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# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

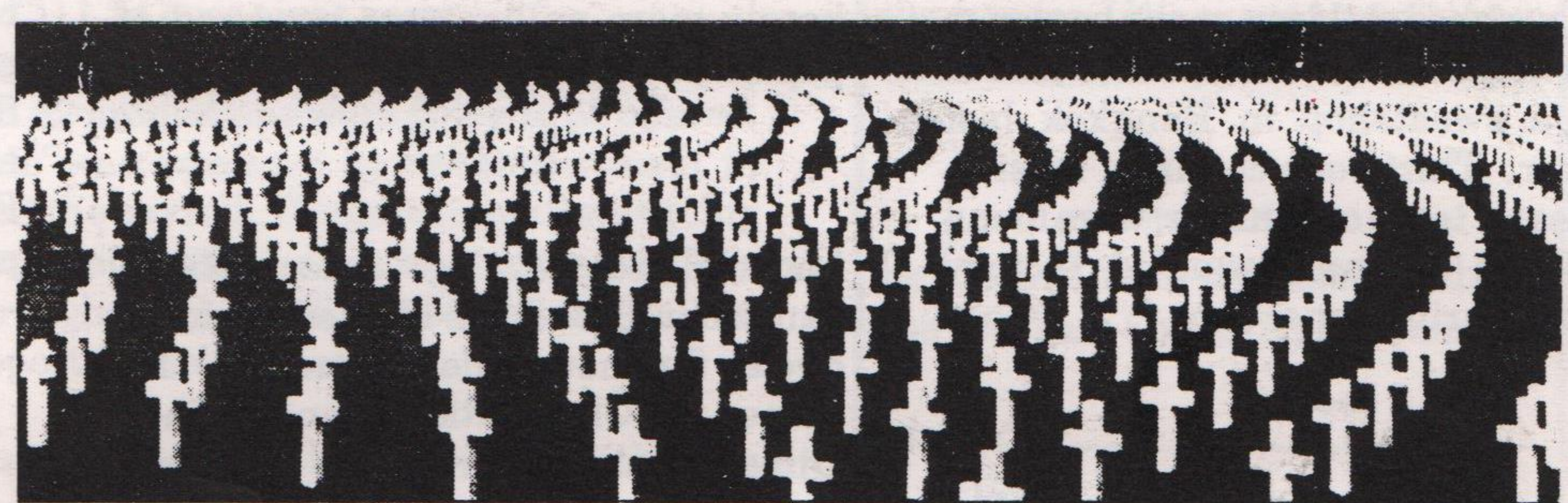
MAGAZINE OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT  
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## New World Order



## Same Old Slaughter

...see page 5



# IRISH ANARCHIST MAGAZINE



**THE EX-STALINISTS** of the Workers Party are washing some of their dirty linen in public. With the collapse of the state capitalist regimes in Eastern Europe, Proinsias de Rossa and his faction are in a hurry to get rid of their Stalinist image. They want to go into the next general election able to say that they have rid themselves of their connections to the fallen dictatorships, and also to the (supposedly non-existent) Official IRA.

Instead of dressing state capitalism up as 'socialism', their new idea is to take a mixture of state and private capitalism and call that 'socialism'. They never understood that socialism is about freedom, workers control and a society without bosses. They don't want to understand. It would upset their authoritarian view of things. All De Rossa and Co. are eager to understand is how to maintain their vote. They want to show how 'reasonable' and 'moderate they are. Bye, bye to even the language of 'revolution' and 'class struggle'.

The Labour Party moves further and further to the right. It was never a socialist party but it did occasionally use socialist language. Now it expels members of the *Militant* grouping while allowing businesspeople like Pat Magner to hold office in the party. Even some in the grouping around Emmet Stagg, *Labour Left*, who originally came together as anti-coalitionists are now

# For Starters

prepared to consider... coalition.

Most trotskyist groups have faded away or ceased attracting new members. Only a couple are managing to hold their membership numbers steady. None are growing. The authoritarian Bolshevik tradition is not as attractive as it used to be.

At this time when the level of activity in the class struggle is low, socialists should get back to basics and reassert the freedom-loving, libertarian socialist tradition. Let us be clear. Socialism is still a good idea, but let us make sure it is socialism we are talking about and not some form of state capitalism. The place for dictatorial and repressive concepts of 'socialism' is in the dustbin of history. Real socialism - anarchism - is as relevant as ever.

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While making no wild claims for Irish anarchism it is worth mentioning that a new Cork Anarchist Group has come into existence and anarchists in Ballymena, Belfast & Derry have organised a regional network.

The Workers Solidarity Movement has not been exactly inactive over the last few months either! Public meetings and open discussions on the "Anarchist Alternative". Travellers Rights, How to

fight sectarianism and the 1974 Portuguese Revolution were hosted. The last mentioned was addressed by an Irish worker who had been living in Portugal at the time.

An observer was sent to a meeting of European libertarian & revolutionary trade unionists in Barcelona (see report on page 16). Our pamphlet, *Ireland and British Imperialism*, was reprinted due to the first edition selling out within a couple of months of publication last year.

Members joined the pickets in Dublin on bars which refused to serve Travellers. These protests were organised by the Socialist Workers Movement (one of the Leninist groups) and called off when they decided that there were no immediate recruits to be gained from such activity. Although the pickets were only publicised in universities they got 50-60 people turning up each Friday evening. There are people who want to fight anti-Traveller hatred but Travellers themselves must be centrally involved. A group such as the Irish Travellers Movement should take the initiative and call on socialists, trade unionists, students and unemployed people to join in a campaign of education, pickets and marches. The WSM will happily give its support to to such an initiative.

## THAT'S CAPITALISM

Malnourished children, many beaten so badly they could not walk, were rescued from a sweatshop in Bangkok last October. Thirty one children, most in their early teens or younger, were found locked in a small squalid factory manufacturing paper cups.

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Twenty three million people in the USA are so poor that they receive food stamps. That's almost one in ten. Food stamps are given by the government to people whose unemployment benefit has been exhausted. Meanwhile the USA still

boasts more millionaires per head of population than any other country.

\*\*\*\*\*

Leonel Brizola, state governor of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil has blamed business circles for thousands of murders. He named the Club of Rio de Janeiro Shop Directors and other bosses organisations as the paymasters of the death squads who have savagely killed 7,000 street children and youths since 1988. The children are killed to 'clean up' shopping areas and make them more acceptable to rich consumers who don't

want to be annoyed by beggars and petty theft.

\*\*\*\*\*

Among those who voted to double water rates at the December meeting of Donegal County Council were Councillors Séan Maloney (Labour), Seamus Rodgers (Workers Party) and Jim Ferry (Sinn Féin) - all of whom were elected on promises to get rid of water rates!





THE KILLING of the eight building workers in January marks the most bloody episode in an IRA campaign against those who work for the 'security forces', a campaign which has been going on since 1985. There has been a massive wave of condemnation from bishops, politicians and media figures.

Most of it is hypocritical cant. In all wars people who assist or work for the enemy are targeted. During the War of Independence the 'old IRA' shot people it suspected of collaboration. Today it is a criminal offence to collaborate with the IRA. Anyone allowing them to use their house or car, anyone minding weapons or giving information can be sentenced to long terms in jail. In the North their name may be leaked to a loyalist death squad.

The Workers Solidarity Movement, as an anarchist and anti-imperialist organisation, agrees with the Provos that workers should not collaborate with the forces of imperialism. It is not in the interest of any worker to collaborate with imperialism, in Ireland or anywhere else.

This does not mean we agree with killing building workers. We don't. The IRA threats to workers who service or deliver to Army bases and RUC & UDR barracks tell us much about the Provos. For all their left-wing slogans, they remain an authoritarian nationalist movement. They decide what is good for us, they decide what methods to use. The role of everyone else is to passively cheer them on and preserve some sort of nationalist solidarity.

A genuinely socialist and revolutionary movement would have appealed to workers to black these bases because it is in their own interest to fight imperialism. It is undeniable that such an appeal would have been ignored by most. However in areas such as Newry, Derry and Strabane there was a very good chance that it would have been heeded if worked for. A campaign of this sort would consist of raising the issue within the unions, holding meetings at depot gates, producing leaflets, taking up

As the IRA kill eight more building workers... we say

## Workers Action is the answer



• British 'security forces' at work in Belfast

the arguments and fighting for official union backing for anyone disciplined or sacked for refusing to help the state's war effort.

It would be a start in bringing workers - as workers - to the head of the anti-imperialist struggle. It has been done before. At the time of the War of Independence there was an anti-conscription strike, the "Limerick Soviet", the refusal of train drivers to carry British troops or war materials.

Activity like this can give workers a sense of the potential power they possess. And by being based on the methods of mass struggle it can give workers the confidence to start getting involved in political activity themselves instead of leaving it to a few rulers and would-be rulers. This is very important if we are to build a real socialist society where

there is no division into rulers and ruled.

We must also look at the **objective** result of the threats and killings. It does not matter a lot what the intentions of the Provos are, the fact is that killing labourers and other workers drives Protestants of our class further into the arms of bigots like Paisley. It is not enough to denounce such workers as supporters of imperialism - the question is how to win them away from that. Death threats certainly cannot do it. Whether we like it or not many Protestants believe that such workers are shot because they are Protestants and that the Provos' stated reasons are not the real ones. Therefore we call for the threats to be lifted and replaced by a workplace campaign based on arguments about working class self-interest.

Joe King



Sectarianism... hatred... intimidation... beatings... murder

# The bigots won't keep us apart

**Statistics for 1991**  
(Irish Press, Jan 1st, 1992)

**Republicans**

Former members of security forces, informers, Loyalist terrorists, those supplying services to the security forces-	17
Serving members of security forces killed-	19
IPLO-	05
INLA-	02
IRA mistakes-	04
Total No. of victims of republican groups-	47

**Loyalists**

No. of victims of Loyalist groups-	37
No. of victims of random loyalist attacks-	32
Total No. of Loyalist victims-	69

Members of IRA killed by Security forces-	04
Civilians killed by security forces-	02

**IT'S BEEN a year of little change up North. Just as the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1986 led to a rampage by Loyalist gangs, in the wake of the Brooke talks 36 Catholic civilians were killed in random attacks. Six taxi drivers were killed, singled out as easy targets.**

Newspapers talk of carnage, of a situation totally out of control, of the sectarianism of the IRA and the Loyalists, with the heavy emphasis on the IRA. Not many papers talk about the sectarianism of the entire state and it is interesting to note that the security forces killed more people than the IPLO, yet they are never described as terrorist murder gangs.

Contradictions such as these arise from the view point that the northern state is merely the neutral ground upon which these crazed madmen practice their blood frenzy. What is the reason for all this? What's special about the North, why is there not a sectarian divide in the South also? Why aren't Catholics being killed down South by Protestants? Obviously, there must be something that is causing this conflict, and if it's not the basic nature of the northern statelet

what is it?

Political commentators leave this question hanging in the air, it's as if there is something poisonous in the water. It's no wonder that many people are not only confused but fed up with hearing about the North. It's no wonder that many political parties hide behind emotive condemnation using trite meaningless phrases to avoid discussing the issues involved.

So what are the issues involved? Why is there this Loyalist sectarian backlash? Why despite the statistics, are the IRA portrayed as the main threat to civilians?

Initially the North was partitioned in order to artificially keep the Protestants in the majority. The Protestants were then given marginal privileges, better housing and job prospects. The North was the richest and most industrialised part of Ireland, and most of that industry (linen, then ship building) relied on exporting to Britain. Therefore it was vital for the owners of business that the North remained tied to Britain.

By splitting Catholic worker from Protestant worker they formed an allegiance between Protestant worker and Protes-

tant boss, and of course the British state. This was the 'orange card'. The North is now Britain's last colony. A majority of people in Britain have said in all the recent opinion polls that they would like to see them pull out.

Why do the the British stay? One important reason is that a chief sustainer of any state is the myth of its invincibility. Once the cracks start to show, as Gorbachev discovered when he lost his job and the Soviet Union, the whole shebang can quickly crumble.

When India was struggling for independence they looked to the lessons learned by Irish nationalists. Indeed John Biggs-Davidson, a leading Tory politician, admitted as much when he said that "if we lose in Belfast we may have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham". This is not to say that a British withdrawal would spark revolution throughout Britain, but certainly it is a risk for the British government to allow such an upheaval, a risk that for the moment they are not willing to take. It's a risk as regards the reaction of their own population at home, and its also a risk to have a wild card statelet, out of acceptable control so close to your own border (see the USA's reaction to Cuba and Nicaragua).

At the moment though Protestants still are marginally better off than Catholics. Unemployment is two and a half times higher in Catholic areas. However, loyalists believe that talks such as the Brooke talks could be a forum for Britain to slowly slip out of the North. It is to prevent this happening that the 'orange card' is again being played. It is for this reason loyalist sectarian attacks occur, they serve to divide Catholic and Protestant and ensure thus that







The UVF "We wear dark glasses and put bags over our heads so that we don't have to look at reality"

the Protestant working class will fight to maintain the status quo i.e. its allegiance with the bosses and the state.

