the 'peace process', but they have succeeded in uniting almost every shade of political opinion in the north - the proposals amount to probably the most complicated electoral farce ever imposed on the people of the north, and thats no mean feat in the history of electoralism.

Forum

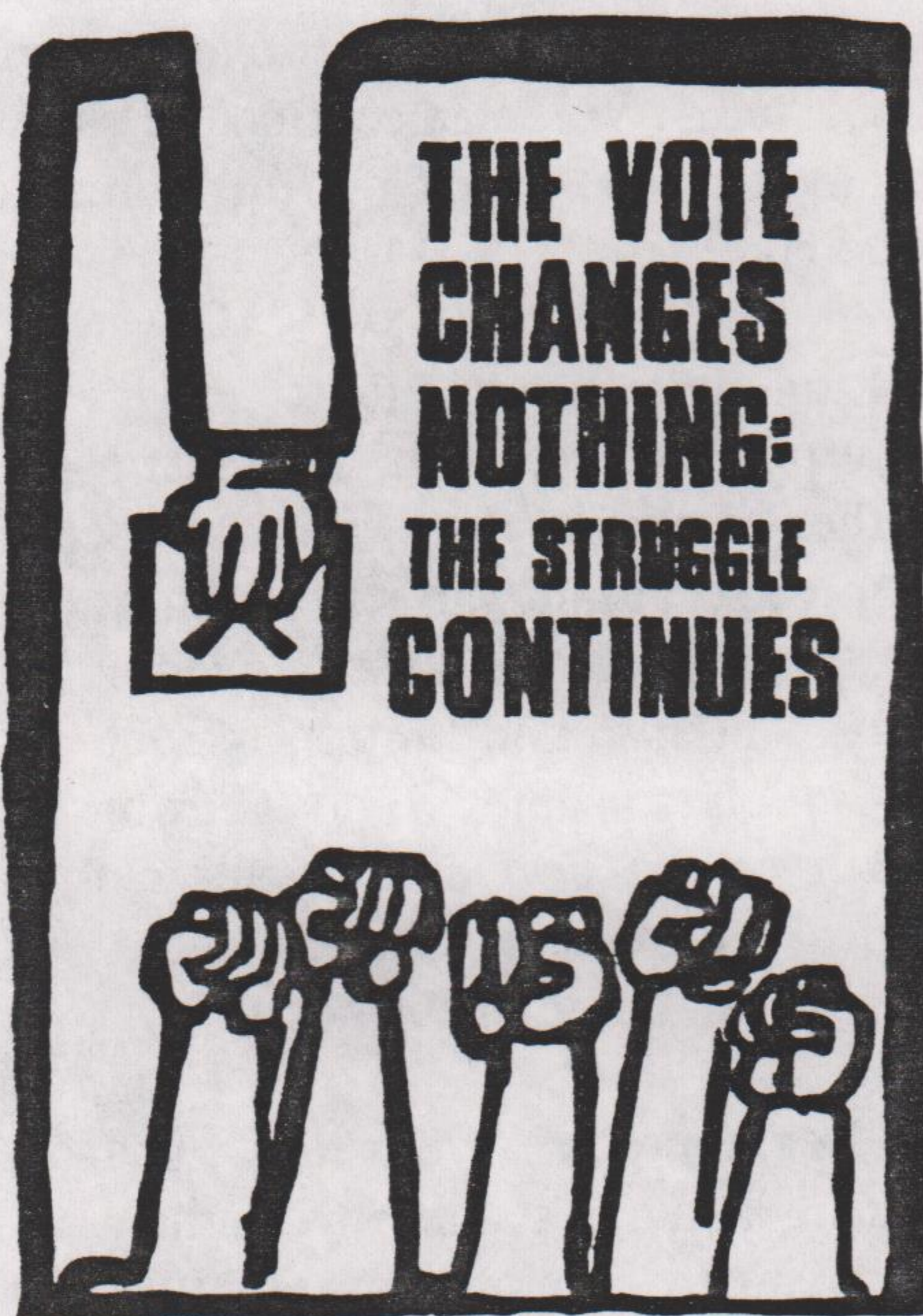
Major has proposed an electoral system which is a PR combination of LIST and MCP systems. Confused already? Don't worry so is everybody else! The end result of these elections should be a Forum (i.e. talking shop) comprising of 110 delegates. The proposal to exclude independents and smaller parties such as the IRSP and RSF from the elections has produced criticism across the board - from the UUP to Sinn Fein. All those who are permitted to stand, despite their reservations, look as if they will contest the elections. Rumours of a big pay packet for sitting up at Stormont have no doubt taken over from any mere ideological concerns.

Consent

Even if this proposed election met with the approval of all the politicians what could it achieve? Okay so we'd have our elected representatives sitting in the Forum, from which talks (more of those again) will develop in June. These talks will of course be independent of the Forum (eh?), but it can supply information, propose discussions etc. It can't make any decisions, which is just as well as our politicians are extremely unlikely to reach any agreement even if they are talking, and will operate for a

year - with an optional 12 month renewal.

But its not just a question of how 'unwieldy' the proposed election will be, nor is a question of just the same old choice between one set of bigots or another. The point is that voting once every four odd years, no matter for who, cannot change the system - if it could do you think they'd have given us the vote? Real change must come from more than giving your 'consent' to politicians and parties to make decisions for us.



This is as true for the 'peace process' as it is for any other issue affecting us a workers. The way to stop sectarianism, and to change the system cannot come through electing some suited eejits to Stormont discussing, or more likely not discussing, whatever all day. They won't tackle the root causes of the conflict in the north let alone the assault of capitalism on our class. And unless these issues are confronted nothing will ever be achieved. No 'lasting peace with justice'. Nothing.

Direct Democracy

We have to create peace and change this rotten system ourselves. Voting can't change the system. We are not opposed to it because we oppose 'democracy', the sham of electoralism is far removed from what anarchists mean by democracy. By democracy we mean people managing their own lives and working together collectively to run our communities and workplaces, for our own benefit instead of for the bosses and politicians. This is Direct Democracy, in which everyone effected by a decision should have a role in reaching that decision.

Parasites

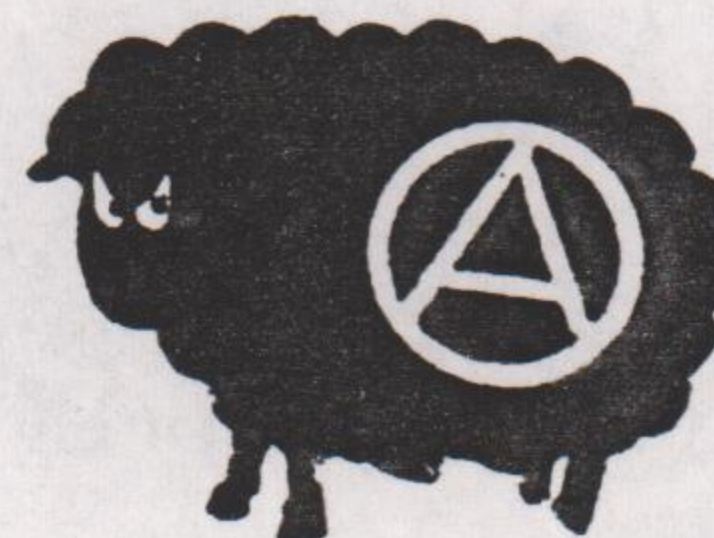
We must create our own organisations, of and for our class, which will deal with the issues affecting us and which can begin the work of creating real change in our society. We need to create organisations which will allow us to take over the running of our factories, workplaces and communities and kick out the parasitic bosses and politicians once and for all. Anarcho-syndicalism offers the framework and strategy for bringing about real change, its not about changing the faces of those who govern, but of taking control of society ourselves. No-one else can represent us.

Time to Decide

Its time for you to decide what sort of Ireland you want.

If you want an Ireland continually on the brink of sectarian warfare, policed by the states hired thugs, of crappy jobs and social insecurity, talks about talks about talks, and increasing state intrusion into all aspects of our lives then go ahead, vote in May.

If, on the other hand, you want real change, an Ireland that is run by the working class for the benefit of the working class, with no government fucking us about, no boss stealing the wealth we create, and a common bond of solidarity uniting workers, 'protestant, catholic and dissenter' then *Don't Vote - Organise!*



Editorial: No War but the Class War

Unperturbed as we may be about the damage caused to overpriced homes for the rich by an IRA explosion in London on Wednesday 18th of April, the breaking of the IRA cease-fire was not something we at Organise! were exactly ecstatic about. The following is a copy of our statement issued following the declaration by the IRA that their cease-fire was at an end.

The IRA's 527 day cessation of violence ended at one minute past seven on the night of Friday 9 February with the detonation of a massive bomb at Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs, London. An announcement that the IRA cease-fire would end that evening had been received by RTE at 5.30pm.

Working-class people have taken to the streets throughout the north to give voice to their anger and condemn the attack which claimed the lives of two working-class Londoners, Inan Bashir and John Jeffries. The short 18 months of peace, which followed over 25 years of conflict and repression, had given people in the north a glimpse of what life could have been like in a 'normal' capitalist society.

Responsibility for the breakdown of the IRA cease-fire must lie squarely at the feet of both the British government and the Unionist establishment who made plain their lack of commitment to maintaining the peace very early on in this 'process'. The intransigence of the British and their Unionist cohorts and their placing of barriers in the way of talks helped to increase the frustration in the Republican camp. The explosion in Canary Wharf was the result of this deliberate stalling of negotiations. A permanent end to sectarianism, both institutional and otherwise, is what members of our class crave and deserve. It is obvious that neither the British nor Irish states, or local sectarian politicians can deliver on this.

The return to armed struggle offers no way forward. The IRA's campaign over the last twenty-five years is surely proof

enough of this, far from achieving their stated goal of removal of the British presence in the north it led instead to the reinforcing of sectarian divisions in our society. The return of sectarian warfare which will yet again be counted in the deaths of working-class people cannot be tolerated.

It is increasingly apparent that there can be no Statist or Capitalist solutions. So called constitutional politics have failed, no amount of 'talks' can deliver any significant gains for members of our class. Only class politics and organisation can provide any lasting solution.

So, what can ordinary people do about the situation? We have already taken to the streets in our thousands to demand that the IRA cease-fire be reinstated and that our political 'representatives' begin serious 'talks'. We must continue to show our anger on the streets but this alone is not enough!

Working-class people must make the 'peace process' their own. We must come together to ensure that we do not see a return to sectarian warfare, which as we have said, has always been counted in the deaths, injury and imprisonment of working-class people. To do this workers unity must be developed along with a political direction based not on sectarianism but in opposition to it.

The 'peace process' was really all about securing a more stable environment for capitalism to develop in the north. Any 'all party talks' which may have, or may yet, come about will amount to nothing for workers. All this was ever about was trying to get together a few men in suits, our political 'representatives', to try and sort out 'our' problems while getting on with the business of managing capitalism. If the 'peace process' had been (or much more remotely is) successful it may result in some sort of power sharing body, and perhaps an end for a time to sectarian violence. It was never intended to get rid of sectarianism, if it had our politicians would have been negotiating to deprive

themselves of their respective power bases.

