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Political ?

The Syndicalist concept of unionism opposes the domination by any political party of the labour movement. It calls on workers to set themselves free through economic opposition to the bosses and government rather than that they pursue the dead end of a parliamentary road to socialism.

The Labour Party since its conception has bridled the trade unions with a philosophy based on conciliation and arbitration--after all when Labour are in power they themselves constitute the ruling class--the last thing they want to encourage then is a militant workforce!

Look at the record of the Labour Party both in and out of power--they have constantly stamped on the workers, from the time the 1945 Labour Government (so lauded by the left) brought troops in to break the dockers' strike to their hostility to the miners' strike forty years on.

When in power last time round the Labour Party imposed a social contract negotiated over the heads of union memberships, which froze pay increases and cut workers' living standards. During the firemen's strike they surpassed the present government in their open use of troops as strikebreakers.

Today in France and Spain the sister organisations of the Labour Party are in power. They too remain loyal to traditional "socialist" policies towards the working class. In France the steel industry has been savaged just as steel and coal have in Britain. In Spain, the same thing has happened to shipbuilding.

All governments, by their very nature, are anti-working-class. Bearing in mind the European experience and the contempt shown for the miners by Neil Kinnock, can we doubt that if Labour had been in power, the last year would

still have seen the miners engaged in a struggle to save their industry, this time from a Socialist "Rationalisation"? Remember the policy of dismantling the Health Service was not begun by the Tories--they simply followed Labour's lead.

As part of the present government's Industrial Relations policy, we are now being asked to vote on whether or not unions should keep political funds. Obviously the Tories want the Labour Party to lose the massive finances it receives from the unions.

In the aftermath of the Labour Party betrayal of the NUM no good trade unionist should support Labour--they are Capital's policemen. Yet as syndicalists, just as we object to Labour's interference in unions, reducing them to timid, legalistic lap-dogs, we object also to the Tories legislating to the unions.

We believe unions should have their own "political" funds. Not to give Labour (or the SDP, for that matter) a leg-up at election time, but for union defence, for producing propaganda, for defending victimised workers, etc.

We believe the unions must break away from the Labour Party, not because some other party tells them to, but because workers must realise that a unionism always kowtowing to laws, parties and government cannot defend them adequately, far less carry out an offensive campaign for workers' control and liberty. Only a unionism which is democratic, decentralised and totally independent of all political parties can do that.

The government's ballot should be boycotted, but individuals can and should contract out of paying the levy and campaign for unions and their branches to disaffiliate from the Labour Party.

read

'DIRECT ACTION'

THE PARASITES

The politicians are always telling the workers that they are pricing themselves out of a job whenever they ask for a wage rise (even if it is just to cover inflation). Thatcher says that the workers are greedy and should accept less; obviously it is in her interest (and in the interest of the rest of the ruling class) for workers to have lower wages because it means bigger profits and even higher standards of living for the bosses and the rich and powerful elites. The boss of the British Oxygen Company now earns £14,838 a week but Thatcher would not dream of telling him to 'tighten his belt'. The bosses, politicians, union officials, top consultants in industry, finance, insurance and other 'experts' and of course not forgetting the Royal Scumbags and those who inherit vast fortunes, are all parasites. They are parasites because they are paid (or receive) staggering amounts of money for doing next to nothing. Most of them do not perform any socially useful work, eg. Ian MacGregor is being paid hundreds of thousands of pounds for destroying the mining industry.

In this country the wealthiest 7% (the parasites) own 80% of the wealth. This wealth is created by the workers but is stolen from them in the form of profit. This accumulated wealth is economic power which is used by the parasites to subject the working class to a state of wage slavery. The sole purpose of production being to create more and more profit to make the parasites even richer and more powerful. The more wealth a parasite possesses the less work he/she has to do. When the amount of wealth they own reaches a certain level they are able to live in luxury without working at all. They are able to do this by exploiting the labour of those who work, this can be done in many ways such as by owning the means of production (factories and land), investing money in the banks, or the buying and selling of shares and commodities. This condition of madness is known as capitalism, it is a disease that exists in every country of the world (in different disguises; such as state monopolised capitalism in Russia). This disease must be stamped out as soon as possible, it is the only way to get rid of the parasites. Without the parasites and their defenders (the states of the world with their armies and police forces) the wealth that is created by the workers could be used for the benefit of everyone equally, and production could be re-organised to satisfy needs instead of for profits.

DIRECT
Action

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

- (1) The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.
- (2) Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.
- (3) We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self-managed production for need not profit.
- (4) In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.
- (5) We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is for independent organisation in the workplace and community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of, and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers organisations must be controlled by workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers movement. Any and all delegates of such workers organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.
- (6) We are opposed to all States and State institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all States do not exist to protect the workers of those States, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.
- (7) We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to control their own lives and the environment.
- (8) The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism; a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.

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VIOLENCE?

"The State is violence, domination by violence; masked where possible, open and brutal if necessary."

Mikhail Bakunin. There's been a lot of nonsense talked about violence during the miners' strike. And violence, by the State or by people in opposition to it, is problematic for some people, even on the Left. Anarcho-syndicalists, on the other hand, have a very clear perspective on this.