This isn't always the case though. There have been times when both sides united, for example, the DHSS strikes against UDA death threats to Catholic workers. Last year workers at the Hyster factory in Lurgan walked out after three of their workmates were murdered by loyalist gunmen. However more often than not when unity occurs it has occurred on 'bread and butter' issues, rarely raising the issue on the border. Avoiding the issue leaves the door open to the bosses to once again play the orange card. The result is that in many cases such unity was followed by a loy-

alist backlash as the bosses attempt to prevent it recurring.

Therefore on one hand it is true that Protestant workers learn that they are more powerful and successful in struggles when they combine with the Catholic working class. However on the other hand they still see the bosses and the British state as necessary in order to protect what minor privileges they have. These are indeed minor, as Northern Irish workers, whether Protestant or Catholic, are the worst paid in the British Isles. Unemployment is higher in the North than any other part of the British Isles.

Sectarianism is a weapon that has been

used again and again by the ruling class. In 1932 it split unemployed Catholics and Protestants who had come together in the Outdoor Relief Strike and it is being used today to entrench the loyalist side. Without workers unity against the bosses the situation could continue on and on. As long as the Orange state exists to divide Catholic and Protestant there will be sectarianism. Our goal is a socialist Ireland, where the freedom of the individual is respected and where the working class hold direct and complete control through their own councils. In the struggle for this loyalist workers can be won away from their bosses, and only then will the cycle of sectarianism be broken.

Aileen O'Carroll

# New World Order Same Old Slaughter

*"It's a proud day for America and, by God, we kicked the Vietnam syndrome for once and for all" declared Bush. The imperialists' victory over Iraq was no surprise given their massive technical and military capacity. What is more interesting is the ready help given them by the "free press". On the first anniversary of the war this article focuses on how the media provided a "licence to kill" in the Gulf.*

**LET'S EXAMINE** a few of the myths that were floating around in February 1991. Firstly was this a war aimed only at liberating a small independent country from a pitiless aggressor?

A Kuwaiti "exile" told Maggie O'Kane in

the 'Irish Times' of the hardships they had endured due to the invasion, "In my normal life I would have servants to do everything in the house now I am ironing my own clothes and I have only one servant". Before the invasion Kuwaiti citizens had the highest standard of

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# New World Order

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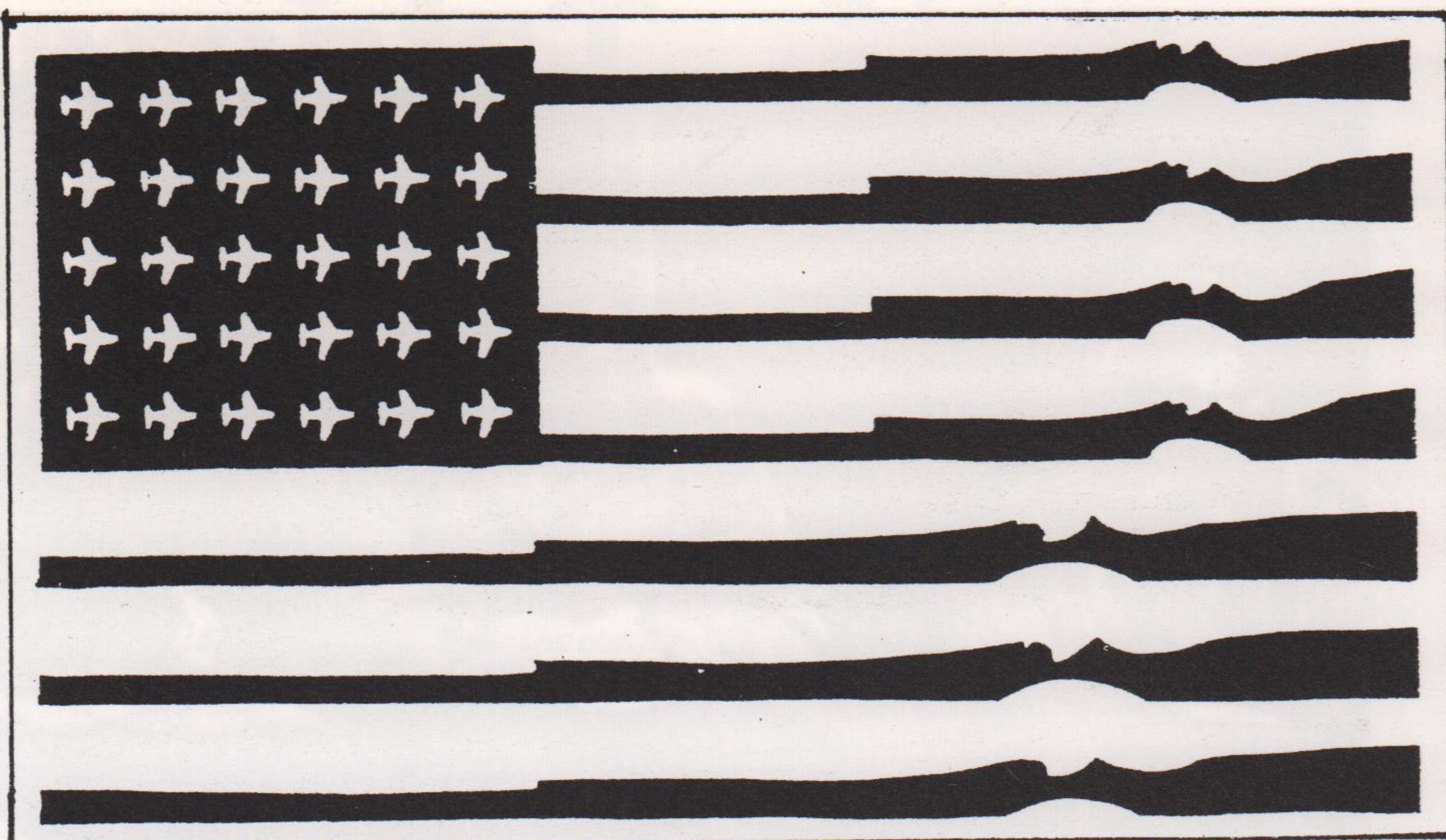
living in the world and enjoyed free education, health care and social services. Sounds o.k. but only 15% of the workforce are citizens!

The remaining 85% are "guest workers" and enjoy the most appalling conditions. Since the war ended 300,000 of the 400,000 Palestinian guest workers have been expelled. Only 60,000 propertied Kuwaiti males have the vote - not that there's been an election in quite a while, certainly not since the Emir closed down the parliament in 1986. The al-Sabah ruling family returned promising democracy and immediately began assassinating Kuwaiti opposition figures. Kuwait was and is little more than a gombeen type of state. The al-Sabahs were installed by Britain in 1961 and still depend totally on the Western powers.

This doesn't justify Iraq's expansionism. Saddam, despite playing "the Palestinian card", was no sort of liberator. However the rush to "save" Kuwait while ignoring Israel's grabbing of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights shows clearly that the West "defends small nations" only when it suits their geo-political schemes.

Secondly, was Saddam the new Hitler? Saddam Hussein is not a nice guy. He is an extremely vicious nationalist dictator. He was responsible for the agonising death by (West German made) cyanide and mustard gas of 5,000 Kurds at Halabja. He killed thousands of Shias during the uprisings last March and continues to rule Iraq with an iron fist.

However, much as he might relish the thought, Saddam was not and certainly is not in the position of Adolf Hitler in 1939. Nazi Germany was the second most powerful industrial nation in the world, almost totally self-sufficient with its own massive arms industry. Iraq is only self-sufficient in oil (which it can't fully process), dates and some vegetables and was almost \$80 billion in debt at the start of the war. Despite the hype they were actually years away



from producing nuclear weapons and had almost no native arms technology. Up to last August Saddam relied totally on the major powers.

Thirdly Iraqi forces in Kuwait were accused of being a gang of murderers. No war is ever "clean". In this war, as in all others, there were horrible atrocities on both sides. However given the balance of forces it comes as no surprise that the coalition forces were the ones that reaped the biggest harvest of death and destruction. Only 137 coalition troops were killed (many by "friendly fire") compared to at least 100,000 Iraqi troops. Up to 200,000 Iraqi civilians died in the bombing or as a result of the starvation and disease that followed.

While the press concentrated on the Western hostages, millions of workers from third world countries were not allowed to leave Saudi Arabia and other countries for the duration of the war. Only 1 in 10 Palestinians in the West Bank (where many of the Iraqi scuds eventually landed) had gas masks in case of chemical or biological attack.

The Western media both "tabloid" and "quality" were prepared to exaggerate, lie, accept rumours or just publish any old rubbish that aided the war effort.

We were told that babies in Kuwait city had been ripped out of incubators and left to die. Hospital officials dismissed these as absurd - they didn't have enough incubators to even hold the number supposedly ripped out.

An icerink in the city was said to hold thousands of bodies - none were found. Up to 40,000 Kuwaitis were alleged to be held hostage - they weren't. Airmen who appeared in Iraqi TV were supposed to have been beaten black and blue by the Iraqis but sustained their injuries ejecting from their planes at high speeds.

## COLLATORAL DAMAGE

The Iraqis couldn't, even if they wanted to, have come close to the imperialist tallies. The Iraqi army of young and mostly untrained recruits was annihilated in Kuwait. It wasn't so much a war as a "turkey shoot".

Between Kuwait and Basra a fleeing and deserting army in every conceivable vehicle was exterminated. They were attacked by British and American tanks and from the air with rockets and cluster bombs. Tens of thousands were wiped out and it didn't merit a headline in many papers. They called it "the

*"In the hours after the ceasefire north of the Iraqi border, it was impossible to drive on the highway without running over parts of human bodies. I watched wild dogs feasting on Iraqi flesh and camera crews filmed all this. But scarcely a frame reached television viewers. Faced with the reality they supposedly craved, nearly all television editors decided that 'good taste' would restrict their reports now that government officials were no longer there to censor them. Having therefore offered viewers war without responsibility, television ended the Gulf conflict by giving them war without death". Robert Fisk, Irish Times, January 19th.*



mother of all easy target areas".

A few journalists were revolted by what they saw. Some did not, to a lesser or greater extent, take part in the sanitised and censored coverage. They refused to be involved in the censored military press briefings or to be photographed in camouflage at the front "with our boys". One British group, Media Workers Against the War, had 800 people at their founding meeting. They produced their own 'War Report' which contained much good factual reporting.

Breaking the consensus carried its risks which tended to increase nearer the front. DJ Miles Patterson of Jazz FM in London played a few mildly anti-war tracks and was fired. Bob Fisk who tried to prevent Kuwaitis beating up Palestinians in Kuwait city was told by an American soldier "You have a big mouth, this is marshall law boy. Fuck off!" All things considered he probably got off fairly lightly.

#### KURDISH WORKERS' COUNCILS

One possible reason for the massacre between Kuwait city and Basra was the rebellious feelings of many of the fleeing conscripts. Though the West wanted to be rid of Saddam it would much prefer a palace coup within the Ba'athists then a popular uprising. It was possibly, also, for this reason that his elite imperial guards were left fairly intact.

On the 29th of March one of the first tanks back into Basra destroyed a poster of Saddam. A general uprising soon gripped the South, a rising which was portrayed by the media as exclusively Shia Muslim in character. However this area of Iraq has always been strongly secular. Basra, Nasariah and Hilah were traditional centres of the Iraqi Communist Party (effectively wiped out in the sixties). Had the rebellion lasted longer there might have been some appearance of socialist ideas on the agenda.

In the North according to some sources\* quoting participants in the Kurdish uprising there may have been up to 100 'shoras' or workers' councils. These were active in the fight against the Ba'athists. They also came into conflict with the nationalists of the Kurdish Front (KF) and the Stalinists of the 'March of Communism' (RAWT) group.

The nationalist forces seem to have been extremely unpopular in some areas. One witness said that Jalai Talabani (who later signed a treaty with Saddam) was not let into the town of Sulaymaniyah. Massoud Barzani of the Kurdish Democratic Party had two body guards killed by the people of Chamcharni.

Shoras called for self-determination, bread, work and freedom including freedom to strike, for a "shoras government", for womens' equality and that

people should control their own economic and political destiny. It would appear that a revolution which began as a nationalist one was being taken further by workers fighting for a social revolution. According to one activist "a large part of the shoras movement didn't acknowledge the KF's social authority".

Of course the KF have since brokered an agreement with Saddam which recognises his authority in return for an autonomous region. The lessons of the Gulf massacre and the Kurdish uprising seems to be that nationalists have no answers. Neither Saddam, Yasser Arafat, the KF or any nationalist outfit have anything to offer workers fighting imperialism in the Gulf region.