A sectarian war is not the only one facing workers, capitalism, with its allies in both, (and all) governments, has been waging all out war on our class - with results as devastating to us as sectarianism. Casualisation of labour, running down of services, mass redundancies, 'cut backs', inflation, privatisation, poor health and safety at work are all a part of the untold suffering of our class. And our respective 'leaders' are definitely not interested in, or capable of tackling a class war!

The only people who can defeat sectarianism and create a successful fight back against the bosses are the working-class. Politicians and so-called leaders have let us down time and time again. It is time to take matters into our own hands.

Only class unity and self organisation provide us with any answers, in event of any escalation of violence, from whatever quarter, workers must be prepared to translate their anger into industrial action. Our strength to fight back against capitalism, and our power to influence events comes not from a gun or ballot box, but from our communities and our strength at the point of production. In the factories, workshops and offices. If the bigots continue to push us towards a full scale sectarian war we must bring the north to a standstill.



INLA FEUD - THE POLITICS OF SUPERIOR FIRE POWER

The INLA feud looks set to continue as we go to press. Their recent statement that they were breaking their cease-fire and adopting a 'retaliatory and defensive' position does not seem to have done the trick of reuniting the organisation.

The current feud has so far resulted in the deaths of Gino Gallagher, Chief of Staff of the INLA shot by the 'GHQ' faction at Falls Road DHSS office on January 30th, the battering to death of John Fennell of the 'GHQ' faction in a caravan in Donegal, the tragic death of nine-year-old Barbara McAlorum in a botched INLA 'Gallagher faction' attack. Most recently the wounding in the arm of an IRSP member by a 'GHQ' gunman as he drove his car away from the their offices on the Falls road. A number of others have been injured in the feud.

The 'INLA GHQ' faction claims that Gallagher was assassinated because of his opposition to the declaration of an INLA cease-fire by defendants in a Dublin courtroom. Among the defendants was believed to have been the former INLA Chief of Staff - who Gallagher replaced. The INLA proper and its political wing the IRSP don't even recognise what is going on as a feud. IRSP spokesperson Kevin McQuillan claims that 99.9% are still loyal to what has been called the Gallagher faction of the organisation. Graffiti appearing in West Belfast reads 'Q-Ball and McLeery M15 agents. IRSP INLA.' Q-Ball and McLeery being members of the INLA GHQ faction. Supporting the belief that the INLA 'GHQ' is working to 'a British agenda' McQuillan has asserted that these gunmen, who he puts at only two in number, 'have free movement, free access and walk away after shootings without being concerned about being apprehended by state forces.'



July 1984: Volley of shots for INLA member "Bonanza" McCann at St Peter's Cathedral.

Whether or not this is the case, it must be pointed out that the INLA is no stranger to feuds, many of their internal disagreements have been 'sorted out' by the introduction of the gun. Not surprising perhaps in a militaristic organisation which seeks to impose its view by force.

But the INLA deserves special attention, not least because of the fact that they've had something of a resurgence since the recent peace process kicked off with the initial IRA and then Loyalist cease-fires, but because of their claims to be a working-class revolutionary organisation, albeit one which is exclusively based within the 'nationalist' working class.

For an organisation which lays claim to socialist credentials they have very little to say to the million or so workers from protestant backgrounds here in the north, and have certainly made no effort to win

them to socialism. As for the 'nationalist' section of the working class, all they have succeeded in doing is further terrorising them while increasing sectarian tensions and divisions within our class as a whole. The nature in which they resolve internal disputes may indeed be linked to their particular brand of 'socialist' politics - the authoritarianism inherent in Marxism is taken to its extreme, but logical, conclusion in the use of deadly force to win an argument within their own organisation.

Those activists in the 'republican socialist' movement who are genuinely committed to the social revolution and the liberation of our class from the yoke of capitalism and British imperialism should be seriously considering just what they are doing in a movement which offers no real hope of either to the working class.

Rusch Workers Take No Shit From Management.

200 workers at the American owned Rusch factory in Lurgan showed how to get the goods following bosses plans to have them clock off to go to the toilet!

The Rusch bosses came up with their master plan after deciding that regular trips to the toilet by staff were costing was costing the firm £160,000 a year. The owners were determined to stop "employees... taking advantage of unofficial breaks." The workforce knew straight away who was trying to 'take advantage' and called an immediate all-out strike. Management was forced to back down, its about time other employers were forced to do the same.

FOKKED AGAIN

After the loss of 1000 jobs at Shorts after the Dutch company Fokker went under bosses have come up with a fail-safe method of easing the transition to redundancy.

They haven't relocated any jobs, they haven't handed out sufficient compensation, instead are referring their ex-workers for counselling! Premises were opened in York Street in Belfast for workers to consult with some 'experts' for advice. See it is great at easing the transition to redundancy, for Shorts, as its obviously the cheapest option.

As for being newly unemployed, well Shorts can't help you there, nor can Fokker, and nor can any amount of 'experts'. While we live in a system which needs unemployment for cheap labour and as a threat to employed workers even highly skilled workers can, and will continue, to become victims. We can stop it! But only with industrial action, organisation and determination.

THE HEALTH SERVICE WHERE'S THE FIGHT BACK?

With the deadline of May 5th for responses to the McKenna report upon us, it looks as if the various unions claiming to represent the interests of health workers will have been patently unsuccessful in opposing the latest cutbacks.

This is to be expected from the current social democratic unions. They cling to notions of 'consensus politics', believing in their 'stabilising role' in society, as 'negotiators' for their members. Its a pity, but a reality, that capitalism no longer recognises the validity of such ideas.

The only 'negotiations' which will make the bosses sit up and take notice will be based on workers organisation in which solidarity and direct action are recognised as our surest weapons. It is clear that in the Health Service, as in all our industries, that we must build a new combatitive union movement under the control of its membership. The current unions are a poor excuse for that.

Current Mess

At a time when unity of action is a pressing necessity, and is indeed much talked about by union and 'community' leaders, when, if we are to save our service and our jobs we must not shy from industrial action, we are getting exactly what the current unions are capable of delivering. Nothing!

That shouldn't come as a surprise, especially if we look at the current mess which passes for workplace organisation. There are at least three unions present in the health industry - NIPSA, UNISON and the T&G. Where is the solidarity, and the strength it would lend to workers in struggle, in this? It is simply non-existent. On top of this we have the 'professional' societies and groupings for nearly every trade to be found in health. The Nurses and Midwives, Radiographers, Radiologists, Doctors, Surgeons, etc, all have their own little sects!

Industrial Union

All the workers in the health industry, no matter what their job, should be organised into *one* union. The cleaners, caterers, orderlies, auxiliaries, nurses, midwives, carers, clerical staff... everyone in the industry are affected by the same regime of cutbacks and rationalisation. The best way to fight back must obviously be together, we must remember the truth of the statement 'Unity is Strength'.

This industrial union should also be under the direct control of its membership. We can have no truck with full time officials who will become too attached to their union positions or funds to consider mounting a serious fightback.

Revolutionary Perspective

If we are to stop the onslaught on our industry we must also be able to go on the offensive to secure improvements in our conditions and services. Concessions won from the bosses will never become permanent unless health workers take control of the running of our health service for the benefit of all and not in the name of 'profitability' or 'market forces'.

This needs a revolutionary perspective to be placed at the centre of such a union movements agenda. It is only by kicking out the bosses, in government and the board rooms, that will create a better and healthier environment for all.

The answer to the McKenna report, and to the numerous other problems currently facing the those of us working in the health service, and facing workers in all our workplaces and communities, lies in the creation of an Anarcho-Syndicalist union. Help us build such an alternative. The need has never been more pressing.

THE 10,000 MILE PICKET LINE

The following is a report received from Guy Cheverton an activist in Hull Trades Council, the Anarcho-Syndicalist Solidarity Federation and Hull Liverpool Dockers Support Group.

For active Trade Unionists supporting a dispute struggling on month after month only to end in disintegration and defeat is a familiar experience. It is one that will not apply to the 500 dockers sacked by the Mersy Dock and Harbour Company (MDHC), months ago when they sacked the dockers for refusing to cross a picket line of 80 younger dockers striking for parity with the older men, they picked on seasoned veterans of the class struggle.

The A.T.G.W.U. as is almost routine these days has failed to give the dispute official backing, even banning shop stewards from using the fax machine in Liverpool's Transport House after MDHC complained. But Liverpool's dockers have something more valuable than the recognition of Bill Morris or Jack Dromey, they have the serious solidarity of dockers unions around the globe. Despite learning that the bureaucratic International Transport Federation had warned its affiliates "to keep a wide berth from the Liverpool dockers" support has flooded in.

Dockers in Sydney have said ships will "rust on the berth if the shipowners bring in ships bound for Liverpool". They donated £15,000 while the Maritime Union of Australia at Patrick Port, Botany have decided on a \$20 voluntary levy. A weekly levy has also been agreed by dockers in Drogheda.

Liverpool's well travelled dockers have given a new meaning to the term flying picket - Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Sweden, the longest picket line ever is being spun via delegations, the internet and fax. The latter make great reading, the Danish Harbour Workers Union "Please accept £500", New Zealand Seafarers Union "...heartfelt expressions of solidarity accompany a bank draft of £5000", Zenkowan All Japan Dockworkers Union "I have learnt about the struggle of the dock workers in Liverpool on the internet, the

MDHC have stirred up a great resentment amongst us", CGT Transport Union, Madrid "Nos solidarizamos y apoyamos la justa lucha de los companeros del puerto de Liverpool p.s. (I'm sorry, we don't speak English)", etc, etc.

And all this is working, U.S., Australian, Swedish, and Spanish dockers are all blacking shipping to and from Liverpool, the major carrier set the MDHC a deadline of January 15th to "seek a quick solution with the union of the labour dispute at the Liverpool docks" or they would use another port in the 'U.K.'. That deadline has now passed and as of now (Jan 23) no ACL ships have entered the port. ABC Containerline, a Belgian company, is also pressurising the MDHC after its ships were tied up in Sydney harbour.

In the week ending 20 January £70million had been wiped off the MDHC stock market valuation, £400,000 are being lost in profits per week. Hitting the capitalists in their pockets is what brings them to the knees (and the negotiating table).

The main thrust of this dispute is about international direct action and solidarity and on February 17th an International dockers solidarity conference will be held in Liverpool to extend this action. Having said this the British and Irish labour movement should play a much bigger part. Liverpool Trade Unionists should treat the Labour Parties entreaties not to organise city-wide with the contempt it deserves. We need to make Liverpool dockers support groups and all the work (fund-raising, delegations, pub collections) that goes with it a reality.

On Saturday February 3rd the dockers and people of Liverpool are marching in solidarity, it should be as big a demonstration as those for the miners in 1994, and you should be there.

On 26 January at a mass meeting in Liverpool an offer worth between £20/25,000 redundancy was unanimously rejected. As one docker Geoff told me that afternoon "this disputes about reinstatement and nothing else".

