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Who we are ...

The Solidarity Federation is an organisation of workers which seeks to destroy capitalism and the state. Capitalism because it exploits, oppresses and kills working people and wrecks the environment for profit worldwide. The state because it can only maintain hierarchy and privilege for the classes who control it and their servants; it cannot be used to fight the oppression and exploitation that are the consequences of hierarchy and the source of privilege. In their place we want a society based on workers' self-management, solidarity, mutual aid and libertarian communism.

The Solidarity Federation consists of Locals, which support the formation of future revolutionary unions and are centres for working class struggle on a local level. Our activities are based on Direct Action - action by workers ourselves, not through intermediaries like politicians and union officials; our decisions are made through participation of the membership. We welcome all working people who agree with our Aims and Principles, and who will spread propaganda for social revolution and revolutionary unions.

We recognise that the class struggle is worldwide, & are affiliated to the International Workers' Association, whose Principles of Revolutionary Unionism we have adopted.

CUT OUR PAY ? - NO WAY !

Recently the Government decided to bring in new contracts for legal advice, in England known as Community Legal Advice Centres (CLACS) and Community Legal Advice Networks (CLANS). This has caused a bidding war in which independent advice centres such as Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABs) and Law Centres have become embroiled.

In Hull the local CAB has virtually closed as a private profit making company A4e has won the contract.

This company has also been awarded "pathways" (getting disabled people off benefits and into work project) for Yorkshire and Humberside, a clear conflict of interest.

The housing charity Shelter has also put in bids for the CLACS and CLANS contracts, but in order to make themselves more "competitive" they are trying

to cut wages and work conditions. This has led to industrial action which is still ongoing.

There are rumours that other organisations such as CABs are thinking of cutting pay and conditions to make themselves more "competitive" as well.

A recent legal decision forcing Local Authorities to grant equal pay and conditions to both male and female staff has caused some Local Authorities, including Leeds, to reduce pay and conditions for male employees to bring them into line with female employees, rather than increase female employees pay and conditions to the same as male employees.

Public Sector workers have been offered a below 1 inflation pay rise which is often used as a guide for private sector pay deals, while MPs and private sector bosses have had

well above inflation pay rises.

With the increase in the cost of living many workers are feeling let down as many Trade Unions and the TUC have decided the best action is to "protest" rather than take industrial action. As we know our Government has always listened to such protests....!

Its time to take action - workers need to unite to stop these cuts in pay and conditions.



BOOK REVIEW

Terrence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895-1917* (AK Press, 2008). £14.

This book charts the involvement of various types of anarchist in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth in trying to free sexuality from repressive laws and social stigma. Anarchists in the U.S., usually ahead of their socialist counterparts, advocated birth control methods, non-church marriage ("free love") and decriminalizing homosexuality as part of the human right to enjoy our bodies and sexual

desires. Especially after the arrest and trials of Oscar Wilde (1895) and his sentencing to hard labour, anarchists fought legal and social discrimination of homosexuality. Not all anarchists were in favour of this (prejudice still was widespread) but Emma Goldman, Benjamin Tucker and Alexander Berkman all stuck their necks out to fight for what were to become "gay rights". It's good to have their contribution rescued from history and it helps to guide us in the present-day struggle for sexual liberation.

STRIKE FOR FAIR PAY

UNISON STRIKE ACTION 16TH-17TH JULY 2008

What happens if your shop steward is not in work when there is strike action??? Evidently nothing, unless you take it upon yourself to harass the union. Despite all of the pre strike build up myself and my colleagues sat around waiting for Unison to let us know what was planned. We had no publicity, no notification of picket lines etc.

Eventually I started the process of contacting the unions, organising our workplace picket lines, getting out publicity etc. Frustrating but worth the effort, because those who did join in were committed and feisty and we manage to dissuade a few people from crossing the picket lines. Solfed members and sympathisers joined us on the picket line.

So two months have passed and management are all back at the

negotiating table latest news was they have not begun to discuss the actual 'pay' issue yet but headway is being made! No wonder people get exasperated. Our pay is being docked for going on strike and we sit and wait whilst other negotiate on our behalf.

RUDOLF ROCKER
(March 25, 1873—Sep 19 1958)



Rocker was an Anarcho-syndicalist writer and activist. A self-professed anarchist without adjectives.

He believed that anarchist schools of thought represented "only different methods of economy" and that the first objective for anarchists was "to secure the personal and social freedom of men".

NEWS THAT BEGGARS BELIEF

Last month Telegraph & Argus had a field day exposing the threat that Bradfordians face from 'aggressive beggars'. In their usual balanced way under the heading 'Beggar Off' they reported how , a 'persistent and abusive panhandler' has been jailed as part of a new police crackdown. Splashed next to this report was a photo of a totally different beggar who had tried to give his side of the story. Consequently this individual has suffered increasing abuse and attacks because of the assumption that he is the 'aggressive beggar' we are being warned about. A gain our local rag has placed the blame squarely on the individuals involved with no attempt to discuss or analyse the underlying social conditions that are leading to an increase of beggars on our streets. It is far easier to attack the visible symptom than to get to the root of the invisible cause.

Society gets the criminals it deserves!

BOYCOTT THE UNION BUSTERS !

Starbucks Day of Action Report

Three intrepid members of West Yorks SolFed-IWA braved the rain on 5 July to take part in the joint IWA/IWW Anti-Starbucks International Day of Action by leafleting Starbucks customers in Leeds city centre. The leaflets explained that anti-union firm Starbucks has fired workers who try to organise a union and stand up for their rights, both in Spain and the USA, and asked coffee drinkers to show solidarity by boycotting Starbucks and buying their coffee elsewhere that day.

The timing of the Day of Action was particularly appropriate, as Starbucks had at the beginning of the week announced 12 000 forthcoming job losses and the closure of 600 coffee shops in the USA.

We initially took up positions on both sides of Briggate as there was both a Starbucks coffee house and a Borders bookshop (with a Starbucks inside) to focus on. The Borders manager, after customers complained about being assailed in the doorway, went and

initially remonstrated with our comrade, but ended in being persuaded to lend her his umbrella, so that she could stay out of the doorway and be dry! Across the way, the manager of Briggate Starbucks was a much less charitable fellow, and threatened to call the police on us for our trouble! Although we felt his legal knowledge was probably fairly tenuous, we made a tactical withdrawal, rather than have to watch a grown man cry.

We were approached by one Schuh worker on Briggate who empathised fully with the problems our CNT comrade in Spain had as a result of refusing to attend meetings outside work time without pay or time off in lieu; and being forced to work public holidays for no extra pay – as he'd experienced the same things himself at Schuh! The prevalence of such disgraceful employer practises only underlines for us the crying need for strong union organisation within the entire retail sector.

Relocating to Albion Street Starbucks, we were allowed to give out our leaflets

unmolested by the shop manager there, although we were soon approached by a City Centre Warden, who asked to see our permit. Explaining that we had none as we didn't think it was necessary, he asked "You're not religious or political, are you?" (the implication being that this was a get-out). We had to admit to not being religious, but explained that we are a political-economic organisation. He gave the appearance of checking out SolFed with control on his radio, and then went on his way, giving us the all-clear. We distributed 300 leaflets (including some to Starbucks workers) in about an hour before making our sodden and bedraggled way back home.

Many other SolFed locals up and down the country also took part in the Day of Action, as well as IWA sections across the world. More details of the Day of Action elsewhere are available at: <http://gda.iwa-ait.org/taxonomy/term/1> and in Direct Action #43.