All nationalists eventually find themselves in collaboration with the imperialists and only step out of line to pursue their own interests (as in Saddam's case).

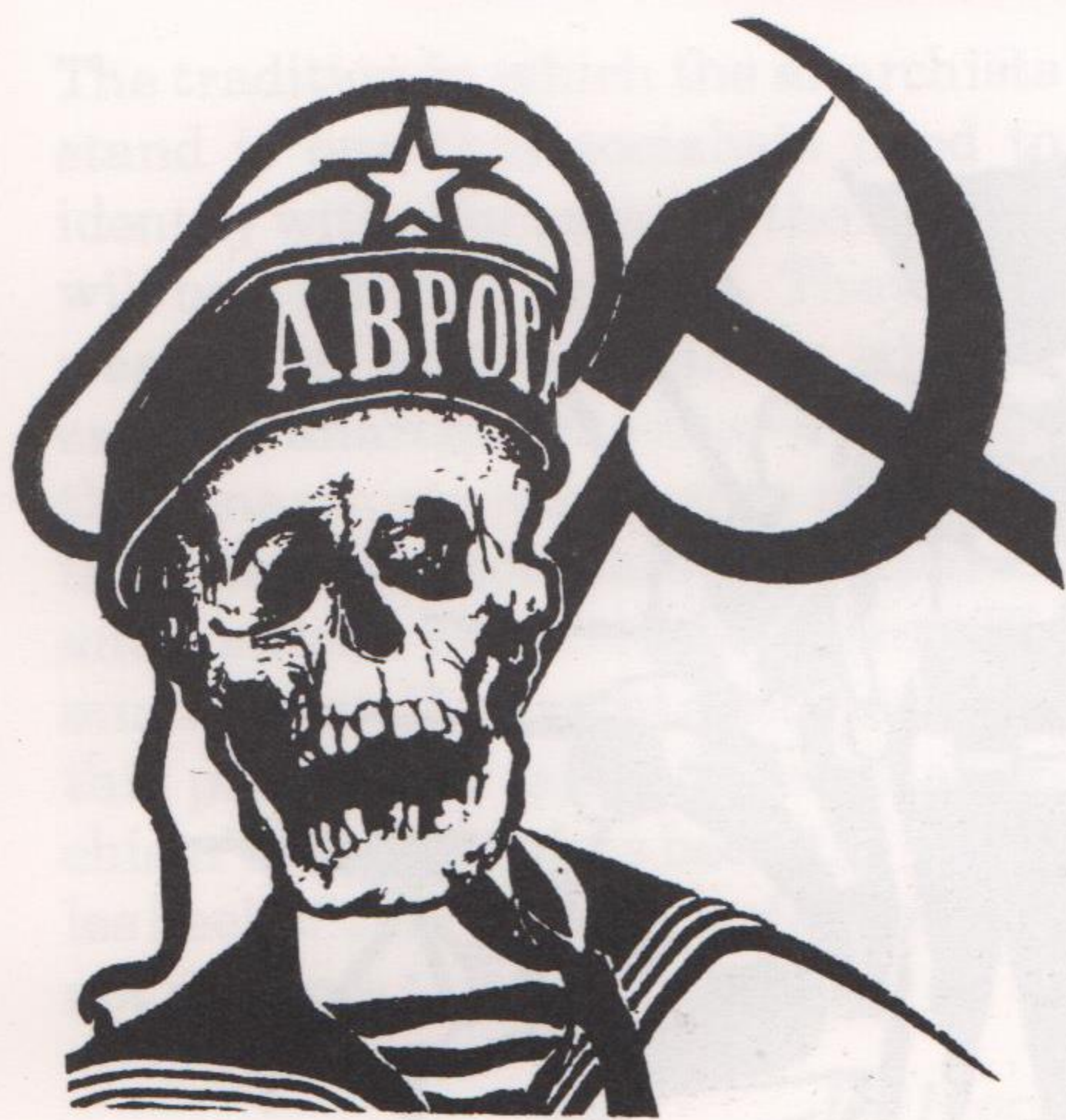
The working class must assert it's interests. They must break with nationalism and boot out all the Emirs, Sheiks, petty dictators and imperialist stooges. Only in a revolutionary war against the imperialists and their own rulers can they really defeat imperialism.

Des McCarron

\* *The Kurdish Uprising and Kurdistan's nationalist shopfront and it's negotiations with the Ba'athist/Fascist regime* BM Blob + BM Combustion London WC1N 3XX, England.

## The Kronstadt Uprising against the Bolsheviks

# In Defence of the Truth



**WE HAVE BEEN insisting on the need for the far left to re-appraise the tradition of the Russian revolution and in particular the role the Bolsheviks played in destroying that revolution. One of the most detailed responses to the anarchist critique of Bolshevism was published under the title 'In Defence of October' in the winter issue of *International Socialism*, the journal of the Socialist Workers Party (the largest Leninist group in Britain).**

Unfortunately the article fails to seriously address the criticisms of Lenin, preferring instead to repeat more sophisticated versions of old slanders and distortions. Due to space considerations we cannot cover the entire article (80 pages) here, however in looking at John Rees's (the author) treatment of the Kronstadt rising of 1921 a useful impression of the flaws in his approach can be gleaned.

The Kronstadt rising of 1921 represented the last major upsurge of working class resistance to the by then consolidated Bolshevik dictatorship. Kronstadt itself was a naval town on an island off the coast of Petrograd (St Petersburg). In 1917 it had been the heart of the Russian Revolution, although it had never been under Bolshevik party control.

Because of Kronstadt's leading role in the 1917 Revolutions, Leninists have

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## In Defence of the Truth

continued from page 7

always insisted that the revolutionaries in Kronstadt in 1921 were not the same ones that had been there in 1917. The revolutionaries had been replaced at this stage with "coarse peasants". The evidence Rees musters for this point is a useful indication of the general Leninist method when it comes to the Russian revolution. The quote below is in Rees's article on page 61.

*"In September and October 1920 the writer and the Bolshevik party lecturer Ieronimus Yasinsky went to Kronstadt to lecture 400 naval recruits. They were 'straight from the plough'. And he was shocked to find that many, 'including a few party members, were politically illiterate, worlds removed from the highly politicised veteran Kronstadt sailors who had deeply impressed him'. Yasinsky worried that those steeled in the 'revolutionary fire' would be replaced by 'inexperienced freshly mobilised young sailors'.*

This quote is referenced to a book called 'Kronstadt 1917-21' by Israel Getzler, an academic but useful look at Kronstadt throughout this period. Rees's account is a fair version of the first half of Yasinsky's report. The quote however continues exactly as reproduced below.

*"Yasinsky was apprehensive about the*

*future when, 'sooner or later, Kronstadt's veteran sailors, who were steeled in revolutionary fire and had acquired a clear revolutionary world-view would be replaced by inexperienced, freshly mobilised young sailors'. Still he comforted himself with the hope that Kronstadt's sailors would gradually infuse them with their 'noble spirit of revolutionary self-dedication' to which Soviet Russia owed so much. As for the present he felt reassured that 'in Kronstadt the red sailor still predominates'.<sup>1</sup>*

Handy 'editing' of this quote transforms it from one showing that three months before the rising that Kronstadt had retained its revolutionary spirit to one implying the garrison had indeed been replaced. Rees then goes on to contradict himself about the composition of the Bolshevik party at the time. On page 61 he says "The same figures for the Bolshevik party as a whole in 1921 are 28.7% peasants, 41% workers and 30.8% white collar and others". On page 66 however he says the figures at the end of the civil war (also 1921) were 10% factory workers, 25% army and 60% in "the government or party machine". A note at the back says even of those classed as factory workers "most were in administration".

Rees also attempts to attribute the decline in the number of Bolshevik party members in Kronstadt to the Civil war but in fact the fall in numbers in 1920 was due to purges and resignations from the party. The attitude of the remaining party members is demonstrated by the fact that during the rising three veteran Kronstadt Bolsheviks formed a Preparatory Committee of the Russian Communist Party which called upon local communists not to sabotage the efforts of the Revolutionary Committee. A further 497 members of the party resigned

from the party<sup>2</sup>.

Getzler also demonstrates that the crew of the battleships Petropavlovsk and Sevastopol which formed the core of the rising, were recruited into the navy before 1917, only 6.9% having been recruited between 1918 and 1921. These figures are on the same page as the earlier quotes Rees uses but are ignored by him. The remainder of the section on Kronstadt relies on more traditional smear tactics. Much is placed on the fact that the Whites thought they might be able to gain from the rebellion. The fact that Petrochenko an ex-Bolshevik and chair of the Revolutionary Committee was later to join the Whites and attempted to contact them at the time of the rising is mentioned. The fact that the Revolutionary Committee itself constantly warned against any idea of an alliance with the Whites is not.

Any real examination of what happened at Kronstadt has to look at what the real balance of forces was at the time and what the actual demands of Kronstadt were. The work of academics like Israel Getzler in uncovering Soviet records of the period have demonstrated that of those serving in the Baltic fleet at the time at least 75.5% were recruited before the 1917 revolution. The majority of the Revolutionary Committee were veterans of the Kronstadt Soviet and the October revolution.

So why did these revolutionaries who were the backbone of the 1917 revolution rise against the Bolsheviks in 1921. At the time Lenin said "White generals, you all know played a great part in this. This is fully proved"<sup>3</sup>. Latter day Leninists are more subtle and try to place the root of the rising at discontent with the economic policies of the day. No major Leninist publication has ever repro-





duced the Kronstadt programme. This is probably because only 3 of the 15 demands are economic, the rest being political demands designed to replace Bolshevik dictatorship over the working class with the direct rule of the working class.<sup>4</sup>

In any case the New Economic Plan introduced by the Bolsheviks in 1921 went far beyond the granting of the economic demands of Kronstadt. The crushing of Kronstadt was followed by what the SWP has referred to as "unilateral killings" i.e. executions of many revolutionaries and the expelling of over 15,000 sailors from the fleet. Thousands more were sent to the Black sea, the Caspian and Siberia. Even the Kronstadt soviet was never re-established. This demonstrates that even after the rising the Bolsheviks feared the political demands that had been raised in its course.

The real danger of Kronstadt was not a military one, it was a political one. Kronstadt had to be brutally suppressed in case its call for a third revolution had succeeded in mobilising the workers of Russia. The Bolshevik party by 1921 was a counter revolutionary one composed, even by their own figures, of more bureaucrats than workers. Leninism was not the sole cause of the defeat of the October revolution, its failure to spread across Europe and the Whites played major parts as well. Whether or not Kronstadt could have led to a successful revolution is one of the 'what ifs' of history. It did however represent the last hope of setting the revolution back on course.

It is unfortunate that the SWP has chosen to continue the Leninist tradition of lying, even to their own members about the Bolsheviks' role in defeating the Russian revolution. Rather than learning from a critical look at the mistakes of the Bolsheviks they have chosen to do a crude plastering job and are hoping nobody examines it too closely. Similar methods aided the Western Communist parties to build a castle, but the events of the last couple of years demonstrate what happens when you build on sand.

*Andrew Flood*

1. Kronstadt 1917-21, Israel Getzler, p. 207.
2. Ibid, p218-219.
3. Lenin, report to 10th congress of the RCP, 1921. Selected works, Vol IX, p98.
4. Ida Mett, The Kronstadt Uprising, p37-38.
5. Abbie Bakan, Socialist Worker Review, Issue 136, page 58.

# Abortion Information is Illegal

## REVIEW

**Ireland's Abortion Reality - Including a Guide to Abortion Services for Irish Women** by the Cork Abortion Information Campaign (£1.00)

The mainly black cover of this pamphlet showing a drawing of a gagged woman with the words "censored" over her mouth give a graphic first sight into the contents of this pamphlet.

A well written and informative document, we are brought through the recent history of womens' rights in Ireland, in particular a woman's right to control her own fertility.

After the introduction we get the legal history starting from the 1861 "Offences against the Person Act" which made any person performing or assisting in an abortion liable to penal servitude for life. The abortion referendum of 1983, the Hamilton judgement of 1986 (not 1987 as the pamphlet says) and the Finlay judgement which has made all information on abortion facilities illegal are also mentioned.

The main body (roughly 30 pages) is devoted to abortion itself. What is abortion? What are the risks? The statistics and "Why abortion isn't murder" are dealt with briefly. The Cork group has managed to pack a lot of facts into a short space but at the same time keeps the style interesting and easy to understand.

The pamphlet ends with a list of clinics, prices and a catalogue of useful phone numbers such as the Womens' Information Network, **01-6794700**, which continues to defy the State by giving non-directive pregnancy counselling on all the options including abortion.

There are other small signs that a fight for the Right to Abortion Information may be possible. There is definitely large support given the recent motions passed in various places. For example, last November the National Youth

Council, and students at Dublin City University voted overwhelmingly for information on all the options. The Dublin Council of Trade Unions has recently voted for abortion facilities to be provided in Ireland. (However the officers 'forgot' to send it to the ICTU in time, so it won't come up on the agenda at this year's ICTU conference.)