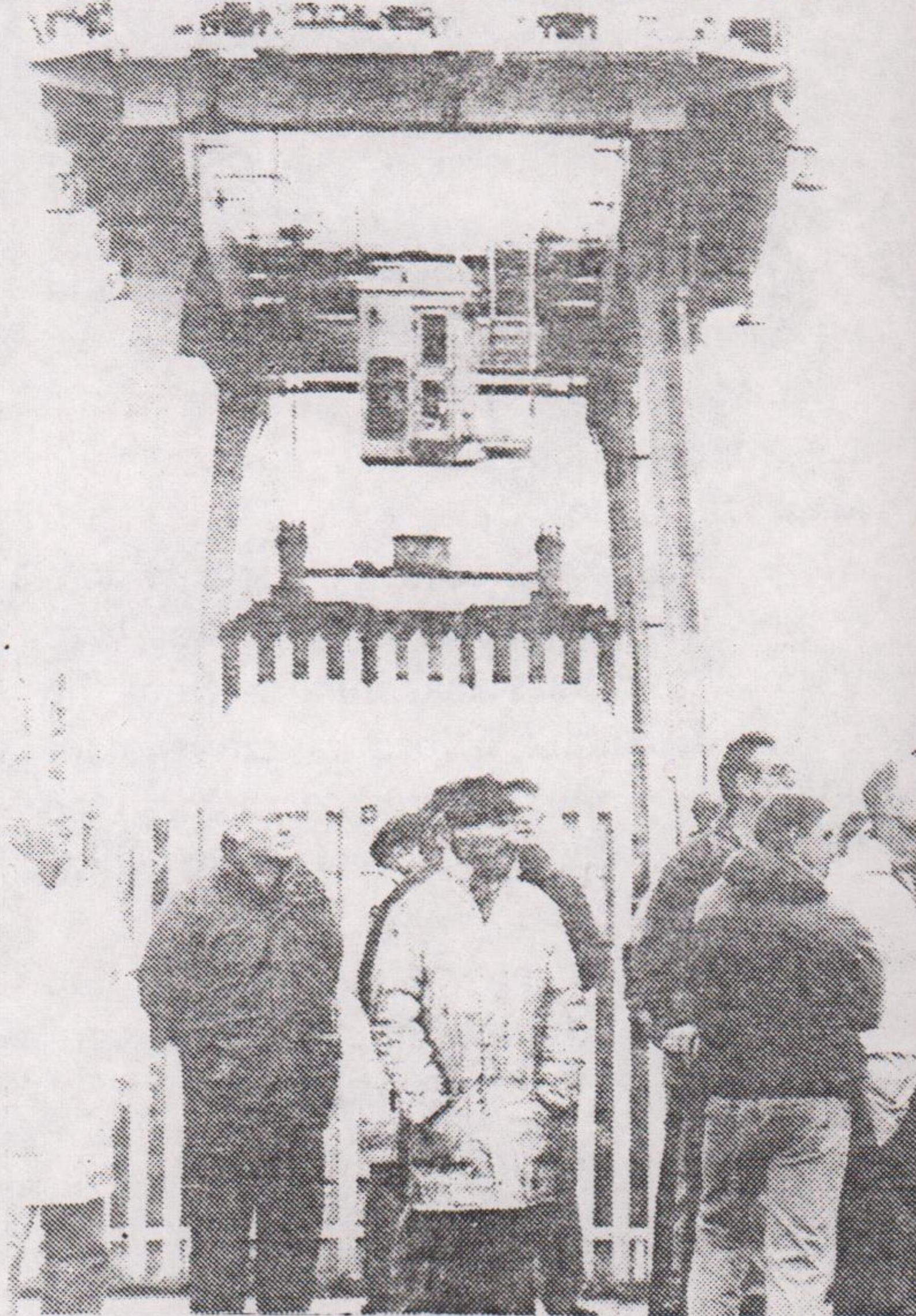
Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists should prioritise support for this dispute. Indeed if our activity is not about supporting a tenacious unofficial dispute what is it about?

Manchester Solidarity Federation have sent out an appeal for solidarity to the A.I.T. (International Workers Association) the Anarcho-Syndicalist international. Syndicalists active on the Hull Trades Council organised a visit to Sweden for two dockers with the Swedish syndicalist trade union SAC and the Independent Swedish Dockers Union, this resulted in total blacking of Liverpool shipping, some £10,000 in donations, SAC created Liverpool dockers support groups and a great respect and liking from the dockers for the syndicalists.

Mick Parkin a syndicalist based in Glasgow organised a visit to the Co-ordinadora (Independent Spanish Dockers Union) whose HQ is in the Canary Islands, again the Co-ordinadora and other Spanish dockers unions decided to black Liverpool traffic.

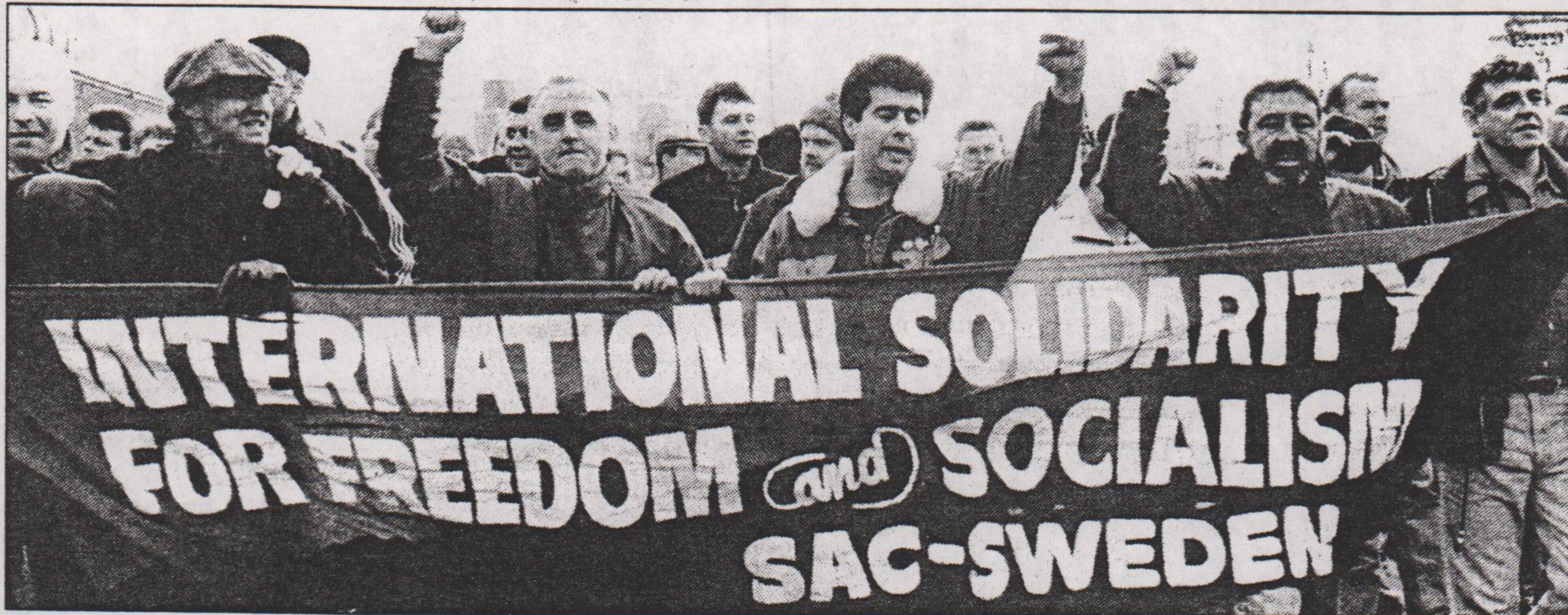
In Belfast Organise! have been involved in the setting up of a Liverpool Dockers and families support group. Wherever we are we should be helping to create Liverpool dockers support groups either as independent groups or allied to Trades Councils.

**For more information telephone
Liverpool Dockers on 01515 2073388**



The iron curtain separating men from their work

WHAT A DAY!



The day when the International Conference went to the picket lines was the most memorable of the whole week.

Nobody was prepared for the impact on each and everyone when the international delegates met the sacked docker, holding the picket lines since 28 September 1995. Dockers from 15 countries walked slowly, together, towards the line of pickets on the North Huskisson dock gate. Derry docker, Gerry Quigley started to clap. Then everyone walked clapping towards the pickets; when they joined they clasped each other with tears in their eyes.

Someone spotted a car with James Bradley, the scab whose father began the strike by sacking the 80 'Torside Tigers'. The whole crowd went through the gates as policemen looked on. There was a threatening 'discussion', and lots of photographs.

Quigley angrily told him to 'save up and buy himself a set of balls' while the Spanish contingent stood in front of the car singing 'No, no, no nos moveran' (We shall not be moved).

Then it was to the Gladstone dock, where pickets had closed the gates. It was here where Powergen's coal imports from the US and Colombia helped the government attack the miners and dust from the terminal drifts inland over the local community.

This time the pickets had closed the 'Kellogs' gates too, leaving a trail of grain lorries caught inside the dock.

Liverpool dockers' faces light up at the sight of the international contingent. Drivers of the huge juggernauts at a standstill inside the gates look on with a mixture of emotions as the delegates walk forward together clapping, the pickets clapping back. When they meet there is much laughter tear and hugging. Lots of discussion, jokes and general statements of solidarity.

Lars, a Swedish syndicalist, told of collecting for the strike outside the cinema showing of 'Land and Freedom' (Ken Loache's film of the Spanish Civil War). Liverpool dockers went to fight in Spain - the favour is being repaid.

Then, driving north along the dock road in brilliant sunshine, the coach passed a long line of container lorries stalled in front of Seaforth Grain storage terminals and the big blue cranes of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company tower behind the gate where 100 dockers are waiting.

And now the whole crowd, pickets and delegates walk slowly to the Freeport, Seaforth Container Terminal behind the Swedish banner along the Crosby Road. To our left the terminals where ACL, CanMar, CAST and the rest of the container trade is loaded and unloaded by scabs. To our right Daleks on horseback. We pat the horses and shout at the cops, whistles and sirens signalling our power.

Big Terry Ryan from New Zealand is hassled by the mounted police and Terry Southey is hurt in the eye. A huge queue of traffic builds up behind the procession.

but nobody looks or bothers about anything except to speak to each other and pour out all the emotion which seems to have been bottled up inside for years.

And now at Seaforth, the Liverpool dockers are chanting 'The workers, united, will never be defeated' and the Spanish dockers reply 'Obreros, unidos, jamas sera vencidos'. Francisco Mellado vows to chain himself to a ship in Bilbao if that's what it takes to shut down trade with Liverpool.

As the delegates and the crowd of dockers again walk slowly forward clapping they are met by the laughing, crying, clapping pickets and their families. It seems that everyone is bursting.

Women of the Waterfront are singing, standing in a line across the gates. It is half-term so some children are there too. The women shout 'Dockers In, Scabs Out'.

The march halts and everyone holds hands in a great circle, singing and moving rhythmically together - smiling at each other across the circle and to their neighbours on either side.

Dockers of 20-30 years' service from Bilbao, Sydney, Copenhagen, San Francisco, Motreal, Salerno, Tenerife, Lehavre, Antwerp holding hands with the Liverpool dockers and their families.

Jorg, 30 years a Hamburg docker, laughingly says he thinks it must be cold weather as he wipes a tear from his eye. Jim from Australia shakes his head momentarily unable to speak. 'They

thought we couldn't do it!' said Ronnie, 22 years on Liverpool docks, nodding his head towards the MDHC offices.

