

DERBY AGITATOR

REVOLUTIONARY CLASS-STRUGGLE ANARCHISM.

free fortnightly newsheet

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AGITATOR

I would like to thank Derby co-operative press for printing 500 copies of issue no. 1, and also anyone who donated towards printing costs, any small donations are still needed and will be greatly recieved.

Derby Agitator can be got from Guts, saddler gate and Forum bookshop, Abbey st. or send a second class stamp to the address and one will be posted to you.

Any like minded people out there interested in forming an action group - collective please get in touch.

The next issue of the Agitator will be out on sept. 14th.

News, views, letters, comment are most welcome, I will try to print most things, if you want a reply please enclose an S.A.E.

DERBY A. 39 DERBIGH ST; CHADDESDEN, DERBY.

THE MINERS AND THE LEFT

The activities of certain of the groups of the 'revolutionary left' during the present miners strike raise whole questions about what is and what is not solidarity?

The major activity of most 'revolutionaries' on the left has of course been selling 'THE PAPER', but it is not the selling of the paper that is so bad as what is actually written in them. Many of the 'revolutionary' parties have used their papers to attack the strategy of the strike, personal union officials and in some cases the whole principles of the strike.

The principle that no person has the right to sell another person's livelihood has been attacked by the Revolutionary Communist Party, who want a national ballot and Workers Power who want a branch 'show of hands'. It may not have occurred to these vanguards of the working class but people are voting everyday with their feet.

The overall strategy of the strike has been attacked by all and sundry but the main aggressor has been the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP has made personal assaults on people such as Jack Taylor, Yorkshire Area President, over the handling of the Orgreave situation, although the directing of pickets is neither controlled by Taylor or Scargill but by the Yorkshire region co-ordinating committee. They believe that Taylor has deliberately held back on the picketing of Orgreave and restricted the movement of pickets.

The overall strategy of the strikes has been good, considering the lack of pickets, the wide number of targets and the determination of the police to stop them, the only tactics available to the miners has been the hit and run tactics of guerrilla warfare. Orgreave was of course a diversion from this strategy and the end result was hundreds of arrests and injuries for very little other than an education in the true nature of the police.

Although we as anarchists have different ideas about organisation than the hierarchical structures of the NUM and different political principles to people like Scargill and Taylor, this is not the fight that we are engaged in. There is little that we can criticise these two on during this strike. Both of them have thrown themselves into the frontline, both have been assaulted by police, they like all other paid NUM officials have given up their wages and during this strike have been nothing more than propaganda and symbolic figure heads.

Getting back to the SWP's assault on the miners. They have argued for Orgreave to be turned into a mass symbolic battle, day in day out (perhaps they want a permanent pitch to sell their paper), being totally unaware of the limitations of such an action and ignorant of the forces that the state has, to fight such a pitched battle.

But it is not just the words in the papers of the left that are dubious, but all their other forms of 'solidarity'. Fund raising 'for the miners' is a great thing to latch on to. The SWP started off its miners fund, which has not reached £14,000, the purpose of this fund 'to put the miners case over to other workers', i.e. fund the paper, and other SWP propaganda. Money is also raised by many groups to send miners to their conferences and meetings. But more often than not it is used by the party to control situations, pay for busses etc. and build up their prestige. Of course not all of the 'left' groups are as bad as each other and some have given useful solidarity work to the miners and their families.

This brings us onto the question, what is solidarity? Solidarity comes in various forms, first is propaganda and education in support of people involved in struggle. In most cases strikes and other struggles go hardly noticed and any form of propaganda is useful. But there is propaganda in support of the strike and propaganda for your own cause, the best example is the Support the Miners Posters by the Revolutionary Communist Party, which has RCP taking up a third of the poster, a true poster of solidarity should have the name of the group showing solidarity in print, that has to be looked for.

Likewise the written word, either in papers or leaflets, should be used to inform people of the struggle and the events going on, and not as a means to criticise the people involved, point out the ideological differences, but the aim of solidarity is to educate and propagate not to take over.