But as far as action goes there is very little. The Trinity College Right to Information Group organised a public meeting in Dublin in early December which attracted 90 people. Following from this a Dublin Abortion Information Group has been formed.

The chances of a campaign winning big victories in the short term are small and is too early to say how successful the new Dublin group will be. But there is obviously more support for the campaign than the media will admit to. The task of any campaign is to turn the passive support into active support. When you have enough active numbers on your side the state can be forced to back down.

The best tactic would be to try and link the campaign with activists in the unions, getting motions passed and discussed in branches to make the arguments and get grass roots support. Meanwhile a publicity campaign should be done, as a build up for a march. For example an Abortion Information Bus going from Dublin to Cork or occupations of libraries demanding the reinstatement of the Miriam Stoppard book which was banned recently because it had abortion information in it.

WSM members are active in this campaign. We see the winning of the Right to Information as a first step towards the Right to Choose - obviously a much harder battle.

The Pamphlet is available through the Workers Solidarity Bookservice. The Dublin Abortion Information Group can be contacted c/o the Socialist Society, Box 4, Trinity College, Dublin 2. The Cork group don't have a permanent address yet but can be contacted c/o *Workers Solidarity*.



# After the collapse of "socialism" ... ANARCHISM TODAY

**AT THE MOMENT** the "Socialist Movement" has all but collapsed. Despite the fact that high unemployment, war and mass starvation would point to the need for a coherent anti-capitalist alternative most socialists are confused and demoralised. The reason is simple, both the reformist and Leninist parties are paying for their legacy of betrayal of socialism in this century. What they conceived socialism to be has been totally discredited. As anarchists it is important to realise that there are both advantages and drawbacks to these developments.

The vast majority of those that referred to themselves as socialists saw the Stalinist countries as being ahead of capitalism, a large amount even went so far as to refer to these regimes as "actually existing socialism". To those people the collapse of these regimes has resulted in the belief that socialism itself cannot work. To anarchists there is no such problem, we realised that the USSR stopped moving towards socialism when the Bolsheviks destroyed workers' democracy between 1918 and 1921.

## IS SOCIALISM DEAD?

The fact that most of yesterday's 'socialists' are now saying socialism is no longer on the agenda is and will have a major effect on the level of struggle in society over the next few years. Most of those workers who were activists in unions and campaigns were either members of the various 'state socialist' groups or were broadly sympathetic to them. Many of these people are affected by the inevitable demoralisation of seeing their parties disintegrate.

In the ideal situation we anarchists would be in the position to move in and fill this gap. We would be able to get across the argument that it is not socialism that has collapsed but rather reformism, Leninism and Stalinism. We

could say that experience demonstrates there is no authoritarian way to socialism. In reality however the anarchist movement is much too small in most countries to be able to get across these arguments on a mass basis. Rather those few small organisations like ourselves are trying to make what impact we can.

This means that although it is now easier to put across anarchist politics to people searching for an alternative to capitalism there are now far fewer people looking for such an alternative. This is the problem we face in the short term.

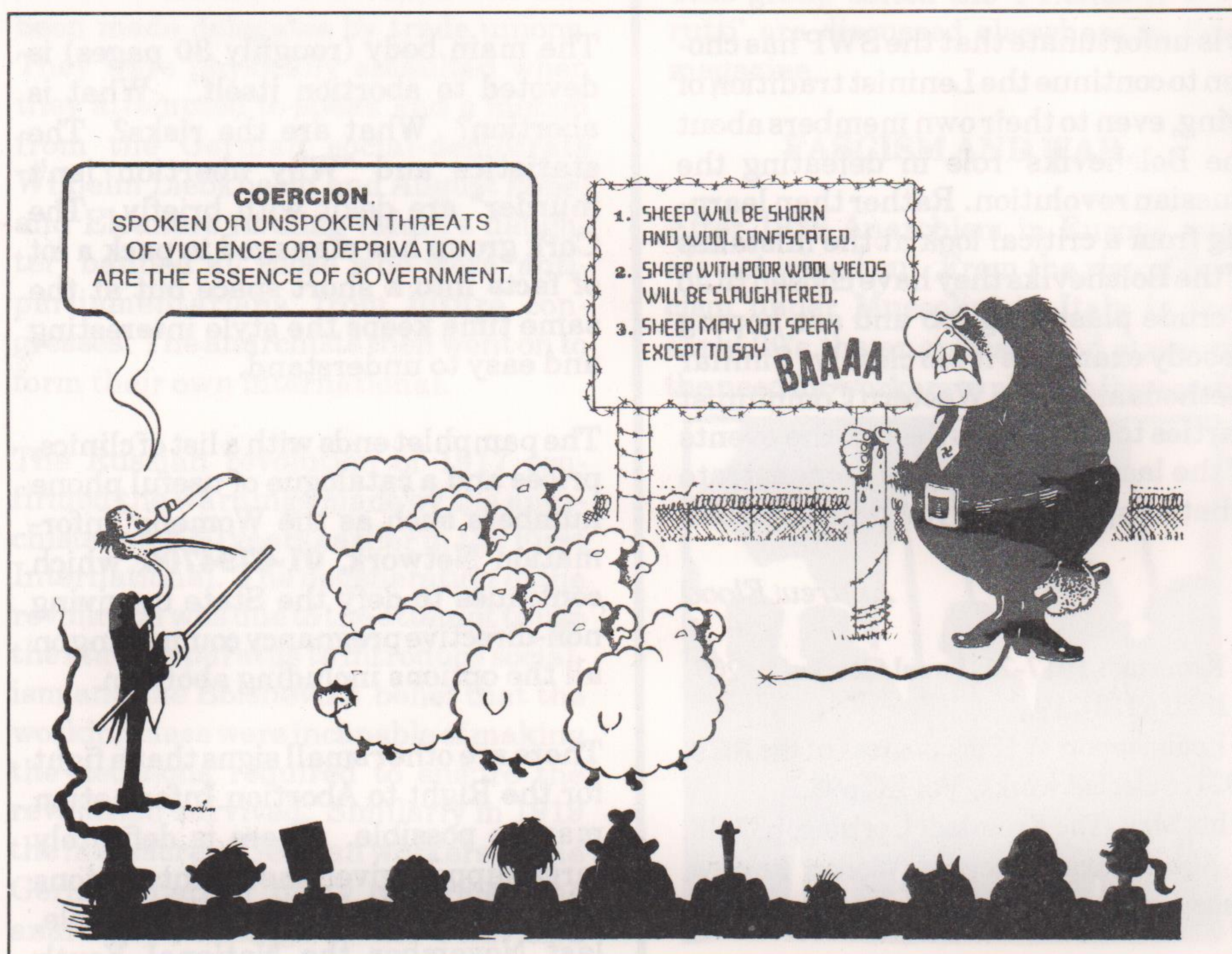
## LABOUR PARTY BLUES

Those groups who drew their traditions from Lenin and Stalin are already collapsing or have collapsed. A few who have the tradition of not being such hard line Leninists are trying to defend Lenin from anarchist criticism. That other large 'socialist' tradition of Social Democracy (or labourism) is also in deep trouble. The reasons for this are not hard to find.

The Labour parties always accommodated that section of the ruling class

who saw stability as being insured through policies of co-operation with the trade union bureaucracy. The Labour parties were the creation of the trade union bureaucrats and fought to reduce class antagonism through the introduction of the welfare state, arbitration procedures, national plans between the bosses and the unions, etc. In the past the far-left convinced large numbers of activists to join the Labour parties either to transform them or expose the party leadership.

Internationally these policies met with various degrees of success from the end of the Second World War onwards as a mixture of expanding capitalism and the threat of industrial unrest led to most states taking up many parts of the Labour parties programme. By the late 70's however this expansion had slowed or stopped and the Labour parties where they remained in power led the offensive on behalf of the capitalists to drive down wages and living standards. In Britain this offensive was continued by the Thatcher government which held power in England throughout the eighties. In France, Spain, Greece and Australia it was the Social Democrats who carried out the cuts in the 80's.





## A DECADE OF DEFEATS

Naturally enough, workers resisted this offensive and won a few initial victories. The trade union bureaucracy however turned increasingly to trying to work out plans which would limit job losses rather than outright opposition to these cuts. Strikes like those in Liverpool, the printers at Wapping, the P+O workers and the national miners strike of 1984/85 were isolated, with the bureaucrats doing all they could to prevent sympathy action. The 'soft left' in the unions was unwilling to fight the bureaucrats so such strikes lost despite heroic efforts by those on strike.

The lesson most workers took was that job losses could not be fought against. The 80's in most of the western countries was a decade where defeat followed defeat. The left rather than seeing these losses as coming from their reliance on the Labour party and the union bureaucrats to lead the fightback drew entirely the wrong lesson. They thought "Thatcherism" represented some sort of new, undefeatable phenomenon. A variety of theories which claimed that the working class no longer existed or that class politics were no longer relevant came into being. There was nothing new in this, in the mid 60's similar ideas that the western working class had sold out to consumerism abounded, these of course were smashed by the events of 1968, particularly the general strike in France.

Most of those on the left who didn't go

along with this analysis were Leninists of one sort or another who looked to the Soviet Union as some sort of example. The collapse of the Soviet Union had a similar if not larger effect on these people. Thus at the start of 1992 we find the situation where despite the fact that capitalism is in obvious trouble there is almost no organised alternative to it. The radical alternatives of yesterday have become today's jokes.

## SOME THINGS CHANGE

The collapse of reformist ideas in the Labour parties may not be final. A British Social Attitudes survey reported in the 'Guardian' (Nov. 20th '91) revealed 83% supported the "Keynesian policy of fighting unemployment through investing in construction planning" and 9 out of 10 people wanted more investment in the NHS even if taxes had to be raised to pay for it. Yet at a time when Thatcherism has been abandoned as inadequate by the bosses, many on the left still consider it to have destroyed the whole socialist project.

In the 80's there were many changes in the composition of the working class. In the West, at least, the industrial working class dwindled as the white collar working class grew. Many of the largest industrial workplaces were broken up and dispersed, usually with the aim of weakening the unions involved. In Ireland there are only 6 sites employing over 1000 people in the same company. For those who saw socialism as being introduced by steelworkers and miners wearing cloth caps and clogs this repre-

sented a big blow

In Ireland Irish companies have increasingly come to replace multinationals. Of the top 10 companies by turnover only two (at positions 5 and 10) are multinationals. In the top 50 there are a total of 10 multinationals. This demonstrates how the southern Irish ruling class has successfully established itself as a junior partner of international capitalism. Those socialists in Ireland who saw the multi-nationals rather than our native capitalist class as the main problem in the South are being forced to reconsider.