The women sing 'We've got the whole world, in our hands.' Everyone presses forward to the gate. Liverpool shop steward, Kevin Robinson, steps forward with a loudhailer, welcomes the delegates, inviting them to say a few words.

Ina Heidtman from the Maritime Union of Australia is a woman in an overwhelmingly male international delegation. 'AS you say in Liverpool - absolutely brilliant! And I know that you're going to win this victory. When we go home we're going to make sure that the action continues until it is resolved in your favour. Thank you comrades.'

'These people don't know what they've started,' says her colleague, Jim Donovan. 'Because what they have started, we're going to finish.'

Jack Heyman from the ILWU in San Francisco has a message for Bernard Cliff (MDHC boss). 'For the time being you will load these containers with scabs. But they're not going to be unloaded in the other ports around the world.'

Montreal dockers' union president, Micheal Murray sees 'in the eyes of the Liverpool dockers, the young ones and the old ones, in the eyes of their families, the children, that victory is gonna be soon. We already started what we call Operation Liverpool in our ports,' he said.

Ciro Orilio from Salerno portworkers' co-op, through an interpreter, claims to be a 'man of few words'. Women of the Waterfront have already singled him out as a cross between a soccer star and a film star - 'all action, eh?' shouts one. 'Before this week it was maybe only Liverpool football that was known around the world, now its the Liverpool dockers that are known around the world,' he says.

Terry Ryan tells us the New Zealand waterfront workers have a saying, 'United we bargain, divided we beg. From what I've seen here you won't be doing any begging. Its gonna be a complete victory. It mightn't be tomorrow, but it will come because the momentum is gathering all over the world. Stick in there and power to your arm!'

To wild applause Nico Georgiou announces that 'solidarity with the Liverpool dockers is put into action and tomorrow we close the port of Pireaus.

'We phone all the mass media and it will have a big support from other unions as well in Greece. We want you to win and we believe you are going to win. We are with you.'

Winding up the rally, Kevin Robinson declares 'if capitalism and big business has no boundaries, then trade unionism, struggle and solidarity world-wide can have no boundaries. United, we will win!'

The above article is from 'Dockers Charter', a paper published by the Liverpool Dock Shop Stewards Committee and available from the Belfast Liverpool Dockers and Families Support Group.

LIVERPOOL DOCKERS & FAMILIES SUPPORT GROUP ESTABLISHED IN BELFAST.

Trade Unionists and other activists in Belfast have set up a Liverpool dockers support group in Belfast. The main work of this group will be to publicise the dispute and more importantly to raise much needed cash to feed the Liverpool Dockers and their families throughout the dispute. Financial donations from individuals and organisations are urgently needed.

Please make cheques payable to **Liverpool Dockers and Families Support Fund.**

Alternatively money can be paid directly into the following bank account **Liverpool Dockers and Families Support Group, Bank of Ireland, 62 High Street, Branch Sorting Code 90-21-78, Acc. No. 69118212.**

Please notify the support group of all lodgements. All donations will be acknowledged and the dockers will be forwarded details of all donations.

If you would like more information, or you're willing to get involved with the group contact us at:

Liverpool Dockers and Families Support Group, c/o J Freeman, Transport House, 102 High Street, Belfast BT1 2DL.

Labour to Scrap Child Benefit for 16-18 Year Olds.

So 'New Labour' has come clean about where its to get the money it will need to finance its planned 'improved' training schemes and 'education for poorer families'. In a move worthy of the most right-wing Tories they've announced that once in power they will scrap Child Benefit for 16 to 18 year olds.

Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown expects that this will pour £700million of savings into their proposed training and education schemes. Training and education schemes that are useless when there are no prospects of the creation of real jobs from 'New Labour'. They are of course, as the Conservatives have taught us, very good at massaging unemployment figures and getting a lot of necessary work done at next to no cost in wages.

Blair, in language typical of the Tories, has declared that the days when benefits are solely provided by the state are gone;

"It is important that we reform the system. It will be a mix of public and private financing".

Well it looks as if we're headed towards a society in which we'll have to take out private insurance against unemployment whichever side gets in. Good news for the insurance companies, bad news if you're never going to earn any money, or enough money, to meet the payments. But then if Labour get in at least they'll bung you on a training scheme to avoid you sitting about all day bored.

THE POVERTY OF STATISM

'Smash the State!' is a slogan very much associated with anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism. But what exactly is the state and why do we feel it must be smashed and not adapted to the needs of the working class as our various brands of Marxist and Leninist 'comrades' would have it?

CAPITALISM ITSELF

'The State' is a vague term used to describe the point of control, economically and politically, of a society. It would be hard to describe or imagine it as a particular group of people in complete control - instead it is easier to see it as the very pinnacle of power, and to recognise it as the combined force of certain elements existing in society. The state is the very machinery of the system, it maintains privilege and power for those who act as its representatives, and so allows capitalism to thrive.

Statism in a capitalist society is basically capitalism itself. It centralises control of industry, and it 'manages' this control in such a way that the highest amount of profits can be made, both for the bosses, through private wealth made by selling products at a higher price than it took to make them, and for the local government through the taxing of goods as they are sold.

STATISM IN A CAPITALIST SOCIETY IS BASICALLY CAPITALISM ITSELF

LOCAL LEVEL

On a local level government as decision maker of the state works to keep capitalism running, its decisions effect

jobs, housing and everything else that matters to ordinary people but that politicians, whatever side - left or right - needn't worry about. They as part of the establishment are a privileged class. The Civil Service also act as aides to the state, acting in strict accordance to its rules, and its leading lights receive their share of privilege as government officials. The police and army exist as the repressive arm of the state, maintaining its laws and social order and defending its interests at home and abroad.

FREEDOM

The state effects the working class in such a variety of ways that it reaps the benefits they create. From the cradle to the grave, a working class individual will feel the effects of the state. It is said that a person loses their freedom the moment they are born, and to an extent this may indeed be true, and change will only occur when that person thirsts for their freedom back and is no longer prepared to have their life led and their decisions taken for them by groups of selfish power hungry leaders. Statism is in effect authoritarianism, and the working class knows this only too well.

EDUCATION

Children grow through at least 12 years of 'education' in Ireland and Britain, which has a massive influence on how that person will develop. Social conditioning starts with young primary school children, the education system is a powerful tool for the indoctrination of state-authoritarian ideas in the minds of the young. Patriarchy is taught at this stage. Deference to authority is the mainstay of the education system, where

notions of sexism, racism and homophobia can also be instilled.

Most significant for all of us in the north is the segregation of working class children on religious lines. The state uses this to strengthen the strategy of 'divide and rule', splitting our class into sections and playing them off one against the other in order to prevent any effective unity in opposition to our real exploiters. Class unity scares the state because it is the one thing which could seriously threaten it.

BOSS CLASS

After school comes work, maybe. The authoritarian figures of school are replaced by bosses or the petty bureaucrats of the dole, so that sense of someone breathing down your neck remains. In the workplace the link between the state and capitalism is even clearer. The working class perform the function of wage slaves, selling their labour to the boss class, producing goods which are then sold making fat profits to keep the bosses rich. This is where the inequality between producer and 'seller' can be best seen... if the worker makes the product then why shouldn't he/she be able to enjoy the benefits of it, instead of the boss who got it made for him?! This exploitation of man by man is the ideal principle of capitalism and indicates the oppressive nature of the state.

'DE FACTO WORLD GOVERNMENT'

The further centralisation of capitalism has created even more problems for the working class and our environment. The growth of multinational corporations, has created a global economy in which; "Capital can move freely, workers and communities suffer the consequences."(1) And as a result; "...is the fading of meaningful democratic processes as decision-making is vested in private institutions and the quasi-governmental structures that are coalescing around them, what the Financial Times calls a 'de facto world government' that operates in secret and without accountability."(2)

This 'world government', a collection of the politicians and capitalists from the most 'advanced' capitalist countries its

institutions being, the IMF, the World Bank, GATT, NAFTA, G7 meetings, the EC executive etc; is becoming the decision maker for this increasingly global capitalist system.

DECENTRALISATION

Anarcho-Syndicalists, on the other hand, believe that industry should be decentralised, and organised by the workers themselves directly from the workplace. Workers control of production would mean making products for the needs of the community, not the greed of the bosses. With getting rid of the boss, you are getting rid of exploitation and wage slavery, creating space for self-determination and mutual aid, as the decentralised units of production would depend on each other for survival.

REVOLUTION WITHOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE STATE IS DOOMED

DESTROY THE STATE

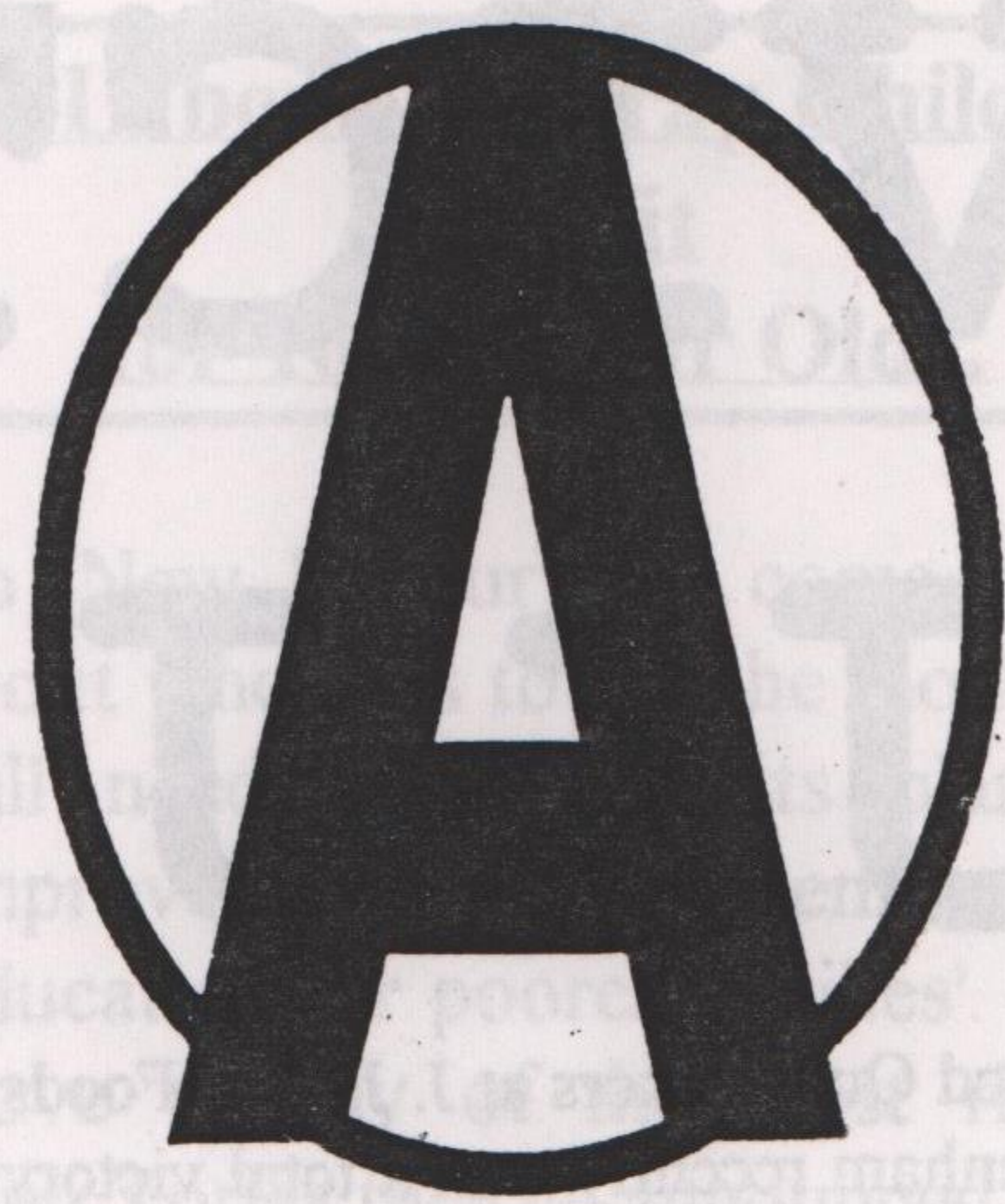
But not all revolutionary movements are anti-statist, marxist-communism in all its variations, puts forward the dangerous notion that the state can be 'seized' by the working class for their own benefit (for working class read party). Another tenet of the marxist-leninist variety has it that once capitalism is destroyed the state will 'wither away' - this is simply not the case. If the state is not deliberately and forcefully destroyed during a revolution then it will still exist afterwards with its authoritarian nature intact, often in a worse and more oppressive form than before, as with the so-called 'workers states' all but a few of which have collapsed.

