

Enjoyed your "Tist" pamphlet haulers - Roy.

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South West Solidarity

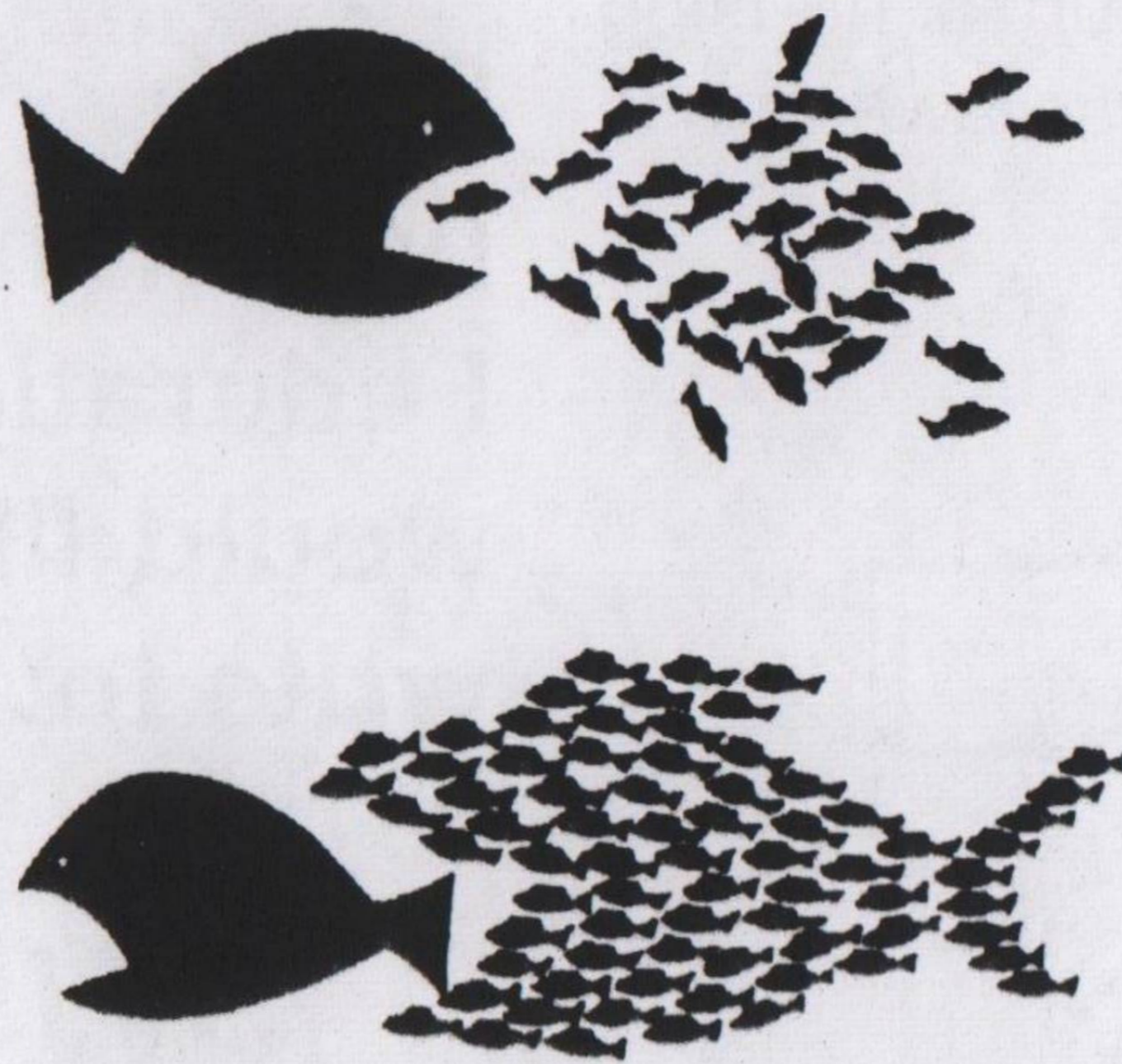
Bulletin #1 May Day 1999

This is the first bulletin from South West Solidarity. SWS is a newly formed local organisation which is part of Solidarity Federation-IWA. We have devoted the bulletin to a brief outline of the political and social perspectives of SWS, and our ideas on organisation.