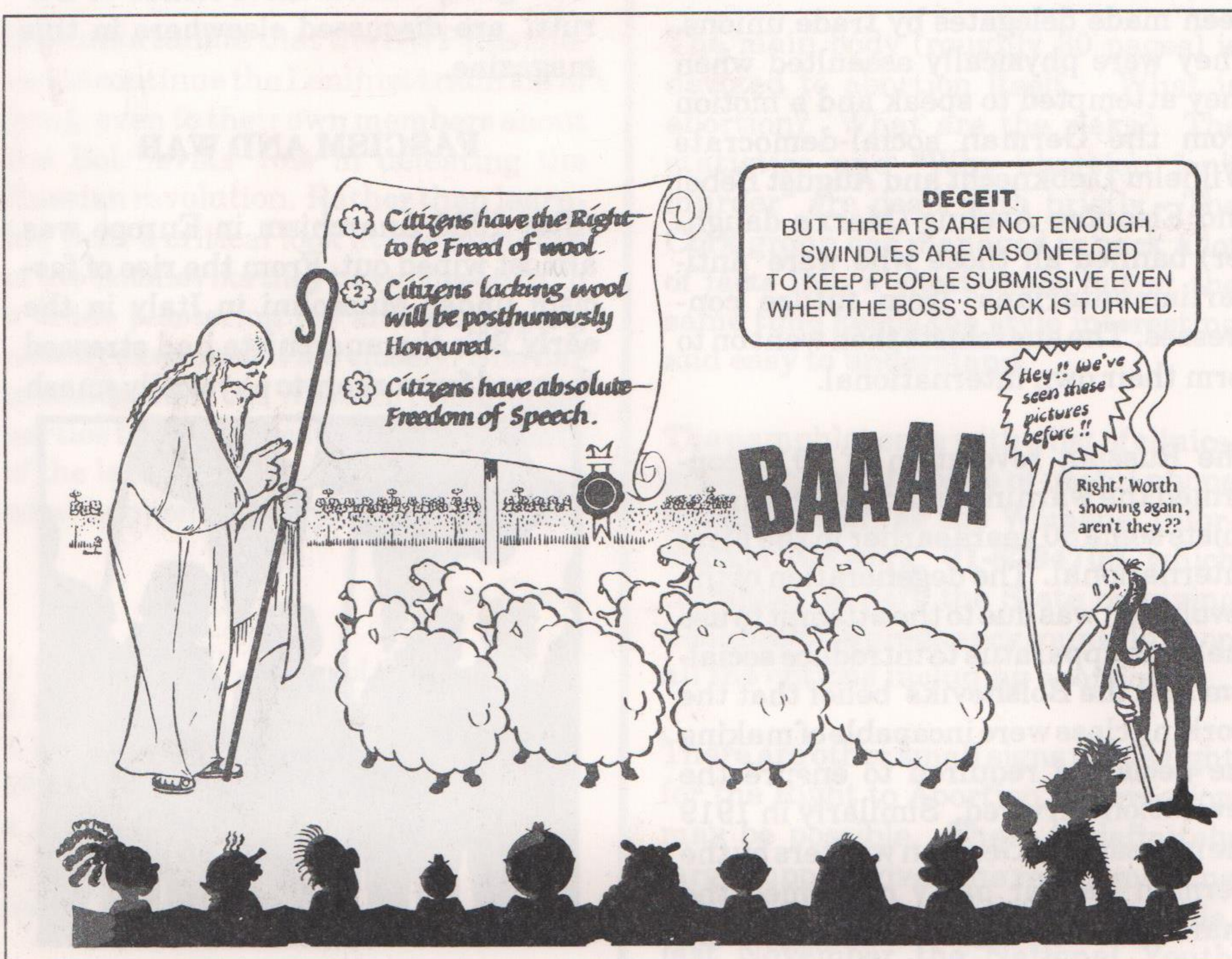
There is nothing new in all this, throughout this century conditions have changed for socialists. Similar ideas that socialism was dead were being thrown around before the struggles of 1968 shook the world. We have to continually take these changes into account. We have to continually elaborate our ideas, and test them by involving ourselves wherever there is struggle against the bosses. Any theory is only as good as the practical guidance it gives in day to day struggle. One of the most important aspects of any socialist organisation is the ability to throw out all that is irrelevant (or wrong) in its tradition.

## WHY ANARCHISM?

It is becoming clear that the bulk of what has been referred to as socialism up to now is in fact nothing of the sort. The vast bulk of the theory and practise of the last 70 years needs to be thrown in the bin. Unfortunately most of the Leninist groups are avoiding such an exercise, preferring instead to do a botched plastering job over the appearing cracks. They have chosen to follow the same paths as the Communist parties did and will probably suffer a similar fate.

The vast bulk of those leaving the Leninist and Labour parties are just disappearing from any form of politics or activism. The few who are trying to continue the anti-capitalist fight in a new way are making old mistakes. For the most part, rather than seeing their version of socialism as flawed they have come to see capitalism as triumphant. There is a tradition, however, which refused to see socialism as something being imposed by a minority wielding state power "on behalf of the majority". The tradition of anarchism always rejected both the crude authoritarianism of

continued on the next page







Leninism and the reformism of the Labour parties.

It is for this reason that we call ourselves anarchists. Anarchism as a tradition is no doubt flawed, at times even badly flawed but it has always been better than any of the alternatives on offer. What's more, it has been capable of the sort of fierce self-criticism needed to continually develop. Throughout the last 120 years it has always been the anarchists (or a section of the anarchists) that have developed the best position on the events of the day. Most importantly anarchism unlike reformism, Leninism and Trotskyism has never imposed dictatorship and massacre on the working class.

### THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

Within the First International, the International Working Mens' Association, in the last century the anarchists consistently argued against a turn to reformism and parliamentary elections. They argued against the view that the state apparatus could be seized and used to introduce socialism. The introduction of socialism could only be carried out by the working class itself not by a minority of revolutionaries acting through the state. They also argued against the emerging strain within Marxism that argued that the revolution could only come about if the working class was under the dictatorship of a minority of intellectuals. With the advantage of hindsight it is clear that these arguments explain much of what went wrong with the socialist movement in the 20th century.

At the same time the anarchists showed they were capable of organising the scale of struggle needed to threaten capitalism. In the USA in the 1880's the anarchists were organising a huge campaign for the 8 hour day involving demonstrations of greater than 100,000 workers. Here the anarchists showed their ability to connect building for a socialist revolution with the winning of

reforms from the bosses. In 1886 this was to result in 8 anarchists being sentenced to death in Chicago, an event May Day originated from.

At the end of the century Anarchists in the US, most notably Emma Goldman were to take up the fight to unionize women workers and break the ban on contraception. At a time when most other socialists saw women's liberation as a side issue the anarchists were fighting against those aspects which most oppressed working class women.

### THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

The anarchist fight against the use of parliament by socialists continued when the Second International (Labour Parties) was set up in 1889. Anarchists attempted to argue against reformism at the first three international congresses in 1889, 1891 and 1893. The 1893



congress passed a motion excluding all non-trade union bodies which did not recognise the need for parliamentary action. The next congress in 1896 however included anarchists who had been made delegates by trade unions. They were physically assaulted when they attempted to speak and a motion from the German social-democrats Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel and Eleanore Aveling (Marx's daughter) banned all those who were 'anti-parliamentarians' from future congresses. The anarchists then went on to form their own international.

The Russian revolution of 1917 confirmed the warnings made by the anarchists some 50 years earlier in the First International. The degeneration of the revolution was due to the attempt to use the state apparatus to introduce socialism and the Bolsheviks' belief that the working class were incapable of making the decisions required to ensure the revolution survived. Similarly in 1919 the massacre of German workers by the German Labour party confirmed the anarchist warnings to the First and

Second Internationals of the logical outcome of parliamentary action and statist illusions.

The Russian revolution was the first real test of anarchism in a revolution. The anarchist movement at the time was comparatively small but it had major influence particularly in the factory committees and in the Southern Ukraine. The anarchists were amongst its foremost supporters and were the only group to support the dissolving of the constituent assembly on the grounds that the Soviets were a more democratic form of government. (In contrast the Bolsheviks were clear that they wished to use the soviets rather than the constituent assembly because they had more support in the soviets).

The anarchists fought to push the revolution as far as it would go, recognising that this would maximise the willingness of Russian workers and workers internationally to defend it. When the Bolsheviks started to impose their dictatorship the anarchists fought them through the soviets and factory committees. By 1921 the anarchists alone recognised that the revolution had been destroyed and either died trying to bring about a third revolution or fled into exile to warn the world's workers of what had happened.

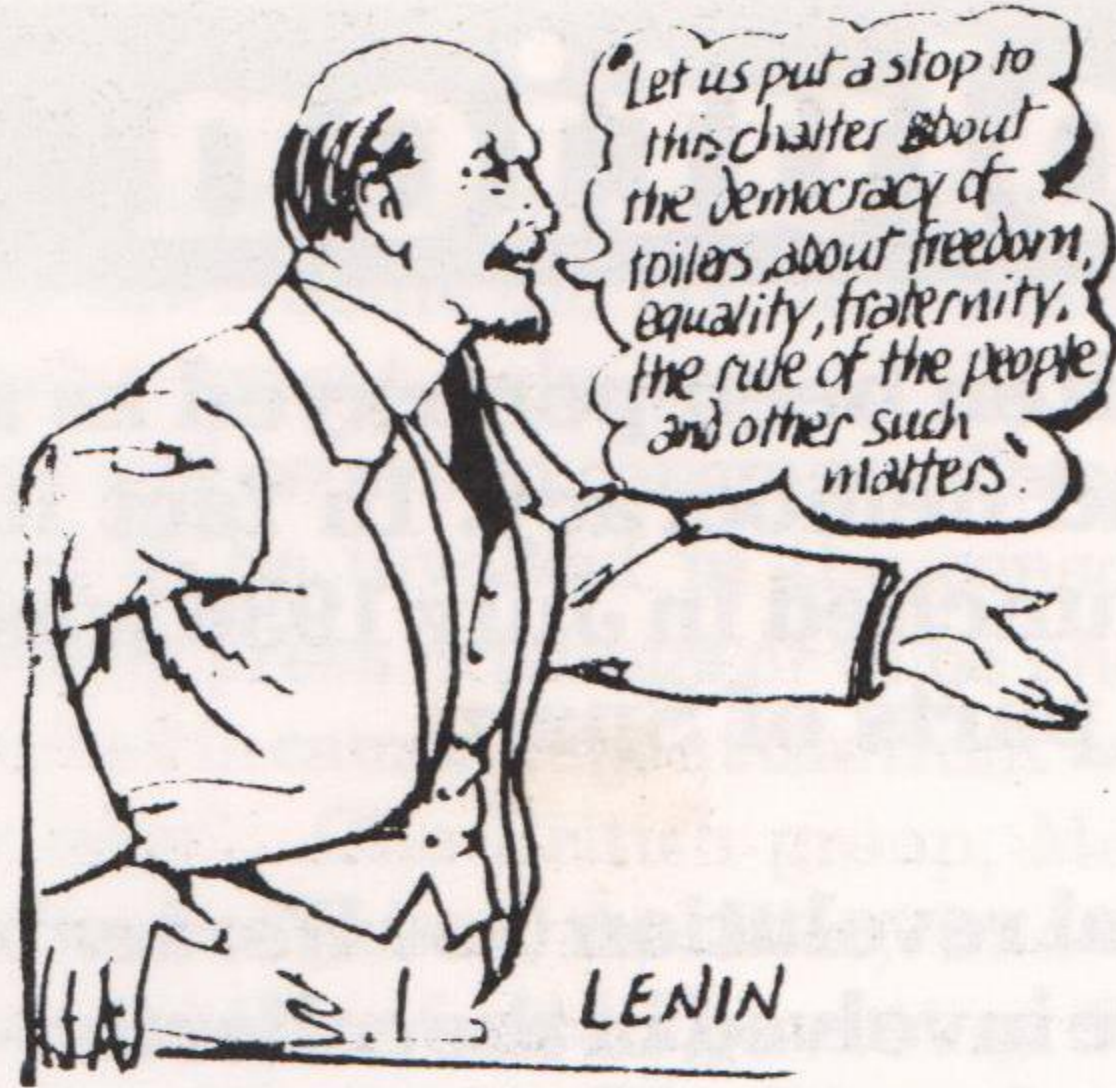
One major (correct) criticism of the anarchist tradition was that during the Spanish revolution, four of the 'leaders' of the CNT went into government. A sizeable portion of the anarchists in the CNT formed the only consistent faction pushing for completing the revolution. This group called the 'Friends of Durruti' are discussed elsewhere in this magazine.

### FASCISM AND WAR

After 1936 Anarchism in Europe was almost wiped out. From the rise of fascism under Mussolini in Italy in the early 20's the anarchists had stressed the need for workers to physically smash







fascism. In Italy at the time however their attempts to do so were undermined by the social-democrats. In Germany the anarchists were smashed by Hitler as he came to power, many of them dying subsequently in concentration camps. With the fascist occupation of Europe during the Second World War many other anarchists were to share their fate.