This is borne out in the example of the Russian Revolution which ended with the creation of the first 'communist' state by the Bolshevik marxists under Lenin. This state did nothing towards the emancipation of the proletariat, it did nothing to ensure equality and freedom from slavery for the working masses. In consolidating state power in their own hands the Bolsheviks undid any of the

gains workers and peasants had achieved themselves and turned the revolution into a process of establishing a new leadership.

NO LEADERS

It can be seen from the Russian and many other examples that statism can have no place in a revolutionary movement - a free society cannot be created by any statist method, and will only be able to exist when all forms of statism are destroyed. Marxists often criticise Anarchism, arguing that it is impossible to run society without leaders, but once free from state oppression society can manage itself without the need for people in 'high places' making the decisions. Marxists assure us that they are working for the emancipation of the working class, but rather than our class fighting for our liberty and working together, we are told to put our faith in the PARTY which will carry on the fight on our behalf. And half, if not more, of the party membership is in most cases made up of middle class students with no idea about our lives or struggles. So they've read a bit of (a lot of even), Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, whoever - so fuck. Only workers know what life is like as a worker, and only we as workers can do anything about it!



These so-called revolutionaries don't really believe that we 'plebs' can take control of our own lives, they don't think we are mature enough or politically sophisticated enough, so they justify the necessity for leadership. *Their* leadership of course, and try to set themselves up to take power *for* us! Fucking likely!

SOLIDARITY

'Revolution' without the destruction of the state is doomed, the power of society and the potential for social change lies within the masses of ordinary people, in our workplaces and communities. With the bond of a common struggle and solidarity uniting us we have no need of any would be 'leaders'.

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VICTORY FOR J&J WORKERS

Locked Out workers at J. J. Fast Foods in Tottenham recently won a total victory in their fight against anti-union boss Mustafa Kamil.

The workers and their supporters have shown through a militant campaign of boycotts, protests and direct action they could bring their boss to his knees.

The Locked Out workers were mainly Turkish and Kurdish, and displayed a fantastic level of class solidarity throughout the dispute, despite threats from fascist thugs, the police and attempts by the boss to divide them along national lines.

The Transport and General Workers Union did little to assist the strikers, who are members of that union. They played down the role of direct action in winning the dispute, actively discouraging it and even refused to support a demonstration by workers and supporters on 13th of January, which heard solidarity speeches from a striking Liverpool docker and CPSA strikers.

Boss Kamil has been forced by this action to reinstate all the workers, recognise the union, agree to sick and holiday pay, and pay lost wages for the period of the dispute.

J. & J. workers won because they ignored all anti-union legislation and because they took what decisions were needed as necessary. They struck and stayed on strike until their demands were met.



JENNY'S TEXTILES WORKERS WIN DISPUTE

On February 100 workers at Jenny's Textiles, also in Tottenham, went on strike against low pay and poor working conditions. They slung banners across the street and in front of the factory, distributed leaflets, faxed the press and sent flying pickets to other textile factories in Tottenham and Hackney. Bosses of all the neighbouring textile factories locked their doors to try to stop workers from Jenny's coming in. The workers also staged a sit-in which prevented any collections or deliveries. By evening agreement had been reached and the workers had won.

The boss agreed to an end to illegal deductions from their pay (£10 a week that he pocketed), proper tea and lunch breaks and clean eating and toilet facilities. He also agreed to union recognition, written contracts for all workers and proper disciplinary and grievance procedures.

TOTTENHAM PICKET

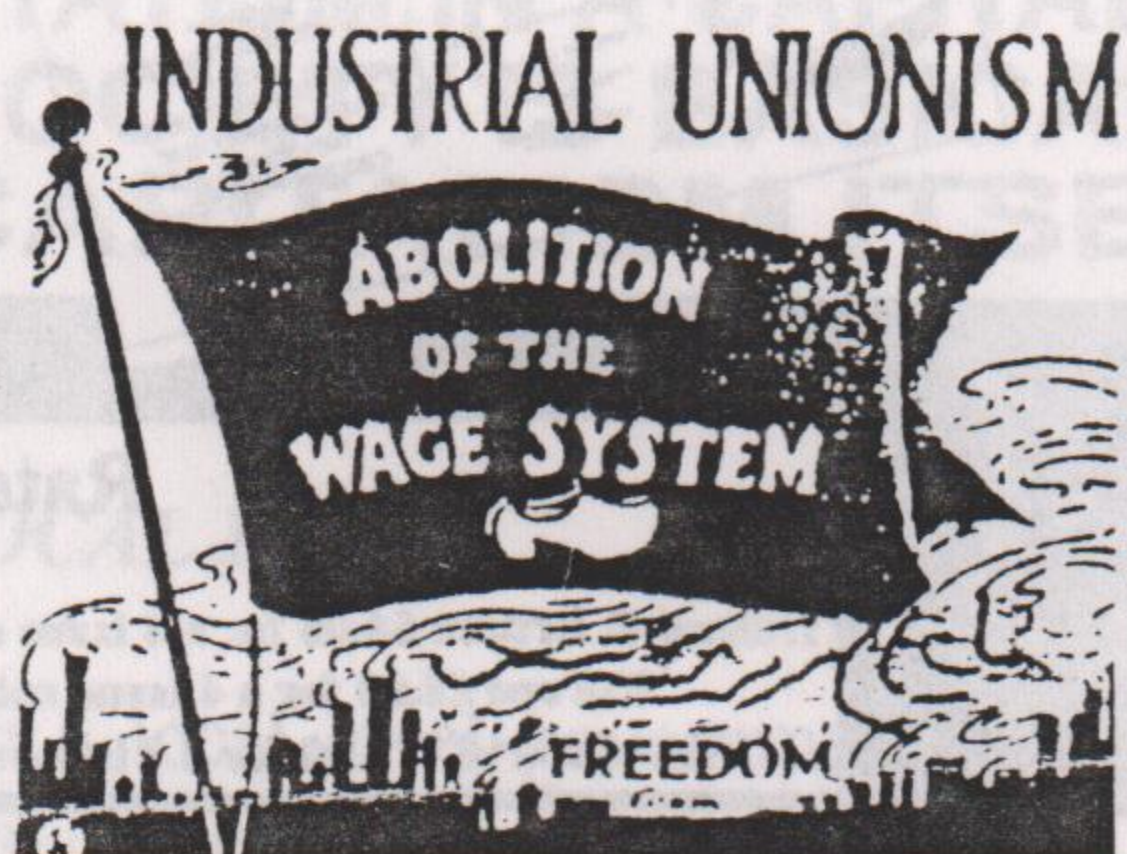
Both these disputes were run and centred round the activities of the JJ Fast Food Workers' Support Group, and the T&G Textile Workers' Branch, both based at Tottenham Unwaged Centre on West Green Road. They publicised the strikes through the newsletter, produced both in Turkish and English, the "Tottenham Picket". It is hoped that the newsletter will continue to appear on a monthly basis, those involved have stated;

"Our support group and the Tottenham Picket is going to remain active, because now is the time to extend these struggles and bring the strength of the union to those still under attack. The lesson of this struggle is that without grassroots level, worker-controlled organisation, little can be won."

"We believe a world without war, without exploitation, without classes, is possible. It is in our hands to create that world. It is we, the workers, who will create it... Solidarity is the way forward.

Workers of the world unite"

Extract from JJ workers' speech to rally of 2,000 sacked Liverpool dockers & supporters, Liverpool 02/12/95.



12 CNT ACTIVISTS ARRESTED IN MADRID

On April 12th 1996, at 20.30, National Police special forces arrived with a judge at the local and national offices of the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajos (Spains Anarcho-Syndicalist union) in Madrid. They were in possession of a judicial order dated April 11th 1996, authorising them to ask for the original documentation of a release made in 1993.

The CNT had no prior notification of the order and therefore had no chance of appeal against it. Those present in the CNT office asked for some further explanation, and when this failed to satisfy them they refused to cooperate - in a peaceful manner. Eventually the judge lost the rag and ordered the police to force the door and arrest everyone present.

The union activists were handcuffed and driven off in what is described as 'most spectacular', although none of them

resisted arrest.

The National Committee of the CNT see this incident in the context of a wider campaign aimed at hindering their fight for 'independent and critical unionist positions, in the interests of workers'. They have promised to answer the current provocation in the way it hurts most, that is:

'total confrontation with the present system of labour relations that impairs day by day the living conditions of the workers'.

**CALL FOR
INTERNATIONAL
ACTION AGAINST
IBERIA AIRLINES**
CNT DELEGATE
DISCIPLINED FOR UNION
ACTIVITY

Following the suspension without pay of a delegate from the CNT Section at IBERIA, Spains largest airlines, the CNT-IWA have initiated an international campaign against the company.

The suspension is just part of the companies campaign of repression against the CNT, an Anarcho-Syndicalist union. By taking action against IBERIA both in Spain and internationally the union hopes not only to get the suspension revoked but also to force recognition of the union on the company. The Sindicato de Transportes de Madrid believe that in order to 'achieve both goals it is imperative that we make a show of strength'. Action targetted wherever the airline has offices or interests is imperative. Telegrams, letters and faxes of protest can be sent to their regional office at: **IBERIA Airlines of Spain, Stock Exchange House, 7 Nelson Mandela Pl, Glasgow. Phone Belfast 247029.**

**WITHDRAW THE
DISCIPLINARY
MEASURES AGAINST THE
CNT
DELEGATE!
DOWN WITH REPRESSION
AGAINST THE CNT!**

A Country Bleeding

Colombia is a country bleeding because of the impunity of the crimes against social leaders, numerous 'vanishings', murders and torture carried out by the security organisations of the Colombian State. This situation has been highlighted by independent organisations such as the Commission of Human Rights of the A.S.O. and the United Nations. However, the crimes won't stop.

