

Politicians, the Police and the media are all agreed today that their society is in crisis. They say that it is a crisis of social responsibility, a crisis of law and order, a crisis of morality. In other words *it is your crisis*.

We say that the name of this crisis is *capitalism*. Unemployment, lack of decent housing, poor health care and grinding poverty are the facts of life today, as we are asked to pay for the crisis of their economy and of the state which underwrites it.

Anarchists have always argued that human beings can never be free with a society founded on authoritarian principles. Today, the need to transform society is glaringly obvious. After the historical failure of marxism, we suggest that the libertarian principle is a tool and a weapon for working class people seeking to resist the day to day attacks on our living standards and liberties, and to take up the revolutionary challenge of running society tomorrow.

## WHAT IS BLACK EYE?

BLACK EYE is an initiative from members of the Direct Action Movement in the South West. Our aim is to spread Anarchist ideas. We welcome contributions from our readers. Letters or articles should be short and sent to PO BOX 1592, Midsomer Norton, BA3 3FH.

## ***DIG COMRADES, Labour R.I.P. OFF!***

### ***DIG!***

You hear them every day, the walking wounded, those who never seem to have recovered from the shock of learning that the Xmas story is a myth. They fulminate against the wrongs of whichever administration is allegedly in control of events with cries of 'What can we do?' in voices filled with the despair of the abandoned.

In attempts to alleviate their position some of them band together in broad-based organisations with which they lobby the powers-that-be. Their cry is for a change to the constitution, for the legalisation of freedom of speech, for freedom of information, or whatever. *Except for security matters you understand.*

They hold the naive belief that once something is enshrined in law it is immutable and anyone daring to change or remove it will be subject to....umm....the law? They never seem to grasp the fact that "The Law" is part of the problem, manipulated, ever flexible and staffed with timeservers, it can hardly be used as a weapon against itself, can it?

Liberals (small l) are a pitiable lot. They seek justice within the prison while restraining those digging holes for the dynamite.

At a recent 'Coal Not Dole' meeting held at Victoria Hall, Radstock, some 50 people heard various speeches criticising the Tory government's attacks on pit communities through the pit closures programme.

The meeting had been organised by the South West TUC and the local Labour Council, so it was doomed to be a tame affair with councillors expressing much righteous indignation for the benefit of the press.

No-one present was under 30, and the average age must have been nearer 60. Nothing wrong with that, but it does indicate the irrelevance of such meetings to the young. The local MEP was in attendance, having returned from South Wales with the area NUM banner. The most ridiculous statement of the day (and there were many) came when this worthy militant said "It's right that it should be back in this room where the struggle continues." Where the what???

There was praise for that most revolutionary of journals 'The Morning Star' for supporting the miners. No-one saw fit to mention it's support for Joe Stalin. There were calls to supply it to every Labour Party reading room.

This was an exercise in complacent, self congratulation. The only follow up was to be letters to MPs - and of course the obligatory call for the return of a Labour Government.

An attempt to point out that the capitalist system lay at the heart of the problem and that the Labour Party had itself frequently attacked the working class met total incomprehension and much bluster. It seems that the Labour Party is literally dying off, in this area. The sooner it does so the better, because all it has ever been is an obstacle.