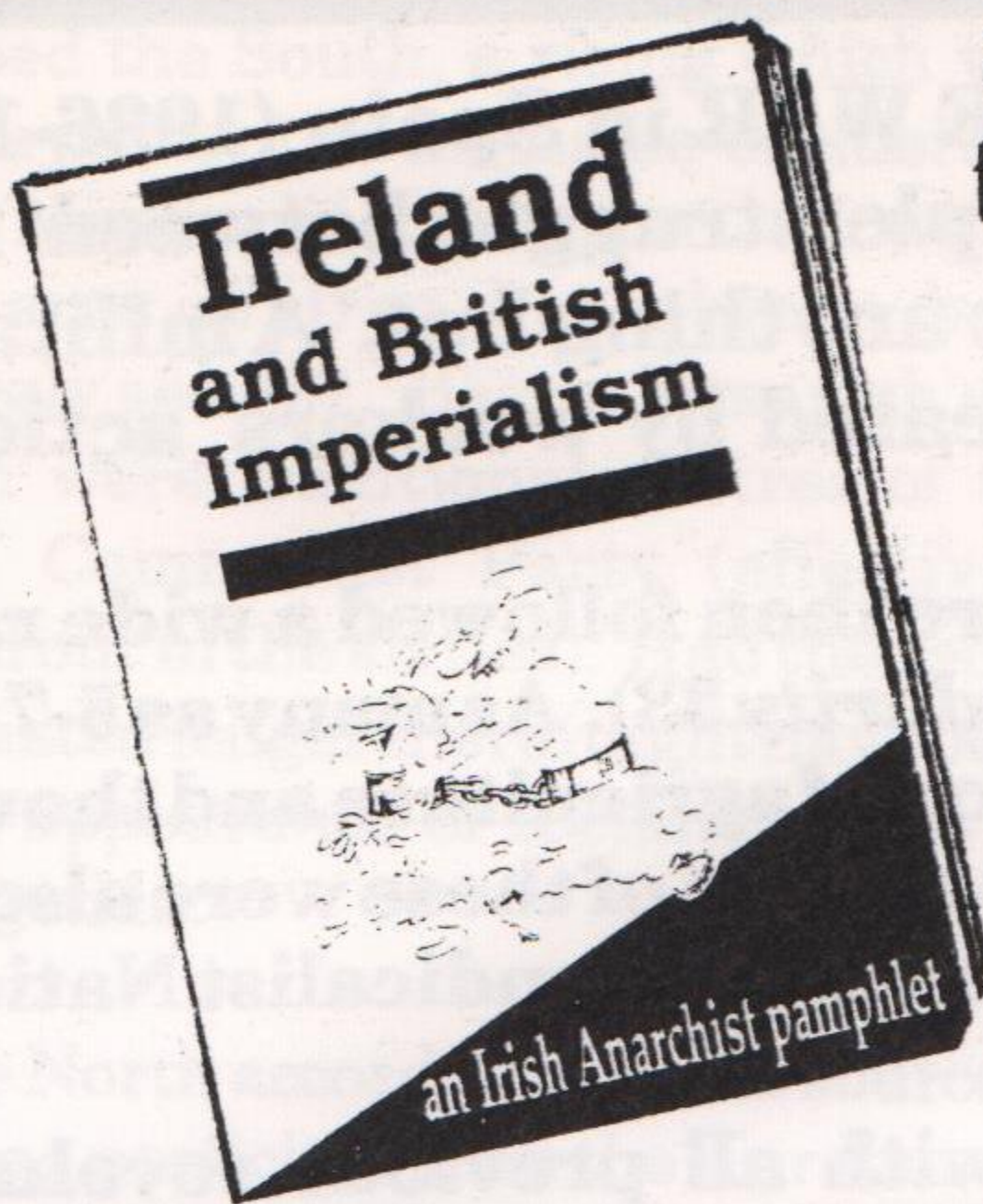
In Italy, France, Poland and Bulgaria at least there were anarchist resistance groups throughout the war. In Italy they were involved in the land seizures after the war but were defeated by the combined forces of the Italian Communist Party and the Allies. In Bulgaria the anarchist movement after the war grew rapidly but was wiped out in 1948 by the Bulgarian C.P. Again, hundreds were executed or sent to concentration camps. Anarchists in Poland and other Eastern European countries shared a similar fate.

Anarchism to-day is growing in all of the Eastern European countries. As it was isolated for some 70 years in the Soviet Union and 40 years in Eastern Europe it will be a slow and painful process. In the West the anarchist movement grew slowly throughout the 80's and is now in the process of re-examining its tradition. Long years of isolation meant that a lot of rubbish has accumulated so this re-examination is vitally important

The tradition in which the anarchists stand is one that socialists need to identify with. For many on the left this will be a difficult process. They were weaned on a diet of slander when it came to anarchism, either being told that anarchists were police agents or that they were not real socialists at all and wanted a return to feudalism. We must resist the temptation to avoid this problem by going "beyond anarchism". The state has been the 'achilles heel' of 20th century socialism. It is not an issue to be fudged.

Joe Black

## Out Now

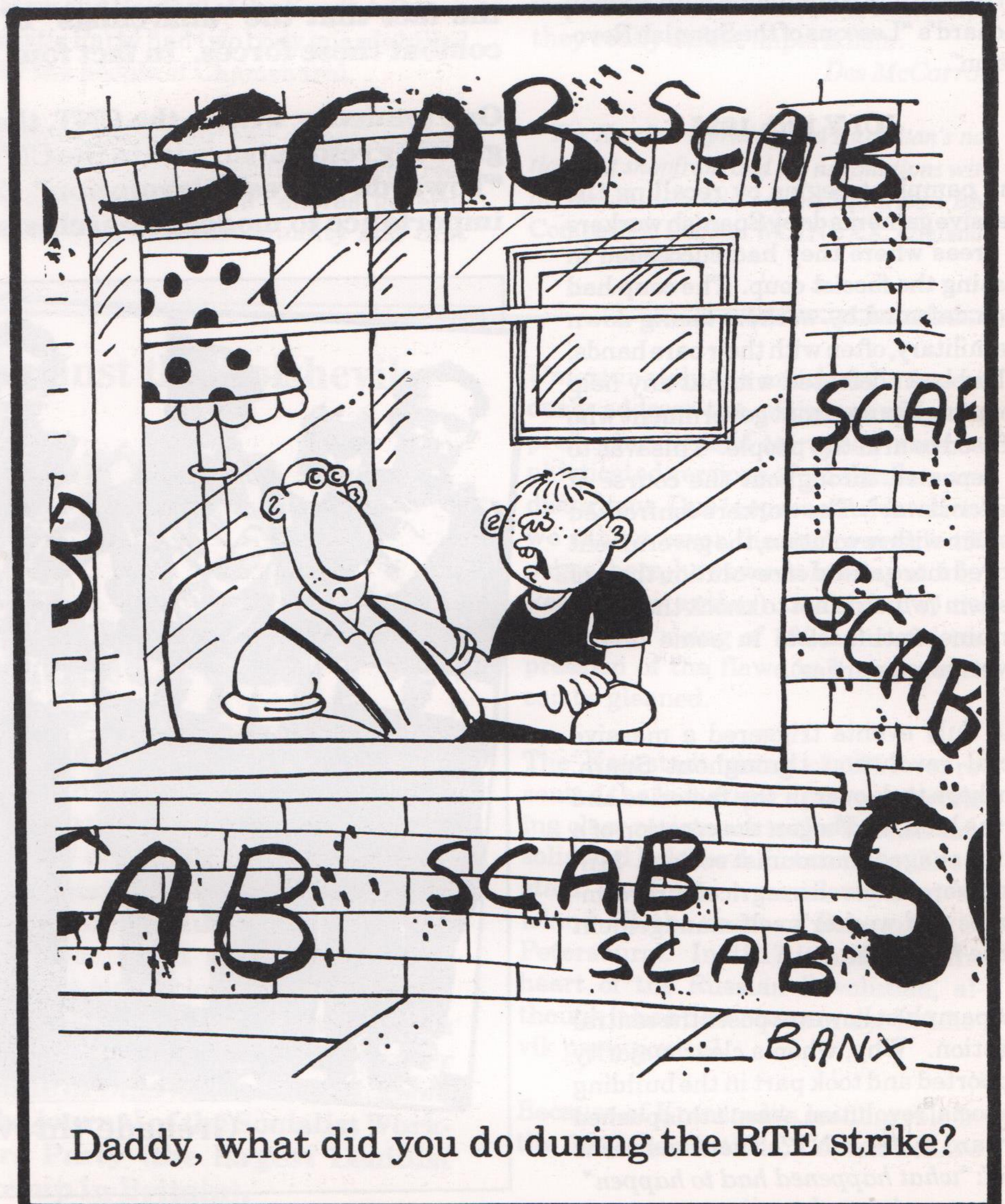


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## Believe it or not

The popularity of 'Chinese' restaurants in Ireland and the rest of Europe may be traced back to a cafe which opened in Paris in 1902. It was run by Chinese immigrant anarchists as a means of financing their paper. The idea that Chinese students should go abroad to learn about modern industry, and finance themselves by working in Chinese restaurants, came from the anarchist Chang chiang-chiang. Few Chinese restaurateurs will know this today!



Daddy, what did you do during the RTE strike?



"We are not interested in medals or in general's sashes, we want neither committees or ministers" Buenaventura Durruti - Solidaridad Obrera, Septembrer 12th 1936.

"The government has posthumously granted the rank of Lieutenant Colonel to the illustrious libertarian leader Buenaventura Durruti on the anniversary of his death" - Solidaridad Obrera, April 30th 1938.

The Friends of Durutti were set up in 1937 by rank and file members of the CNT and members of CNT militia columns. "Towards a Fresh Revolution" was published in 1938 as "a message of hope and a determination to renew the fight against an international capitalism". It's a short and relatively easy read at 43 pages. It is obviously aimed at activists in the CNT and it pulls no punches in its attacks on the Spanish bourgeoisie and "collaborationists" in the CNT. However be warned it does assume a certain amount of background knowledge of the history of the CNT and the Spanish revolution. It would be useful to read it in conjunction with Vernon Richard's "Lessons of the Spanish Revolution".

### JULY 19th 1936

The pamphlet begins by recalling the massive gains made by Spanish workers in areas where they had succeeded in beating the fascist coup. The coup had been defeated by workers facing down the military, often with their bare hands. It had been defeated without any help from the popular front government who refused to arm the people. This was to be repeated throughout the course of the "civil war". The workers confronted fascism with revolution, the government proved more afraid of revolution than of fascism (which is not to knock the many genuine anti-fascists in some of the government parties).

The July events triggered a massive social revolution throughout Spain. Workers took over in the factories and on the land, and began the creation of a self-managed communist society. Millions were involved in agricultural communes and worker's self-management in the factories.

The pamphlet however poses the central question. Why, when a clear majority supported and took part in the building of a social revolution, wasn't this pushed forward by the CNT? Their answer is brief: "what happened had to happen"

# War & Revolution

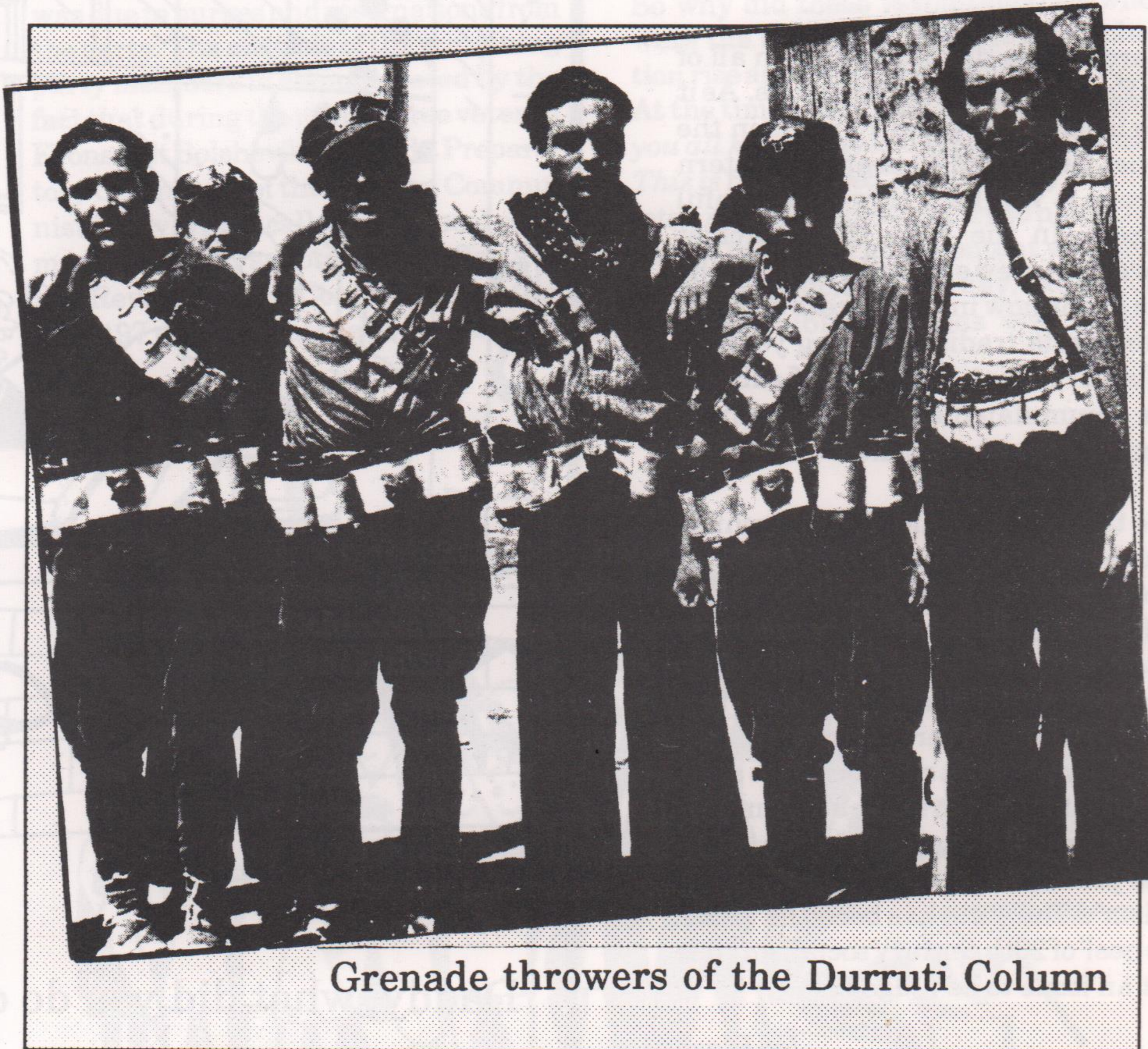
**THE WAR** in Spain (1936-1939) has often been portrayed as a simple struggle between fascism and democracy. In fact it was anything but. A military coup launched in July 1936 was defeated by workers' action in most parts of Spain.