In May 1995 Law student Humberto Pena Taylor was murdered in the university campus of the National University of Bogota. This student was a member of a Libertarian collective that has always fought against the privatisation of education and the establishment of Neo-Liberalism. Including Humberto, more than 200 teachers and students have been murdered because of their opposition to the Civil Dictatorship now ruling in Colombia.

Organise! and the International Workers Association are calling on people to press

the Colombian Government to stop these crimes and to punish the people responsible for carrying them out. Faxes or letters expressing our strong objection to these crimes can be sent to the following:

Dr. Alfonso Valdiviezo s
Fiscalia General De La Nacion
Bogota-Colombia
Fax (1) 2859316

Ministerio De Justicia
Fax (1) 2816384

Dr. Jaime Cordoya Trivino
Defensoria Del Pueblo
Fax (1) 3461225

Standard letters of protest are available from Organise! at our P.O. Box. Copies of your letters and faxes would be much appreciated as we would like to keep track of the campaign. We urge you to get involved in this campaign and help turn solidarity into something concrete as opposed to just mere words.



Piggy in the Middle

So the start of the Loyalist marching season has seen the police already banning two parades through the non-unionist Lower Ormeau Road.

On the first occasion police were petrol bombed by loyalists incensed at this flagrant abuse of their god-given right to parade in areas where they are not welcome. On the second occasion Orange Reverend William Hoey warned the police that if the 'Protestant and Loyalist people' were forced to rise up 'as one' that they would have 'nowhere to run and nowhere to hide'.

Rev Hoey even suggested the changing of the assistant chief constables title to chief of staff of the republican movement in Belfast!

Non-Sectarian RUC?

This is not the first time that the RUC have been confronted with agitated Loyalists. This has been a recurring factor in the north since the abolition of Stormont and introduction of direct rule and perhaps has been more frequent since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

This is of course being sold to us as the new 'acceptable' and non-sectarian RUC going about its work in an even handed fashion. Not many are fool enough to be taken in by this - but it does the British government no harm in the eyes of the international media, especially at a time when they've stalled anything which may have passed for a 'peace process'.

Loyalist Force

The RUC is still a Loyalist force, its whole ethos is pro-British and Unionist, it is still 98% Protestant. So why the confrontation. The fact is that despite its loyalist bias the RUC will obey orders and move against any section of the community which its pay masters believe are being disruptive. And this is the point, the RUC can and will be used

against 'out of hand Loyalists' because the British government are those paymasters now.

The times of Stormont and total Unionist/Orange domination have slipped away. Loyalists now see a British government acting to its own agenda, and it's an agenda which they often feel borders on betrayal. And when 'their' RUC (and when they say this they fondly remember Burntollet, the police led anti-catholic pogroms of the early seventies, shot to kill, collusion...) is used against them they are of course justified in threatening 'uprisings' and all sorts. Sometimes it may seem like that's the only way they'll get any control back and rid this wee province of the fenian scum, and Lundy's, once and for all.

Power

These confrontations are about power and where it lies in our society. The Orange marches and whether the police stop them or not provides a focus for these confrontations. The wishes of the Lower Ormeau residents are in reality of secondary concern - if they mattered to 'the powers that be' these marches would be stopped permanently.



A MORE ACCEPTABLE RUC?

It's also been announced that in a move to make the RUC more acceptable to the 'nationalist' community the Police Authority has suggested a name change. Now we're to have RUC Northern Ireland's Police Force (NIPS). Well we bet that's reassured everyone!

Other radical proposals for change include 'further consultations' about the RUC oath of allegiance and the flying of the union flag.

Seriously though it wouldn't make any difference if they could come up with a form of policing which would be acceptable to 'both sides'. The police, no matter what they are called, no matter what the religious or political (in the peculiarly northern Irish sense of the word) make up of the force, their fundamental role will remain the same. That isn't to deal with crime, which is what some naive people would refer to as 'normal policing'. The role of the police force is to protect the government and the wealthy, it and the army serve as the repressive arms of government. And that must always be unacceptable to the working class.

European Commission Closes the Floodgates

The European Commission rejected the case against the British government taken by relatives of the 14 people shot dead in Derry on Bloody Sunday. This means that the case cannot go before the European Court of Human Rights as the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign had hoped.

Commenting on the decision Tony Doherty, whose father Patrick was one of those shot dead by paras on January 20th, 1972, whilst marching in opposition to internment, said he felt the Commission did not want to "open the floodgates" to other human rights abuses in the north.

An independent inquiry, set up by the families of those killed, is to sit next year to mark the 25th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

J.S.A?

Job Seekers Allowance

Do you want to see wages drop like a stone?
Unemployed people forced into low paid jobs?
Compulsory work for benefits?

State oppression of the unemployed, the sick, the poor
and asylum seekers is all part of one agenda.
Are we going to let them pick us off one by one?



NO WAY!

The protective screens are already being erected at dole offices throughout the north in anticipation of the Job Seekers Allowance in October.

Those of us on the dole have already received our 'Jobseeker's Allowance Information for you' handout. But what does this latest 'initiative' mean for the unemployed?

The JSA will replace Unemployment Benefit (which has already been reduced from 12 to 6 months entitlement) and income support. October will also see the merging of the DSS and the Job Centre into one organisation run by the DSS.

DSS staff will deal with payment of benefit and Employment Office staff will be formed into 'Back to Work' teams, who will be trying to match claimants with jobs each time they sign on. This is known as active signing! It will be used

to make people disqualify themselves from benefit - if you refuse to take crap work then its goodbye giro!

Its estimated that 100,000 applicants will be cut from benefit - saving the government a tidy £200million a year!

What the JSA really means is yet more harassment and intimidation of unemployed people. The 'job seeker' will now have to enter into an agreement as a condition for obtaining benefit, stating what he/she intends to do in their quest for work. Much like the 'actively seeking work' crap we've got at the minute only worse when considered with the whole package. 'Advice' under the JSA could range from having to accept low paid work, being forced onto a scheme, or having to get a haircut.

Another scheme running as a pilot in West Belfast, Strabane and Fermanagh is the 'Benefits Plus' Community Work

Programme. This scheme is aimed at the long-term unemployed but it is already experiencing recruitment difficulties due to non-cooperation. The CWP and JSA are just more steps on the road to American style workfare projects - with any failure to follow 'advice' resulting in benefit cuts! This is why our dole offices need new security screens.

JSA is already being piloted in some areas. In Reading, England there is a pilot scheme known as SBR - Stricter Benefit Regime and Back To Work teams have already been set up. The purpose of this is to get all 'long term' unemployed people (over 6 months on the dole) off the books. They are doing this through something known as 195 Action and the 'long term' unemployed are being asked to fill hard to fill crap jobs with crap wages. If you refuse the offer, or refuse to go to the interview, or agree to the interview but don't turn up your income support will be immediately cut by 40%. This is already happening and the rest of us have it to look forward to in October! Claimants have already begun to fight back against the JSA in Scotland and England. Claimants, and workers in the dole offices, here need to get together to actively oppose the implementation of the JSA. Only by making it unenforceable can we scrap it, this demands unity and action!

Apologies and Sympathies

'Organise! the Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism' would like to apologise for the cancellation, at short notice, of the Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin public meeting advertised in our last issue. Former Black Panther Lorenzo was forced to cancel his world speaking tour due to the illness of his mother. We extend our sympathies to Lorenzo, his friends and family, at this time.

DIRECT ACTION

Vs

Parliamentary Inaction

Recent studies claim to show that an increasing number of young people between the ages of 18 and 25 are becoming disillusioned with 'traditional' politics. This age group accounts for just under a sixth (16%) of the total electorate but at the last general election less than half of them voted. This state of affairs seems to have caused much teeth-gnashing in various quarters of the social democratic world.

Peter Hain, the Labour MP for Neath, and Demos, the left-wing think tank, have both gone to hysterical lengths of advocating compulsory voting as a remedy. Not very subtle, you might think, and certainly ill-considered. Does anyone really think they would wish to face the consequences of trying to enforce such a measure? Compelling those who are disaffected with political parties and the parliamentary farce to vote against their will could only turn the whole issue into something of Poll Tax proportions. And what an opportunity that would present to those of us already bent on discrediting the present political set-up!

Meanwhile, Activ 88, the youth wing of the political reform pressure group, Charter 88, in conjunction with the British Youth Council, has launched a nation-wide initiative going under the name of 'M-Power'. Using a postcard style registration form they aim to con(vince) more young people to vote. Part of the con is to label this campaign as 'apolitical'. But, surely, to promote the dubious benefits of the parliamentary system can only be regarded as a political act, nothing more, nothing less.

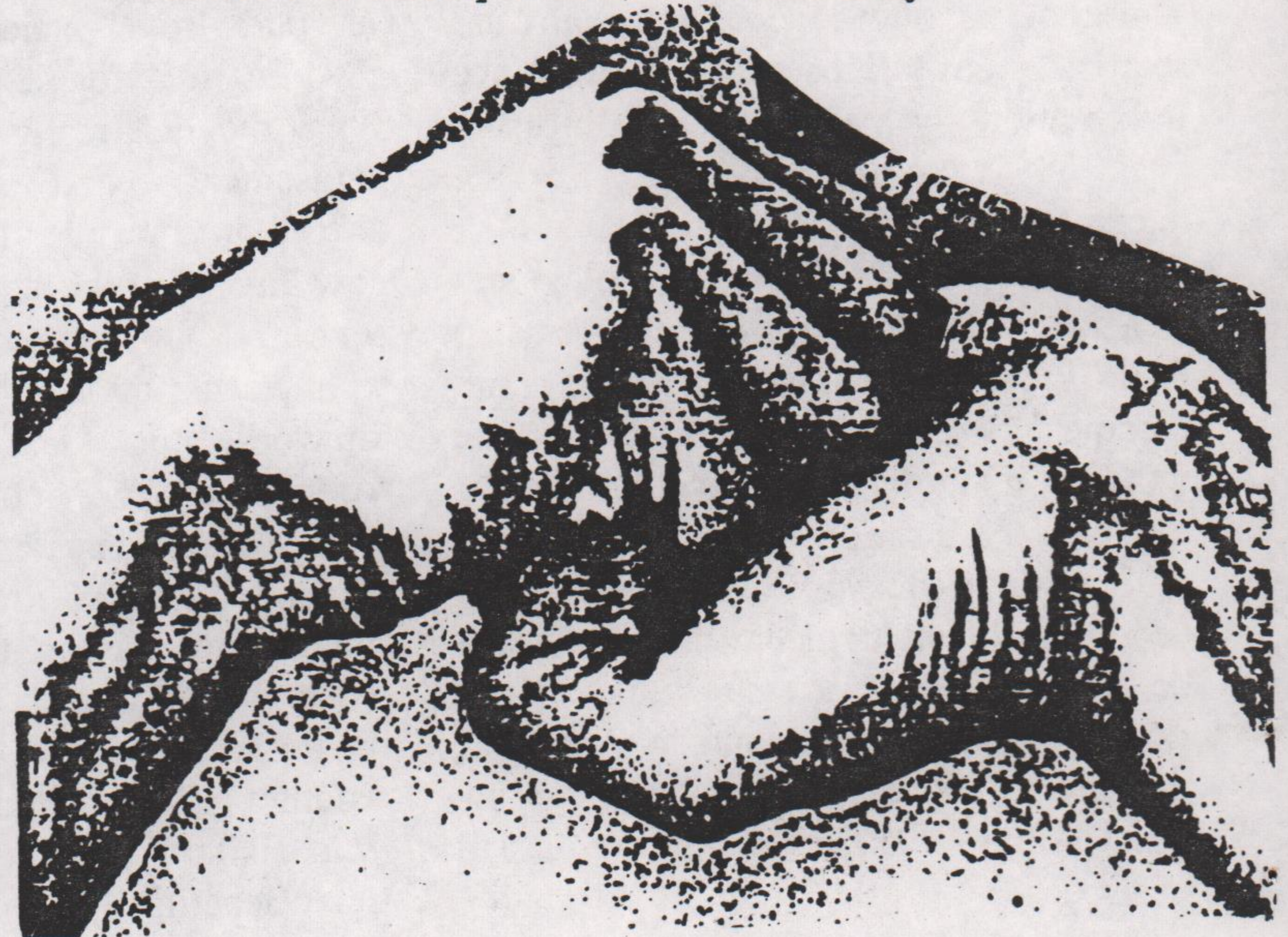
Of course, what all these worthies are frightened of is the social chaos that a growing 'underclass' of young people alienated by an unequal society has the potential to create. We live in a world where every day get-rich-quick, I'm-all-right-Jack individualism and consumer fetishism are promoted in a never-ending stream of dross from the so-called free market. Now we see those at the shit end of a system that offers then everything but denies the means to achieve it turning to other methods to make their mark. It is no wonder that many working-class areas have become so riddled with drugs and crime that it now seems to be normality.