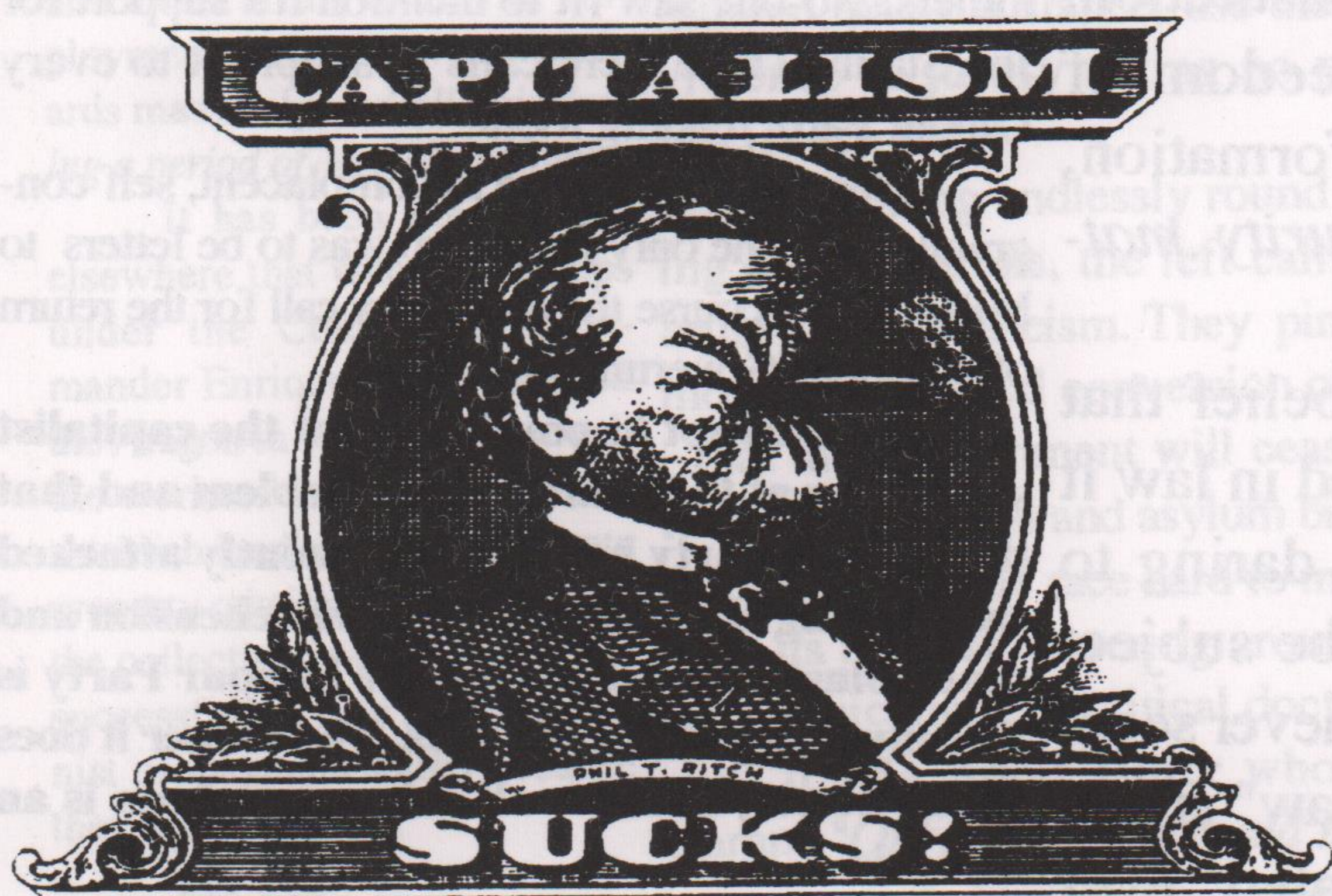




# Privatisation Shambles

The Government's 'Railway Privatisation Bill' eventually published on February 1, is an utter shambles. I don't say this just as a railway worker, although it will certainly mean mass redundancies, wage cuts and the scrapping of safety standards and conditions if implemented; it is a shambles because it runs counter to the Board's own strategy for privatisation and because it has failed to achieve any support from the finance capitalists in the City of London in whose interests it was originally conceived. It is clear to even the most loyal Tory propagandists in the media that MacGregor has come up with a real turkey.

It was politically important for the Tories at the last election to promise to privatise the railway; partly for John Major to satisfy those Tories who doubted his Thatcherite credentials, partly to maintain the flow of wealth to City financial interests from asset stripping the industrial infrastructure, but mainly because the railway represents a body of organised labour which defeated the Government in 1989, and is still capable of doing so today. Anyone who believes that the rail unions are as impotent as our leaders pretend, or that the Tories have forgotten the coordinated strikes on the railway and London Underground, has fallen for the oldest trick of the boss class; whenever possible bury discontent under a conspiracy of silence (the sacking of shop stewards at Manchester Piccadilly, the London Underground Company plan). However, when threatened by coordinated industrial action they will respond with a deluge of slander and lies about railway workers which would make Sadaam Hussein look fairly reasonable, by contrast.