The State We're In

Despite all the supposed "progress" of the 20th century; we all know the world is in a mess. The rich keep getting richer; while the poor get ever poorer. Everyone says they don't want war; but the killing and displacement of whole populations never seems to stop. Our leaders mouth pious platitudes about protecting the environment; while the world's natural resources go on being depleted and poisoned. In short, we have no real control over our lives, and whoever we vote for, nothing ever changes.

Unemployment, low pay, lack of education, poor health, homelessness and bad housing, are still a reality for a large section of the population here in Britain. World-wide more than 800 million people go hungry on a daily basis, while countless others die of avoidable diseases and war.



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Picking Our Pockets

This is what life is like for most of us; but for a privileged few, things are very different. These are the land-owners, the politicians, the judges, the generals, the bureaucrats, the company directors, and media tycoons. These are the bosses; the people who run society. They represent 8% of the population, but they own 80% of the assets. How did they get so much wealth and power? They stole it from you, from all of us. Society is set up so that most of us have no choice but to work for

these bosses, being paid far less than our labour is actually worth, whilst they cream off the profits. Sure, most of us, in this country at least, aren't actually on the bread-line. The bosses discovered long ago that they could make more money by selling us 'luxuries', and giving us the illusion that we are better off than others makes us less likely to rebel. They even let us think that we have a say in what happens to us; allowing us to vote for new bosses every few years. The sad truth, however, is that whether they call themselves Tories, Liberals, or Labour; whatever new disguises they dress themselves up in; a boss is a boss is a boss.

We are told that this is the only efficient way to run a complex society. They say it gives us "choice." These are bare-faced lies. Multi-national corporations produce literally hundreds of varieties of soap-powder (to take just one example out of thousands), but despite the fact that the capacity to do is available a dozen times over; adequate food, housing, health-care, and education for all are deemed to be too expensive. What efficiency! Some choice!

The bosses are deeply afraid of what will happen if people ever wise up to this great big confidence trick; so they have developed many ways to keep us in line. The media persuade and condition us to believe it is all for our own good, the politicians and bureaucrats regulate us, and if we ever dare to resist or rebel; we quickly find the police, the courts, the "benefits" system, and even the military used against us.

Organising For Change

Clearly, If we want to make things better, changing bosses simply will not do. Instead, we have to change the whole system that makes so many lives a misery.

The only way that change is going to happen is for people to get together in their communities and workplaces. To organise and fight, not just for improvements now, but for a whole new way of life based on the principles of solidarity, equality, and freedom, instead of on greed, privilege, and power. This is what South West Solidarity is all about. We are an organisation of people, working together for a better world. We aren't a political party, nor are we a trade-union in the usual sense.

Experience tells us that parties, politicians, and union officials, even if they call themselves "revolutionary" or "socialist" are nothing more than new bosses in the making.