Now, our rulers might be able to tolerate such high levels of anti-social crime, especially as the vast majority of the victims are other working-class people, but there is another worrying trend for them. Disillusionment with political parties, besides being reflected in voting figures, has also led to increasing numbers of people getting involved in campaigns of direct action. Over the last year or so this has been highlighted by high profile campaigns like those against animal exports and the road-building programme.

For anarcho-syndicalists this is a development that can only be applauded. It would be easy to be critical of the fact that many of the young people involved in such single issue campaigns never reach revolutionary conclusions or the fact that some leading lights will deliberately try to steer their campaigns away from making links with wider issues to do with the nature of capitalism. However, the very fact that large numbers of people can begin to learn to organise and act together with others instead of handing over responsibility to professional politicians can only contribute to the building of a culture of resistance within which a revolutionary movement can thrive.

In revolutionary syndicalism, direct action (acting for ourselves instead of relying on representation by union officials or politicians pleading on our behalf) is of central importance and goes hand-in-hand with direct democracy (collective decision-making and full control of all actions, negotiations and policy-making by the whole membership). For us, though, there is no way that direct action can be disconnected from politics. Capitalism, in all its forms, relies on representation, whereby a largely apolitical working-class has no say in the decisions which affect our daily lives.

The complete opposite of this is a society that is organised from the bottom up where every-one has the opportunity to be involved in a direct way in decision-making. Such self-management of society is impossible without there first being the widespread practice of direct action and direct democracy. In other words, to advocate direct action is to advocate the rejection of parliaments and politicians (but not politics). What could be more political, or revolutionary?



Scargill's New Labour

It would appear increasingly likely that the Tories will lose the next election. Blair's tactics of stealing Tory policies and giving them a caring veneer is proving successful, with Labour enjoying a massive lead over the Tories in the opinion polls. Though it is understandable that many working class people would welcome the election of a Labour government, on the grounds that anything would be better than the current lot, it must be questioned what, if any, gain a Labour victory would bring for the working class.

Labour's attitude to the unions at present is to accept the unions' money while at the same time treating them publicly as if they were emitting an anti-social odour. On coming to power they have promised to introduce legislation which would ensure the right of workers to join a union but make it quite clear that the barrage of anti-union legislation will remain in place. Thus, while workers will be able to join unions at the same time they will be outlawed from using union power to defend themselves.

Meanwhile they are making it quite clear that capitalism will remain unrestricted in its right to exploit. The commitment to a minimum wage now looks like nothing more than setting the level so low that in reality it will be nothing more than enshrining in law capitalism's right to pay slave wages. As for re-nationalising privatised industries, this is no longer on the agenda, with even the commitment to reverse the crazy notion of rail privatisation now being dropped by Labour.

The Labour Party's much vaunted commitment to full employment now looks no more than a commitment to yet more training schemes instead of real jobs, some of which, according to Gordon Brown, will be compulsory.

The transformation of the Labour Party into the Tory Party in all but name has been too much for many Labour activists to stomach. Most notable among these is Arthur Scargill, whose socialist Labour Party will be officially launched on May Day. In the statement issued by Scargill it appears that the decision to drop Clause Four from Labour's constitution was the final straw that prompted this decision.

He argues that dropping Clause Four was, in effect, a betrayal of the Labour Party's socialist commitment to common ownership. Well, much as we respect Arthur Scargill, are we really being asked to believe that prior to Blair becoming leader Labour was committed to common ownership? The temptation is to now list Labour



governments' appalling record in its treatment of ordinary workers, let alone the absurd idea that Labour in power really had the slightest intention of overthrowing capitalism.

But why get involved in such sterile arguments? The sad thing is that if Scargill's call is heeded many grass roots trade unionists, having spent years trying to reform the Labour Party are now set to invest more effort in establishing a new Labour Party. It must be asked: what is the point? If the task of the new party is to seek common ownership then surely the failure of the existing Labour Party has shown that this can never be achieved through the social democratic parliamentary system. One can only imagine the reaction of the ruling class if it ever got to the stage where a militant Labour Party voted in parliament to seize the commanding heights of the economy.

If, however, the aim of the new party is to re-establish a left-of-centre social democratic party, again, the failure of the existing Labour Party illustrates the futility of this task. The move to the right of the Labour Party has as much to do with the changes to the world economy as it has to do with the need to win over middle class voters. The Keynesian-inspired left social democratic idea of the nation state intervening in the economy to increase demand in order to maintain full employment is no longer feasible. Any attempt by an individual government to inject massive public spending would only unleash an attack on the economy in this new era of unrestricted global finance.

Wouldn't it be far better if we come to terms with the momentous changes that have taken place in the economy? Instead of looking back, activists should spend their time looking for new ways to fight the de-regulated and increasingly part-time labour market. Instead of seeking to send yet more activists into the crazy world of parliamentary splendour it would be much better to build an organisation in the heart of the workplace and working class communities which would help to fight the many day to day problems facing the working class and link these struggles to the need for revolutionary change.

GARMENT WORKERS FIGHT BACK IN BANGLADESH



Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, became independent after a viscous civil war in which millions died, either from the bullets of the Pakistan army or from the starvation that resulted from the war. The short life of this country has never seen a stable government, just a succession of coups and counter-coups between the various factions of military and civilian bureaucracy. The only consistent thing has been the poverty and misery of capitalism.

The country itself is desperately poor, one of the worlds poorest. In November an IWA delegation travelled to Bangladesh to meet garment workers organised in the National Garment Workers Federation - a union independent of political parties and with a delegate structure. Founded in the early 90's the NGWF currently has a membership of 15-20,000 out of a workforce of a million, 80% of garment workers are women as is the case with the membership of the NGWF. The International Workers Association has been giving practical solidarity and publicity to their struggles.

The strikes, disputes, campaigns and lock-outs which have marked the struggles of Bengali workers are showing us in the more developed West how workers at the sharp edge of capitalism are fighting back with a determination and ferocity which should be inspirational to us in our struggles.

IWA delegate, Shaun Ellis described the conditions typical for workers living in the shanty towns of Bangladesh:

"The scale of poverty was beyond belief. Most people lived in tiny rooms about three metres square. A family of five or six people lived in these rooms and there was no sanitation and most had no water or gas..."

He also visited a vast brick built 'complex' supposedly an improvement on the shanty towns, here he described,

"...damp, dark corridors with little cupboards every now and again with a little calor gas stove, usually with a woman crouched cooking. Outside the building there was an open sewer that ran like a channel under the building, I suddenly realised that people were actually living in the area under the building, I really find it hard to describe this, if there was ever a damnation a damnation of capitalism this was it. The rent for the rooms... were 500 Takka (\$4.00US) a month, the same as the average monthly wage of a garment worker."

Many of the garment workers in Bangladesh are displaced farmers forced to move to the cities because their farms are destroyed by floods. The average hours for garment workers is 14-16 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year.

Workers haven't been taking this lying down. The NGWF has started a campaign of industrial actions to secure Fridays as a holiday for workers. Government legislation already exists decreeing Fridays as public holidays, but this isn't worth the paper its written on. The current campaign began in November and over the next few months, assuming the

employers do not cave in, the workers will take Fridays off anyway. The union expect a massive clamp down on its activity but are undeterred. They see this as their most important campaign to date, not only will it improve conditions but it will also improve the functioning of the union, it will allow them more time to have meetings and develop union democracy further. At present they depend largely on their three paid workers to administer the union and take care of communications. These workers are immediately recallable and earn only as much as they did as garment workers.

These workers have no illusions about what will happen when they stop working on Fridays but they are confident that with the tactics of solidarity and direct action they can win. These tactics have never failed them before.

Titas Apparels Lockout

On 30th December 1995 the Titas Apparels Ltd factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh closed locking out 350 workers. The closure was an illegal reaction to a strike which began on 27th December 1995 to fight for union recognition and an end to the 80 hour week worked at the factory.

Since June 23rd 1995, when the union (which is affiliated to the NGWF) got its registration from the Ministry of Labour, the bosses have tried to break the union using intimidation and hired thugs. Five women workers have been raped and three killed in the ongoing dispute.

Working conditions in the factory were bad. At times wages were paid months late. Workers had to work an 80 hour week, seven days a week with only 11 days off a year. The factory was crowded and had insufficient ventilation. There were only 2 toilets for 300 women and 3 for 50 men.

The union initially took action demanding the legal minimum wage, payment of wages and overtime on time, a day off on Fridays and public holidays, the immediate stop to threats against workers, union recognition and improved health and safety. The owners refused to meet these demands despite the involvement of the Labour Department and the union used its right to strike on 27th December. On 30th December the factory closed and sacked all 350 workers. The NGWF has asked for international support to safeguard the right to organise.

The IWA organised an international day of action on February 15th in 22 countries.

Please send donations (a few quid will go a long way, US\$10 is a months wages) and solidarity greetings to: **The National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh, G.P.O. Box 864, Dhaka, Bangladesh.**

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! DOWN MEXICO WAY

When the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) uprising broke out in the new year of 1994 in Chiapas in southern Mexico it came as a surprise to most people. It is a surprise to many that the Zapatistas are still there and still fighting - seeking to expand the horizons of their struggle at all times.