TRAITORS

During the miners' strike, traitors like Kinnock and Willis have used picket-line violence (by the strikers, mind, not the police) as the excuse to cover their betrayal of the people they claim to be representative of. Their cowardice will have sickened many strikers and their supporters, especially those who have been on the receiving end of "law and order" as meted out by the police during the strike, while Kinnock and Willis were nowhere to be seen.

SCARGILL

Although there is much in Arthur Scargill's brand of socialism with

which we anarcho-syndicalists would disagree, the man has to be respected for having steadfastly refused, despite great pressure, to condemn NUM members for defending themselves as best they can, while all about traitors sneered and cowards flinched.

At the other end of bourgeois politics from Kinnock and Willis, after the Brighton bombing the Government tried to use the event to criminalize all opposition. Thus McGregor compared the bombing to what had been happening on the picket lines.

STATE VIOLENCE

The State is violence institutionalised; repression and containment of unrest on behalf of the ruling class. The apparatus of this domination are the police and the courts -- as we've seen throughout the course of the miners' strike. When the police lines are breached the armed forces come into play, as in Ulster. And when the ruling classes of different states fall out they throw their armies at each other (at least, before they got nuclear weapons; now we are all conscripts). The result is, and has been throughout history, the

slaughter of millions of poor people in the wars of their masters. When the State condemns political opponents for resorting to violence (as for instance in the case of the IRA) it talks with its hands dripping with the innocent blood of generations.

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Having established, I hope, that the State is violence, what then should our response be to the violence of people who, for a variety of reasons, clash with the State? It cannot be a blanket condemnation of violence, since anarcho-syndicalists are neither pacifists nor opportunists like Kinnock. We recognise the legitimate right of people to defend themselves from oppression and injustice, and also to go on the offensive against their oppressors. However, as with our politics generally, we view violence with an ethical perspective. The indiscriminate bombings of various nationalist groups around the world for instance are indefensible -- though even here we look at the disease, not the symptoms whether it be the British presence in Ireland, the disinherited Palestinians or whatever.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEATH

The killing of the taxi driver hit by a lump of concrete dropped from an overhead bridge while taking a scab to work in South Wales is a case in point. We regret the death, more sincerely than the likes of Thatcher and Kinnock. Whenever workers are set against workers it's the boss that stands to gain (and it's the boss that's set them against each other, usually). Thus we lay the responsibility for this death and the several others of strikers (which were quickly forgotten by the media) squarely at the feet of Thatcher, McGregor, and their class. And despite all their condemnations of violence on the picket lines, traitors like Kinnock and Willis bear a responsibility too, for with their betrayal they have aided the bosses and prolonged the strike.

JUDASES

Long after Willis has received his thirty pieces of gold (like his mates Lord Chapple and Lord Murray), history will condemn the real violence of the last 11 months: the threatened destruction of thousands of livelihoods and entire communities, the use of legal thugs.

ABOLISH PRISONS they don't work

Capitalist society is chaotic and disorganised, a breeding ground for the anger and frustration that build up when people are constantly exposed to degradation and insult. It isn't surprising that violence, rape, theft and addiction are rife, or that working-class people take out their tensions on each other, even though we should stick together as a class and direct our anger where it really does some good -- at the ruling class who benefit from all this misery.

The ruling class and its protector the State are in fact the biggest gang of criminals, murderers and gangsters going -- except that they are all LEGAL! The answer they propose for everyone else is punishment, largely in prisons. In this sense, ALL prisoners are political prisoners.

Prisons are there to inflict violence and harm and keep us all in line through fear.

The only answer to prisons is not to reform them, but to abolish the system they reflect in all its insanity, stupidity and ignorance. Once the causes of crime have been done away

with, in a classless society with new living conditions, people will develop new relationships based on mutual love and respect for the needs of all.

Certain crimes and

hang-ups may persist for a while, but shall we punish, or practice more humane methods of restraint without vengeance and cruelty? This would do a lot more to protect a society offering no conditions for crime to thrive. People are quite capable of dealing with problems themselves -- we don't need politicians, police, prisons or "experts" -- we need freedom and equality.

I was disgusted and horrified at the primitive conditions... The food was foul... I remember on two occasions finding cockroaches in the potatoes... I broke my tooth after biting grit which was in the cabbage... They resorted to holding back my mail, tearing it up on three occasions... one member of the censor's staff said "Red fascist scum like you should be shot -- Maggie is too bloody soft"... an inmate suffering from severe back pain... could not stand it. After being refused pain

killers he gashed his wrist with a half broken razor in the toilets. It later turned out that he had kidney stones which required an emergency operation... Inmates were given the liquid cosh for not obeying petty rules... an inmate forced to a strip cell because he refused to take his medicine which was causing him to vomit and it turned out that the inmate had an ulcer which had burst... this gestapo type cruelty should end before some unfortunate inmate is killed...

THE ABOVE EXTRACTS COME FROM A LETTER RECENTLY SENT TO D.A. FROM STRANGWAYS PRISON IN MANCHESTER, DESCRIBING CONDITIONS THERE.



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