On the question of fundraising, it is very simple if all funds are handed over to those who are going to use them, now we think it would be better if we did this with the money people have entrusted to us, if people gave money for a specific purpose such as buying food, then to buy food direct.

Docks strike

At the time of writing the dockers are out on a national strike, it is not clear yet how solid the strike is, the media is trying to put it across that the strike is a non starter, but a solid core of dockers are out and with a bit of determination the swayers should follow, the strike started after scab labour was used, it is obvious that if the miners were allowed to lose, the dockers would equally if not more to lose, a fight for the extension of the dock labour scheme although it is far from foolproof would be a step forward and would give the strike an extra focus.

The battle lines have been drawn, with the miners and the dockers out possibilities exist for joint action, imagine mass picketing at various targets around the country at the same time with various other direct actions & decoys the cops would be stretched to their limit if the troops were then brought in every conscious worker should mobilise for action. SOLIDARITY! MUTUAL AID! SMASH BACK THE TIDE OF THATCHERISM!

Emancipation

The "Trots" are fond of saying the Emancipation of the working class is an act of the working class itself! Quite Right! wot it ain't, is an act of a marxist vanguard leadership get hold of power on the backs of workers struggles.

For workers Emancipation NOT trotskite CONSTAPATION.

NEXT ISSUE.

article on anarcho-syndicalism versus trade unionism, and a bit about the direct action movement, also reports on racist attacks.

World Wide One Fight Miners support groups have been set up in Denmark, Holland, France & Germany. source: Black Flag.

ANARCHIST PUBLICATIONS: For extensive news & views there are two national papers; Direct Action, monthly paper of the Direct Action Movement (anarcho-syndicalist) 20p from Box DAM, 59 Cookridge st; Leeds LS2 3WA. - - - - Black Flag, anarchist fortnightly, forum bookshop on Abbey st. stock it.

The miners strike and the left has been reprinted from a back issue of Black Flag also the letter appeared in a later issue, I have reprinted them because I thought it was an interesting article, I won't add any comment as for me most of the relevant points were made except I'd like to add about the trot left, the vanguard parties no doubt have many good working class activists but they invariably get caught up in the party machine with the elitism and the party line. What are your views on the article.



DERBYSHIRE WOMENS ACTION GROUP

Their leaflet informs that the group was at work from day one of the miners overtime ban, the group now involves hundreds of miners wives and they have set up 34 food centres throughout north Derbyshire, they are desperately trying to feed the families of 10,500 striking miners, at present they are only able to distribute 3,000 parcels aweek, help sustain the strike, don't let the Tories STARVE the miners back to work.

Donations should be sent to: Women's Action Group Relief Fund Labour Club Unity House 113 Saltergate Chesterfield

or their is a miners relief centre on charnwood st; in the T.G.W.U. offices, Derby.

all spelling mistakes in this issue is a thatcher plot!

LETTER

Dear Black Flag,

Having just read your article "The Miners and the Left". I feel compelled to write to you. Whilst I agree with most of the article - am similarly sickened with the "revolutionary lefts" redefinition of solidarity as selling "THE PAPER", I believe that funds raised for the miners should go directly to the miners; etc. - I disagree with some of the conclusions you made, which seem to be concerned with how @s should behave during disputes generally.

Firstly, as an anarchist, I don't like to be told what "my job" is - that, I see as authoritarianism. We're all continually told what to do by the State and its various forms without other @s doing the same. Surely one of the things which makes @ different is its toleration and support of a variety of actions/means of changing the social order.

Secondly, I question the writers assertion that any papers or leaflets distributed on picket lines should merely inform people of the particular struggle they are participating in. Don't you think that people on picket lines are aware of why they are there? Leaflets, it seems to me, are useful in describing the particular struggles of those people in the context of the wider struggle (that we are involved in and fighting).