Today's Zapatistas, like the Mexican revolutionary of old, Emiliano Zapata, whose name they have taken as their own, are mostly native Mexican Indian peasants sick of big business grabbing their lands, leaving them destitute and often starving. All this was aggravated with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), on January the 1st 1994, which opened the way for the cut throat business practices of US and Canadian agri-business. With the implementation of NAFTA the rebels struck.

What is of particular interest is the rejection of the authoritarian model of organisation of the marxist left. The Zapatistas do not want to seize power on anyone's behalf, instead it wants to create a democratic space in which 'civil society' can shape Mexico and the world's future.

Irish Delegation visits Mexican rebels

An Irish delegation recently visited the Zapatistas in Mexico to extend solidarity and to find out first hand about their struggle. The following report from Shane O'Curry originally appears in the Spring 1996 edition of Workers Solidarity.

"As representatives from Ireland took part in celebrations on the second anniversary of the uprising in Chiapas, the EZLN went in for more talks with the government. Elected delegates from Zapatista communities have been participating in the 'National Dialogue'. This dialogue with the delegates was agreed to by the government after it failed to crush the uprising in February 1994.

"The February *offensive* had proved too costly in terms of publicity because of the litany of human rights abuses committed by the federal army. The ruling elite, conscious of the damage this was doing to Mexico's image as an investor-friendly market, opted for the softly, softly approach.

"This is not to say that human rights abuses have stopped in Mexico. In October 1995 Cecilia Rodrigues, an American national working to co-ordinate international solidarity with the rebellion, was kidnapped and subjected to multiple rape.

"Despite a press conference subsequently held by her in the United States, this drew little attention from the world's press. This stresses the importance of public interest and agitation to stop the situation from sliding back into unrestrained repression.

"Despite the repression the Zapatistas remain unequivocal in their opposition to NAFTA and the US dominated neo-liberal economic order. NAFTA, they remind us, is a death sentence for the poor and indigenous of Chiapas and all Mexico. Opening the economic floodgates to US and Canadian capital will wash away what precious little land they have left.

"The rebel army which draws its numbers from the very poorest is ill-equipped and receives no outside financial help. This is in sharp contrast to the 40,000 American-equipped federal troops still deployed in the region.

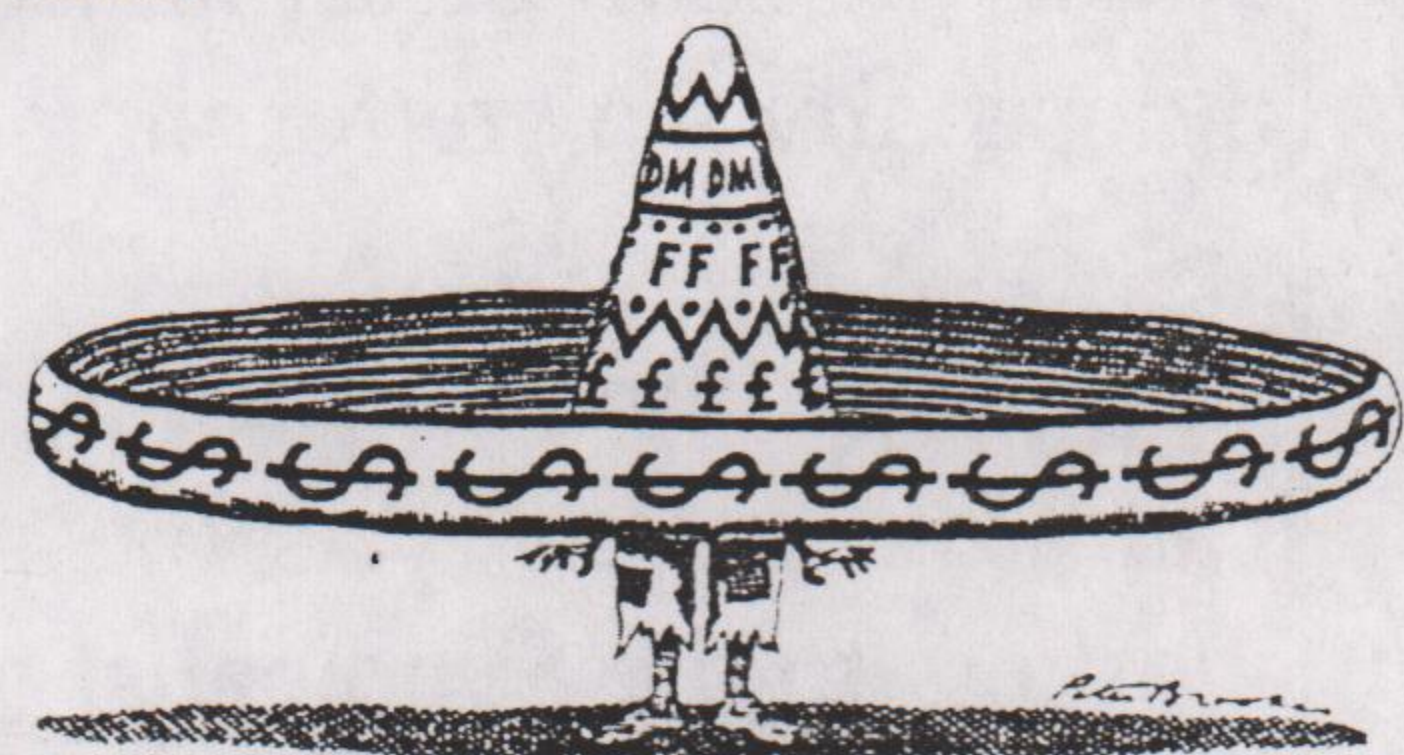
"But the Zapatistas have on their side the terrain and the support of their communities. They also have the support of millions of Mexicans tired of electoral fraud, government corruption and of paying the price of the economic crisis created by the countries rich.

"The Zapatistas' strength also lies in their absolute commitment to grassroots democracy. This is what allowed them to successfully and credibly hold a National Convention for Democracy (CND) in rebel held territory last year.

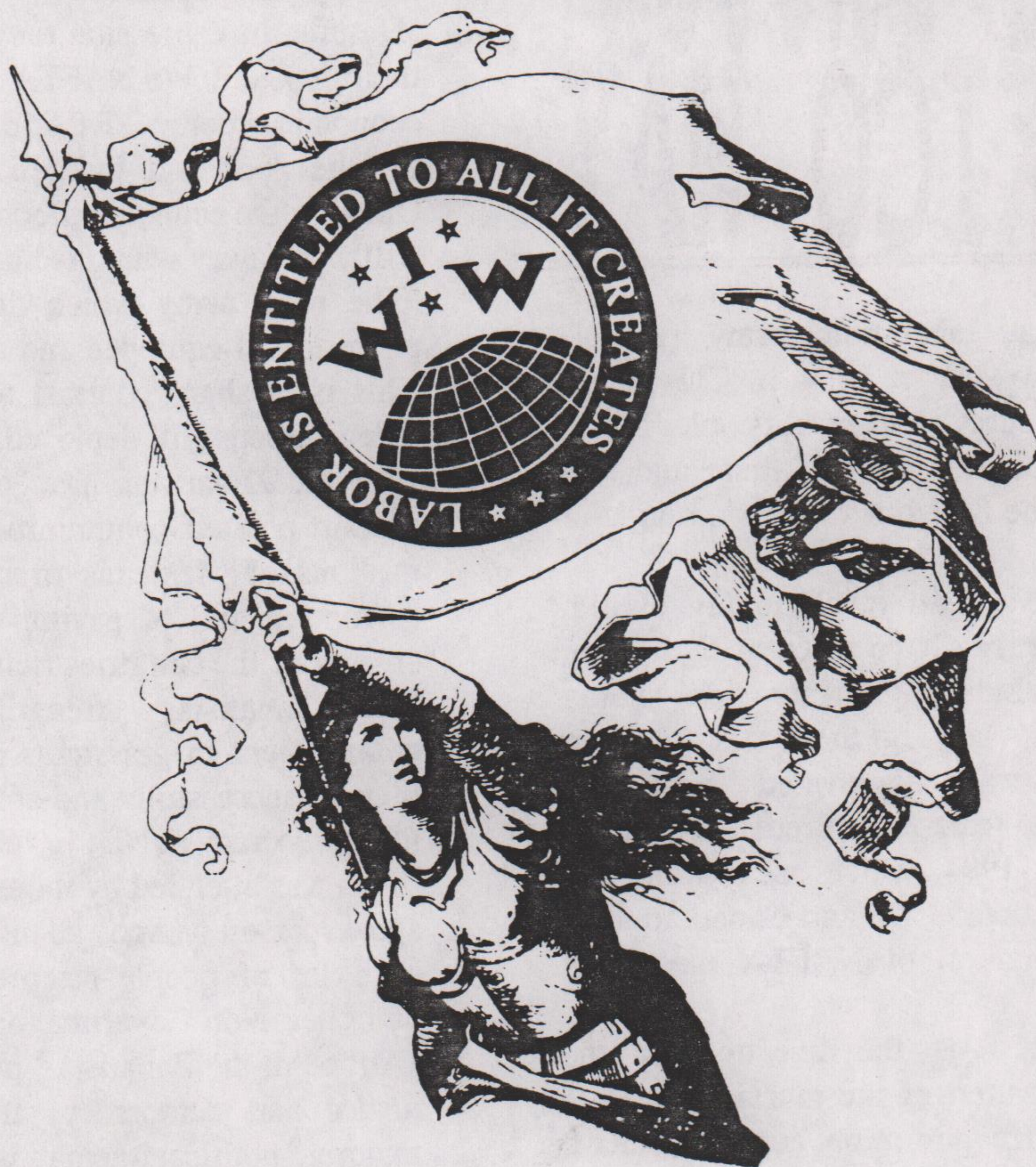
"This was attended by thousands (the 'official' figure cited by spokesperson Marcos at his inaugural speech was "one fuck of a lot of people") representing peasants, trade unions, churches, Non Governmental Organisations and, so on.

"Although the Zapatistas' political programme calls for land, justice and democracy, at the CND they refrained from making political demands, preferring to let the forces attending the conference determine the agenda. This is in line with their stated belief that the revolution must be social, not one that can be determined alone by the outcome of an armed insurrection.

"They share this anti-elitist view with Anarchists; not surprising perhaps considering the Zapatista tradition is influenced by the writings of Mexican Anarchist Ricardo Flores Magon. As an Anarchist he believed in the right of the oppressed to defend themselves and their gains through violence if necessary, but stressed the importance of the social revolution involving the participation of all, if change is to be achieved. The Zapatistas' commitment to the will of the people may prove to be their only ace as they go in for this round of talks."



THE REVOLUTION OF CONSTRUCTION



The opponents of Anarchism often tell us we cannot have Anarchism overnight. We know that well. Everything must be built up, but the time to start building is now. As previous societies decayed there developed within them the embryo of new forms of societies, so within capitalism we build the framework of socialism: the Syndicates.

From every struggle and from our daily work we must learn how to run industries and services. We must develop the class-consciousness, the knowledge and self-confidence of the workers, until the embryonic society bursts the shell of capitalism. As the IWW preamble put it: 'By organising industrially we are forming the new society within the shell of the old.'

Capitalism threatens to destroy society with itself, and the only force that can save humanity is the revolutionary workers. The Anarchists call the workers to the Syndicalist revolution: Revolution of Construction.