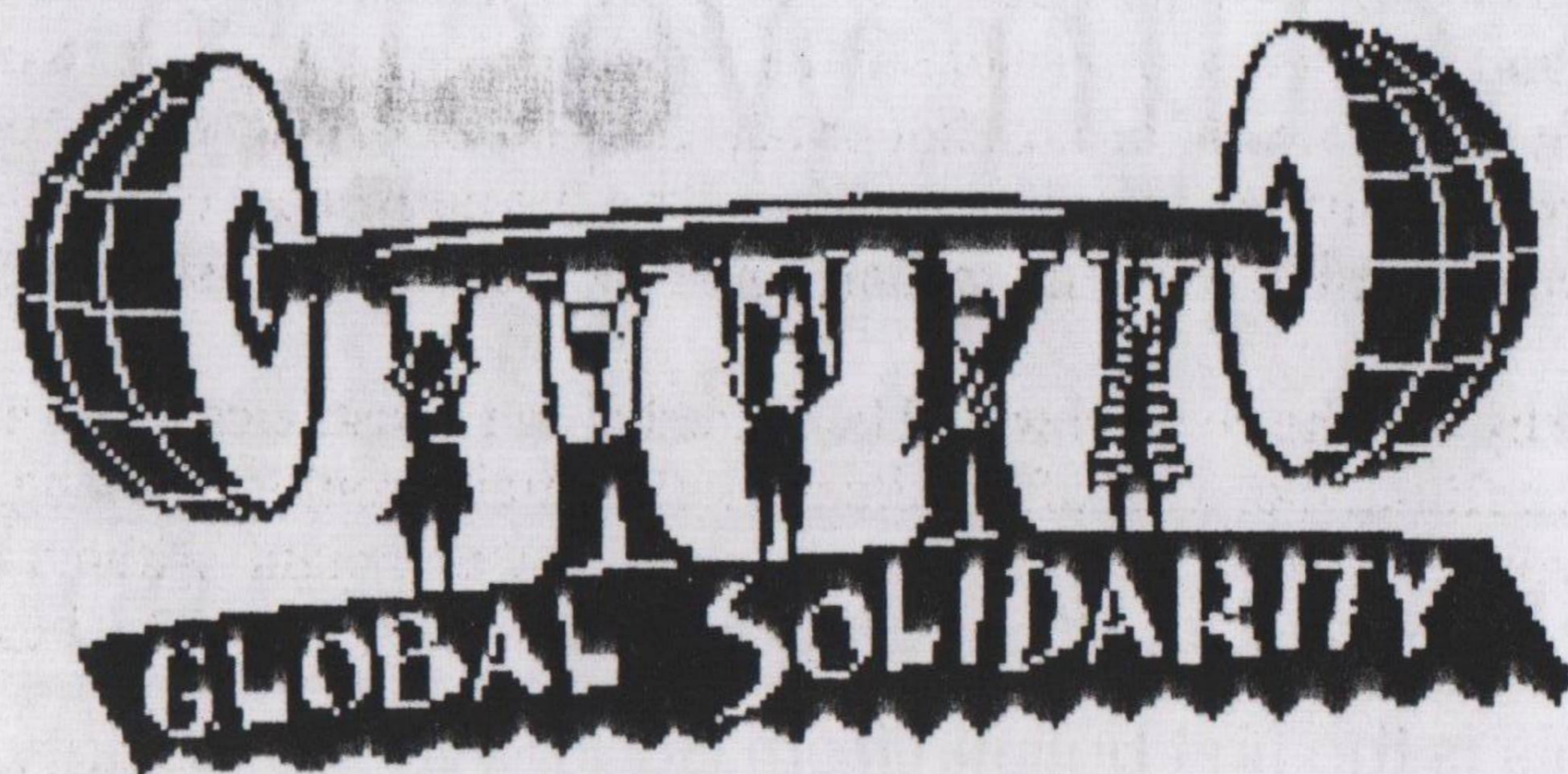
Solidarity Federation, the national organisation of which SWS is a part, has no leaders, no hierarchy, and no central authority. Instead, it is directly controlled by its members. It organises in "Locals" within particular areas, and in "Networks" within particular industries. Its eventual aim is to bring about a free and fair society, where communities and workplaces are run by the people living and working in them. In the meantime we use Direct Action to support a wide range of issues. These include, industrial disputes, protecting the environment, anti-fascism, fighting racism, sexism and homophobia, and many others.

Taking Direct Action

As its name implies; direct action is any action that aims at achieving its ends directly, rather than asking for concessions from the bosses. It can range from occupying a factory or confronting fascists in the streets, to setting up a housing co-op or distributing literature to raise awareness of social and political issues.



From time to time, where applicable, South West Solidarity members may work within existing trade-unions, and alongside "socialist" parties on specific campaigns. However, we recognise that trade-unions with their professional officials and political-parties with their centralised authority, frequently have more in common with the bosses than with the people they are supposed to represent. In the longer term, when people begin to take over their communities and workplaces, trade union bureaucracy and party structures will become irrelevant and disappear.



We recognise the need to work globally in order to achieve a free and fair society world-wide. Solidarity Federation forms the British section of the International Workers' Association (IWA); which has members and sections on all continents of the world. The IWA has been engaged since 1922 in the struggle to build a world free from politicians and bosses.

If you are interested in joining South West Solidarity and becoming part of Solidarity Federation-IWA, or if you would like further information, write to:

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**or call the Solidarity
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