There then followed a wide ranging social revolution (see *Worker's Solidarity* 33). As many as 5-7 million were involved in the collectivisation of agriculture and thousands in workers' control of industry. One million of these were also members of the oldest union in Spain, the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Workers (CNT).

As with all previous revolutions, a counter-revolution followed quickly on the heels of the Spanish revolution. This was spearheaded by the Spanish Communist Party. These were faithful adherents to Stalin's foreign policy of sucking up to France and England in the hope of military and economic alliances. They resisted the revolution at all stages and found willing allies in the Spanish republican and socialist forces. All took pains to convey to the world a struggle that did not go beyond a war between fascism and democracy.

They also took steps to try and *make* it such a struggle by smashing the collectives and factory committees, and sabotaging the efforts of revolutionary forces at the front. However even more worrying is the fact that the "anarchists" of the CNT made little attempt to combat these forces. In fact four became government ministers.

One tendency within the CNT, the 'Friends of Durruti' resisted the growing reformism within the CNT. In this review of their pamphlet "Towards a Fresh Revolution" *Conor Mc Loughlin* outlines their importance to modern anarchists.



Grenade throwers of the Durruti Column



Was this sellout inevitable as the FoD maintained? Why did leading anarchists move on to become leading ministers in the Spanish government?

In explaining their apparently fatalistic view of the CNT, the FoD go on to show how the CNT was devoid of any revolutionary theory or programme. They had "lyricism aplenty" and detailed plans had been laid down at their national conference in Saragosa in May 1936 about how an anarchist Spain would operate. But they couldn't get from A to B, from bread and butter struggle to a future libertarian society.

For this reason they handed the revolution to the tender mercies of the Socialists, Republicans and Communists. These forces which emerged without a shred of support from the July events were not slow to rebuild. Instead of destroying it they propped up the Spanish state in its hour of need. As the FoD put it: "It breathed a lungfull of oxygen into an anemic, terror stricken bourgeoisie."

Garcia Oliver one of the 'leading militants' who was shortly to enter the government without even consulting the union's members claimed he had avoided "an anarchist dictatorship". This shows a complete and crass lack of understanding of the essential tasks of an anarchist organisation, i.e. the smashing of the state and the transfer of power to worker's and peasants. The CNT and Spanish workers were to pay in blood for this collaboration.

We acknowledge the great work of the CNT in propagandising anarchism and the struggle against Franco. But we must stand with the FoD in absolute condemnation of the mistaken ideas that led to their deferring of revolutionary politics to class collaboration.

The FoD had a programme which could have won the support of the Spanish masses and led them to anarchism and the destruction of fascism. However they were too small and arrived too late.

### MAY 3rd 1937

By this stage the counter-revolutionaries in the 'republican' camp felt confident enough to provoke a fight with the Barcelona working class. Police under the command of Rodriguez Salas, the public order commissar, attacked the telephone exchange. They were strongly resisted by CNT organised workers inside



Barricades soon sprang up all over the city. Fighting broke out with the CNT and POUM (non-Stalinist Marxists) quickly gaining the upper hand over government and PSUC (Stalinist controlled Catalan "Socialist" party). After an armed stand off the workers were finally persuaded to lay down arms by the CNT 'leadership'.

The FoD were in the thick of the fighting and strongly urged workers to remain put. They pointed out that the workers had won and now controlled Barcelona (after a steady erosion of their position since July 1936). They insisted that workers stayed put. They issued a manifesto calling for the disbanding of the army and parties which had supported the coup and the establishment of a revolutionary Junta to continue the war.

It is worth explaining exactly what they meant by this Junta since the word has very bad associations. They wanted the Junta to control only the war effort. It was to be made up of elected, recallable delegates from the unions. The economy was to be under the control of workers through their unions.

For issuing these demands they were attacked as traitors and agent provocateurs. The CNT brokered peace was an abandonment of the revolutionary Barcelona workers. Several thousand troops arrived from Valencia. There were mass arrests, executions and immediate press censorship. The destruction of the POUM and CNT by Stalin's OGBU agents began.

The May events were a vital turning point in the Spanish revolution. The collectives were crushed throughout republican areas soon afterwards. Workers' control was smashed and militarisation (placing the workers' militias under government control) completed. The "peoples army" then suffered massive and bloody defeats at the hands of the fascists.

We would agree with the FOD's positions summarised at the end of the pamphlet. These include:

1. That the war should have been a continuation of the revolution with a democratic worker's army.
2. All available arms and money should have been seized by the workers. (The CNT spent most of the war guarding the government's 2,259 million pesetas in gold! This money which could have aided the revolution was exported to Russia to buy the arms that helped destroy it.)
3. No collaboration with the Spanish bourgeois.
4. Real workers' unity.
5. Total socialisation of the economy and food distribution.
6. Equalisation of pay rates.
7. No armistice with foreign imperialist powers.

To this we would only add the immediate granting of independence to the remaining Spanish colonies.

The FoD were armed with a revolutionary programme that could have brought Spain towards anarchism and crushed the fascists. But they were too small and too late to hope to win workers to its implementation. The need for anarchists organised with such a programme is still pressing. We are attempting to build just such an organisation.

**Towards a Fresh Revolution**  
is available for £1.20 inc. postage  
and

**Lessons of the Spanish Revolution**  
for £4.50 inc. postage from the  
Workers Solidarity Bookservice,  
P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.



# World anarchist News

**SPAIN** Fourteen trade union organisations sent delegates to the European meeting of 'Alternative Unions' to better co-ordinate their work. The 130 delegates came from unions which are either explicitly anarchist or where anarchism is the major influence. Unions that are based on grassroots democracy, militant action and also share an understanding that trade unionism is not enough, they accept that a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism is necessary to secure liberty and socialism.

The three day conference was hosted in Barcelona by the Spanish CGT (an anarcho-syndicalist union). The Workers Solidarity Movement sent an observer who reports: "As the delegates filed in the first day it became clear that anarchism enjoys a lot more influence within the European working class than its detractors would like to admit. This was a conference of 'revolutionary unions' organised by an 'anarchist' union. Any organisation sending delegates knew what they were supporting ...anti-bureaucratic, militant, libertarian politics.

"And they did send their delegates. From France came the CFDT railworkers union, the CGT proofreaders union, SUD (a new 1,500 strong postal workers union), the CFDT Social Services union and the CGT emigrants grouping. From Italy the UNICOBAS and the railworkers. From Switzerland the Confederation Romande du Travail, from Spain the CGT (the name taken by the 20,000 strong grouping who split with their former colleagues of the CNT-AIT). England was there in the form of two delegates from the Hull Trades Council and Russia in the shape of the Moscow based Solidarity union and the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists'. Sweden's SAC union, one of the oldest libertarian unions, sent a 20 person delegation.

"Greetings were received from many more organisations including the Swedish dockers' union (whose President is

called Bjorn Borg!), the Territorial League of Free Trade Unions in Romania, the Confederation of Labour in Bulgaria and Bolivian COB.

"The goals set by the CGT for the conference were to co-operate better with other unions in struggles against multinational firms, to give moral and practical solidarity to each other, to unite in the face of EC legislation that worsens the lot of workers, to criticise the bureaucratic unions and show that there is an alternative way to organise and to fight. As an immediate step they proposed the establishment of a "stable co-ordination" with elected co-ordinators, joint conferences and a monthly International Union Bulletin.

"The first two days gave us some new information about the struggles engaged in by the different participants and, for no apparent reason, a lot of generalities that anyone could agree with. Of particular interest, however, were the speeches of the Russians. The Solidarity union was set up last year out of a co-ordination for strike committees, having broken from the SOTSPROF organisation to pursue a more libertarian path.

"They reported a growing number of strikes as workers move against their bosses, old and new. According to them, Yeltsin is losing support as people who considered themselves his followers find their living standards falling rapidly. And the hopes of becoming self-employed have faded as everyone now realises that only the Stalinists and the Mafia have the money to set up so-called 'co-operatives'. The KASKOR told us of the new labour legislation in the Ukraine that allows workers to be sacked for union activity, even collecting money for strikers.





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*"On the third day they got down to working out what sort of co-ordination between the different unions should be formed. After much discussion it decided not to elect any co-ordinators from the conference but to ask each union to appoint a delegate who will ensure that contributions to the international bulletin are sought from their own members and to see that the finished bulletin is circulated (and not just left in someone's office as happens in unions like SIPTU). A list of phone and fax numbers of each union present was made and distributed to facilitate calls for urgent solidarity action. Finally it was agreed to hold a full conference again in 1992.*

*"As it all ended and we wandered out into the corridor where anarchist songs played over the tannoy I wished that the political know-it-alls who tell me that anarchism is dead could have been there to see a living, vibrant libertarian workers movement ...and then swallow their words."*

The organisers hope that other libertarian unions like the Dutch OVB and the Italian metalworkers FLMU will join this initiative. Of course this is still very much a minority movement within European trades unionism but it is one that is growing. The collapse of Stalinism and the behaviour of social democrats in governments in much of Europe has seen many more workers look to anarchism. This growing libertarian union movement is a reflection of the increasing influence of anarchist ideas.

Revolutionary union movements are not enough to change society. We have to organise throughout the entire working class, we have to challenge the ideas that justify class society with its division into rulers and ruled, we have to build anarchist political organisations. Organisation in the workplace is, however, a vital precondition. It is where we have the most power. This new European movement is most welcome, it demonstrates that the prospects for anarchists in the workplace are better now than they have been for decades.

**PARAGUAY** *"In our country, since February 1989, we have been able to have a major role in a series of struggles in the trade union sector that has shaken up the old structure of the workers' movement both culturally and formally.*

*"Under the persecution of the Strossner dictatorship, opposition had already been organised against the Paraguayan Workers Confederation (CPT), which was run by the regime and rigidly controlled by the police. This organised opposition and its struggles made it possible to defeat the political and bureaucratic influence on the unions. It reaffirmed the independent spirit of the workers' movement, having clearly freed itself from paternalistic politics.*

*"The unions and autonomous federations eventually organised themselves into the Coordinated Independent Labour Unions (COSI), which now includes about 70 unions. COSI intends to hold in the near future a national Workers' Conference, whose basic aim would be the formation of a democratic, pluralistic and revolutionary action organisation.*

*"Even more significant is the publication of the 'syndicalist principles' on which this process is based. These principles contain, in their ideological and philosophical dimension, completely new ideas for our time and place. They signify the restoration of the old revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism that has been suppressed, now adopted logically to our time and the circumstances in which we live."*

Letter to **Umanita Nova** (weekly paper of the Italian Anarchist Federation).

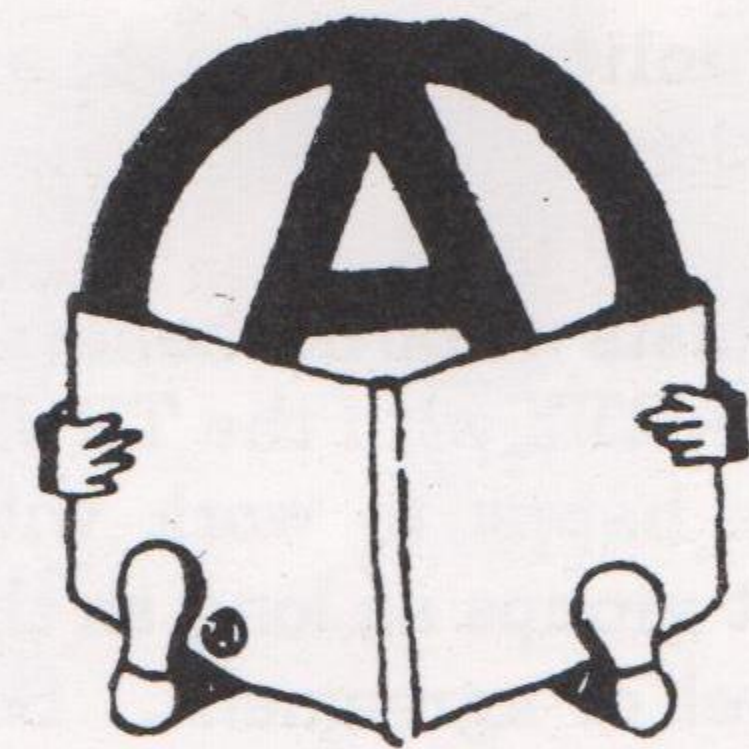


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# Anarchist Organisation

continued from the back page

education and development of all members must be encouraged. People must develop the confidence to speak at packed public meetings. The ability to question someone else's ideas only comes if you know enough about the subject being talked about.