Finally, I don't entirely agree that we as anarchists should not be allowed to make any criticism of striking workers and I do not believe that, in the case of the miners or any other group, "the structures they choose to work within are irrelevant". Whilst I obviously support the premises of much industrial action, as an autonomous, thinking

person I do not always unreservedly support the action of pickets - I'm not exactly crazy about the sexism of some of the striking miners, for example. I think we should move away from this very middle class, vanguardism view of striking workers as somehow beyond any criticism, "sacred". Constructive criticism can help bring about change - particularly if its from people who are quite clearly showing support and solidarity on picket lines, demos or in any other ways.

R. G. (Exeter)

REPLY: The purpose of the article was to stimulate discussion and debate about the nature of solidarity and how it should affect the way anarchists work.

Written propaganda should be used to educate people about the goings on and reasons for a particular struggle and should be directed at those outside the struggle. The widespread ignorance and acceptance of misinformation even amongst political people during the miners strike, points to the need for alternative news. But as anarchists we should not abuse the position of providing alternative information by trying to direct struggles or cause divisions and weakness amongst those we are supporting.

There is no need for us to uncritically support workers involved in struggles, but we should be aware of where our opinions and ideas are going to, and the effect they will have. There is only one way to be sure that our criticisms are constructive and not divisive and that is through personal contact made through giving practical solidarity.

As anarchists we believe that people are capable of organising their own lives and although the NUM may not be organised in the pure libertarian way we would like

it has been created by the miners for the miners. The reason why the NUM and all other unions are not organised in a libertarian way, is because of the failure of anarchists over the last 100 years to convince people of the advantages of non-hierarchical, federalist forms of organisation. For us to go running in during disputes (and to be honest how many anarchists gave a damn about miners, mining communities and the NUM, before this strike?) laying down the line, attacking the structures and generally being negative, neither does our cause any good or helps those involved in fighting against the state and bosses.

Also we must not let our idealistic purity to get in the way of our basic beliefs. People involved in struggle are quite capable of questioning the structures they are involved in and the wider society as a whole, and people do try to change things. During the miners strike great break-throughs have been made in the struggle for women's equality (sexism confronted, women organising etc.) in altering people's attitudes to the police, in questioning local power cliques and society generally. Our solidarity besides helping to win the direct struggle, can also go to strengthen and develop new attitudes, but to do this we must be trusted and respected, which means being involved in practical solidarity on a grass roots level without pushing our politics, self-righteousness and arrogance.

M. (Doncaster)

please pin up the poster overleaf somewhere or whatever.



DERBY MINERS SUPPORT GROUP

The support group hold regular collections and distribute the Miner (N.U.M. paper) every sat. from about 9.30am. onwards on Albdon st. on the slope up to the Eagle centre, they also hold organising meetings every Thur's at the T.G.W.U. offices on Charnwood st. at 7.30pm.

The support group organised a miners solidarity rally last wed. 22.8.84. at the West Indian Community centre among the speakers was Peter Heathfield general secretary of the national union of mineworkers, at a rough estimate there was a crowd of between 100 & 150, this ain't a massive number but their is a nucleus to get a strong miners solidarity movement built in Derby, practical solidarity, fundraising ect. could then be increased, and a movement would exist to respond to miners leaders being arrested, scab transportation of coal through Derby, miners funds being seized ect.

This will not come out of thin air, as some might suggest, but will take a lot of hard work, Organise! Agitate! get stuck in! above all mutual aid!



oh, we, er seem to be having a power cut.



There is also more direct support like attending picket lines and demonstrations in solidarity. On both these events we are there to add our weight, either to show our banners and flags in support or to add bodies to the push, blockade or in a symbolic manner depending on the nature of the event.

Returning to the miners strike our job as anarchists is to give solidarity. Although this fight affects all of us, it is primarily the fight of the miners and their families. We may not like the structures they choose to work within, we may not like their individual politics or religion, but these things are irrelevant, just as irrelevant as if a policeman is an atheist or in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament. There will be plenty of time after the strike to put our political theories over, but during this dispute there is only one form of propaganda, and that is propaganda by deed, through no strings, non dogmatic, consistent and practical solidarity.

MINERS STRIKE

A



IMPARTIAL POLICE FORCE? OR THE BOSSES BOOT BOYS!

Victory to the miners