Books must be circulated and read, a library of left wing books used, articles and policies written by all. On the more physical side, all must be willing to do their fair share of the donkey work. Paper selling and postering, leafletting and picketing. The day to day running of the organisation must also be well organised; branch meetings must be attended, membership dues paid, etc.

The best way to avoid an informal elite is to get everyone stuck in and knowing what is going on. The situation where some people do the "intellectual" stuff like writing articles and others do the "manual" stuff like giving out leaflets and yet another section are burnt out and don't do anything, must never be allowed. If that does happen you can be fairly sure that there is something wrong, politically, with such an organisation.

As anarchists we do not believe that we are the PARTY with the TRUTH. We are quite happy to work with other anarchist groups as long as there is a basic level of agreement. So in the "organisation" of anarchists we expect that there would be many ideas, groups and factions, the only condition necessary would be agreement on the aims and policies of the organisation. Factions would have to support the majority position but would have full access to the internal bulletin and the organisation's journals to argue their ideas.

## THE ALTERNATIVES: No.1 - PARLIAMENT

No other political groups organise in this way. Any parliamentary party is run on a hierarchical structure. The higher you are the more control you have. Real decisions are made by the elected TD's over the heads of the members and the most important decision are made by the leader of the party and a couple of cronies.

Their way of organising reflects their politics of "leave it all to us" They encourage people to allow the bigger decisions that effect their lives to be

made by the small elite of the ruling class. We are told to have faith in people who we are told know better than us.

## THE ALTERNATIVES: No.2 - LENIN

A similar method of organisation is used by Leninist organisations. Based on their failed tactic of "leading" the working class to socialism they develop a ruling elite within their organisations. Leninists do not believe that the working class can develop political ideas. So, instead a Leninist party must provide the leadership and the working class will follow. They see themselves as 'shepherds leading the sheep'.

Within a Leninist party the future leaders of the working class are bred. Central and Political Committees are elected who are then given the right to make decisions for the whole organisation. The ideas and orders therefore come from the top down.

Central control can go to absurd lengths. One Leninist organisation in Ireland is

controlled from the USA. It has to have everything checked and agreed by the central committee across the Atlantic. This includes simple pamphlets which have to be printed in the states and mailed over.

This formal leadership does the "intellectual" side of the business while the majority are left to selling the paper and going to branch meetings for their weekly orders. In these organisations a leader can be a leader for life. Look at Lenin, Stalin or Gerry Healy (English Leninist leader) for example.

As far as education goes, most members are brought up on a diet of their own party literature which limits them to a low level of disinformation about other peoples ideas. Unless you are being trained for leadership there will be very little effort to develop debating or writing skills.

This ties in nicely with their elitist and cynical view of politics. Namely gaining control of the working class sometime in the future!

As anarchists we are committed to our democratic ideals. We are members of the WSM because we want to win the battle of ideas and fight for the control

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# Workers Solidarity Movement



and self-management of society by the working class. We are in an organisation because we agree on our politics, have more resources as an organisation, are better able to put across our views and can combine our forces in the struggle to build an anarchist society.

If you like our ideas we want you to find out more about us, and think seriously about joining us. We encourage everybody to find out more about anarchism, its ideas and its actions.

*Andrew Blackmore*



## Flag burner gets six years

**GERARDO Casanova Ferré, a 27 year old member of the anarchist CNT-AIT union from Barcelona, has just gone to jail for six years, two months and a day for burning a Spanish flag back in 1983. He has lost his final appeal.**

The CNT-AIT is calling for a pardon, especially since on July 3rd of last year a court let off twelve Catalan nationalists for burning flags in 1988. Demonstrations have been organised in Spain and the CNT-AIT is asking people in other countries to write messages of support to Gerardo at C.P. Brians, Aptdo. de Correos 500, 08760 Martorell, Catalunya, Spain and to the CNT-AIT prisoners' support group, Plaza Duc de Medinacelli 6, 08001 Barcelona.

## Strikers' Victory

**Two hundred and seventy-four clerical civil servants won a victory in their battle against the Department of Justice at the end of 1991. Their 14 week dispute over the issue of regrading yielded 70 new promotions for the members of the Civil and Public Service Union. Some resulting vacancies will also be filled bringing the total number of promotions up to a maximum of 81. Especially when wages are held down by the PESP and the government caps even 3% pay increases, regrading is a way to get better money.**

These workers, 80% of whom are women, are very low paid. Clerical Assistants start on £137.69 per week rising to £205.29 after eleven years. Clerical Officers go from £138.96 to £249.86 after fifteen years. These figures are before stoppages for PAYE, PRSI or superannuation. Now some will be able to move up the ladder to become Staff Officers whose scale goes from £249.91 to £311.24 over eight years.

According to the Department no more than 62 promotions were going to be offered. The dispute which involved a 'work-to-rule' was escalated by the Department in October when CPSU members were taken off the payroll. The government was going to play rough. However, the workers were determined and this increased their resolve to stick it out. Union members throughout the civil service voted 2 to 1 in favour of (limited) industrial action in support of their colleagues.

The government backed down shortly after these results became known, the day before an ICTU meeting to discuss an application for an "all-out" picket of the courts.

The stand of these workers points the way to go for others in the civil service where many claims for promotion remain outstanding. Every successful claim undermines the government embargo on job creation in the public sector and strengthens the bargaining power of the union members involved.

# GET IN TOUCH

THE world's wealth is produced by us - the working class. We ought to enjoy its benefits.

The Workers Solidarity Movement is an anarchist organisation that fights for a 32 county Workers' Republic.

We stand for a socialism that is based on freedom and real democracy, a society based on workplace and community councils.

This kind of socialism has nothing to do with the state capitalism that is practiced in Russia, Cuba and other police states.

We oppose coercive authority, and hold that the only limit on the freedom of the individual should be that they don't encroach on the freedom of others.

\*\*\*\*\*

As part of our fight for anarchism we are involved in the struggles for higher wages, for trade union democracy, for womens' rights, for jobs.

We oppose all divisions in the working class. We fight against all attempts to set Protestant against Catholic, men against women, skilled against unskilled, old against young, heterosexual against homosexual.

We are opposed to the British state's presence and to partition. We defend peoples' right to fight back. But we are not nationalists, we do not merely want to get rid of the border. We want to unite our class and create a totally new Ireland.

\*\*\*\*\*

I want more information about the Workers Solidarity Movement.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Return to WSM, P.O.Box 1528, Dublin 8



**ONE OF THE greatest myths that has been fostered about anarchists is that they are disorganised. Since the anarchist movement first emerged in the International Working Mens' Association in the 1860's it has developed many trends. Each with its own method of organisation.**

From the mass unions of the anarcho-syndicalists which today include important unions like the General Workers Confederation (CGT) and the National Confederation of Workers (CNT-AIT) in Spain and the Central Organisation of Swedish Workers (SAC) to the anarcho-communists in tighter, more closely knit organisations.

In Ireland, the Workers Solidarity Movement is an anarchist-communist organisation. The structure our organisation is based on the way we would like to see society structured, and the structure of any organisation reflects the politics that that organisation holds.

Firstly democracy. Any anarchist organisation must be based on the principle of true workers' democracy. The WSM is a platformist organisation.

### WHAT IS THE "PLATFORM"

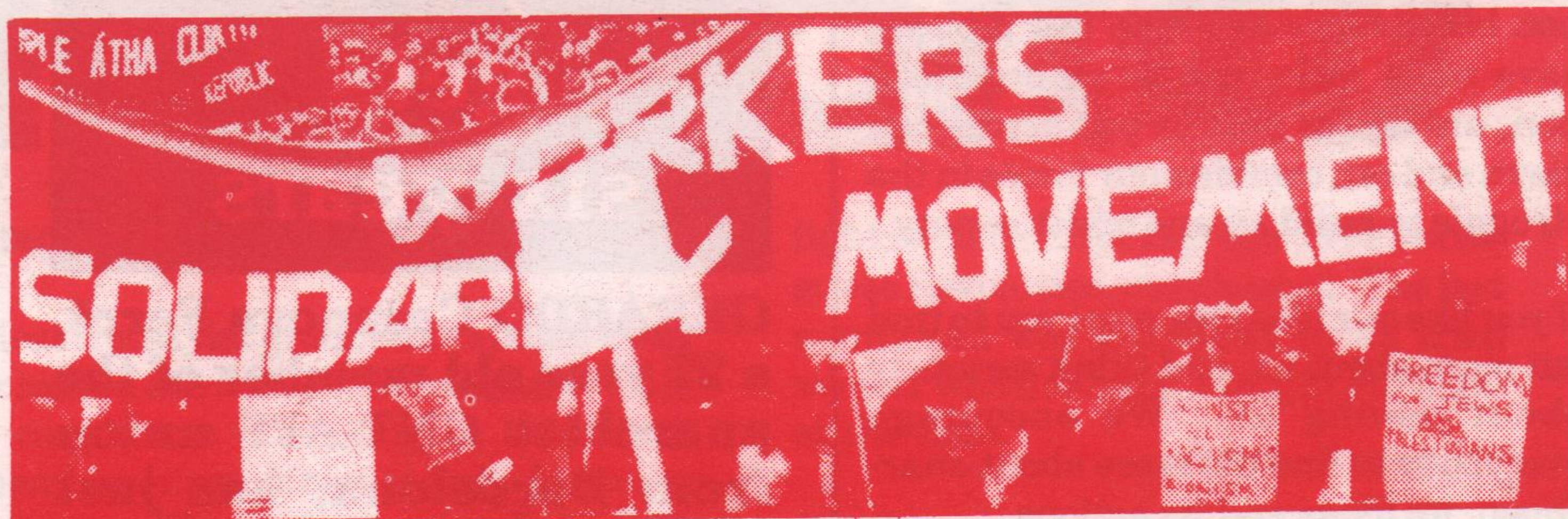
The Platform or "The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists" was written by famous anarchists Nestor Makhno, Peter Arshinov, Ida Mett and others in 1926, following their experiences in the Russian Revolution.

Despite the fact that there were over 10,000 active anarchists in Russia in 1917, they were quickly wiped out by the Bolshevik Red Terror. As early as April 1918 the anarchist centres in Moscow were attacked. 600 anarchists were arrested and dozens killed.

Not all anarchists were clear about what needed to be done. A few even went to the Bolsheviks but others fought on to defend the gains of the revolution against what they saw was a new developing ruling class. The Makhnovist movement in the Ukraine and the Kronstadt uprising were the last important battles. By 1921 the anti-authoritarian revolution was dead. This defeat has had deep and lasting effects on the international workers' movement.

It was the hope of the authors of the platform that such a disaster would not happen again. The platform looks at the

## Thinking about Anarchism



## Anarchist Organisation

lessons of the Russian anarchist movement, its failure to build up a presence within the working class movement big enough and effective enough to counteract the tendency of the Bolsheviks and other political groups to substitute themselves for the working class.

The Platform states for example that it is ludicrous to have an organisation which contains groups that have mutually antagonistic and contradictory definitions of anarchism. It also says that we need formal agreed structure covering written policies, the role of officers, the need for membership dues and so on; the sort of structures that allow for effective and at the same time large democratic organisation. And it says that we must have fully worked out and agreed policies that we can argue for as an organisation. We need to become a "leadership of ideas".

These views are in contrast to the anarcho-syndicalist view which is that all that is needed is one massive revolutionary union. The problem with this is that people with widely differing views are in the union and so when a crucial decision comes up there will be a split or at least confusion as to what way to go.

The best example of this is the action of the National Confederation of Workers (CNT) in the Spanish revolution who, while supporting the revolution of the working class of Spain had no plan of what to do. They ended up joining the government instead of smashing the state, and they did not have any worked out policy of how the workers could defend themselves from the backstabbing attacks of the Bolsheviks directed by Stalin.

We call any group that agrees with the basic outlines of the Platform a "Platformist" organisation.

Following the ideas of the platform, we want to build an anarchist organisation. An "anarchist organisation" would be organised on a branch level. There would be a regional committee composed of delegates from the branches and there would be a national committee. The important thing about this structure is that control would come from the bottom up and not from the top down.

To join, an individual or group must agree with the policies and aims of the "organisation" but once inside all members would be encouraged in a free atmosphere to question and develop these policies.

The business of the organisation would be decided at regular conferences of all members. Perspectives on the future, long and short term, further policies and tactics would be decided and all members bound to them. The representatives of regions and national areas would also be elected and mandated to follow the conference decisions.

In an anarchist organisation all representatives would be mandated and recallable. This means that if they start doing their own thing as people in positions of responsibility tend to do, they can be removed from that position. And nobody would be allowed remain in an important position for more than a few years.

For us the position should never become a status symbol or a position reserved for 'senior' activists. It should better be seen as a temporary position that everyone could be expected to do at some time.

But the most crucial aspect of an organisation of anarchists is the internal life of the branch. In order for an organisation to be truly democratic,

*continued on page 18*