## UNPOPULAR CAPITALISM

Unfortunately for the Government, the recession has made a mockery of their already incoherent plans to sell off the railway. Certainly, it is impossible to maintain the charade of 'popular capitalism' through a public shares issue when the public are suffering from a recessionary crisis. It is even proving difficult to interest the financial sharks and playboys (StageCoach,

Branson, etc) who might have been expected to rush in while wiser and wealthier predators circled impatiently waiting for disaster to strike in order to snap up the bargains. MacGregor claims over 50 expressions of interest in taking on a franchise, but has successfully resisted the urge to name one. The Tories have ended up with the humiliation of privatisation without any buyers. Unless they are prepared to make massive investments in infrastructure quickly (ie cash handouts to prospective owners), buyers will not come forward.

## CONTRACT KILLING

The rearguard action of Bob Reid and the BRB, to resist the breaking up of the InterCity network is the most public example of their opposition to the Government's plans. BR management have their own strategy for reducing labour costs. This involves keeping intact a national rail network, but drastically reducing the size of the workforce from 130,000 at present to about 30,000 essential staff and then contracting out the remainder of the work to outside companies. This would restructure the industry along the lines of the NHS with the emphasis on an internal market and extensive use of contracts to outside companies. During the last year, examples of the drive towards contracting out have become more and more common, particularly affecting Signals & Telecom (S&T) and Permanent Way departments. At present a consultation document from Network South East is being passed around, in which management propose to contract out all P.Way renewals, tamping and lining, drainage, fencing, track welding and lineside management. This would leave track maintenance, inspection/patrolling duties and ultra sonic track testing to be carried out by P.Way workers. Management on Thames/Chiltern (the line in question) are looking towards 75% of work contracted out. This strategy is probably more dangerous than MacGregor's dogmatic shambles, because it could be implemented as an extension of the 'Organising for Quality' management restructuring exercise, already in place.

## A REVOLUTIONARY UNION

What both the strategies for the industry have in common, is that they are both attempts to reduce drastically the ability of railway workers to organise themselves against the demands of modern capitalism. This is interesting because it underlines the threat that industrial organisation still creates for capitalism in the 90s. The lesson for railway workers is that we must take every opportunity to move the struggle to restructure our industry onto our terrain. That means industrial action; united with workers in the coal industry and local government. The TUC call for a 'One Day Strike' on March 17 is pathetically inadequate. The big question for workers trying to defend their living standards and jobs today, is 'how to fight and win without seeing a repeat of the TUC's treacherous role in the 1980s?'

Anarcho-Syndicalists advocate the creation of a union across the whole transport industry to restructure it in the interests of our class. We cannot go back to the social consensus between unions and employers of the last 50 years, we need an organisation which will fight for workers' control of industry and a social revolution. Capitalism in the 1990s is clapped out, it has nothing left to offer us.



# Liberate School!

Most of us are prone to the notion that we can do the other person's job so much better than they can themselves. Watching a neurosurgeon opening a skull and poking around, it is tempting to conclude that it can't be all that difficult as he/she appears to be using tools similar to those used on the workbench. Given this tendency it is probably just as well that we are not loosed on the innocent passer-by who happens to have a headache.

This inclination seems particularly prevalent when it comes to education; here every brown-nosed bureaucrat has an opinion and attempts to inflict it upon the unsuspecting child. By doing so they hope to appear to be doing something radical and the servile media plays along, ensuring that no-one digs too deeply into the subject.

On a few rare occasions the raw material of experimentation has managed to gain access to the laboratory on something approaching equality with the staff. However, once seen as getting 'out of hand' the state bureaucrats step in and pupils and staff are forced back onto the tramlines of conformity.

## PAY AS YOU LEARN

Freedom in education ought to be a fact, not a slogan, but it is as suspect here as in any other aspect of our lives. The so-called free society is filled with such contradictions. Now that capitalism has come to be viewed as the zenith of human achievement by bourgeois and Communist alike, we have the spectacle of schools becoming businesses and flaunting their wares in the market place. It will not be long, no doubt, before pupils become 'clients' and each school opens a payment till.

Alongside this 'reform' the National Curriculum has been forced into the system, the ensuing chaos added nothing to the teacher's ability to give an accurate assesment of a child's progress, but greatly accentuated the inherent stress of the job and limited the educational options still further.

Education has been shunted from a child-centred approach to one of chalk-and-talk so favoured by the reactionaries who infest the political establishment. By such means they hope to regain respect, or rather submission to authority - any authority. This is simply part of the age-old formula of social control.

## EDUCATE, ORGANISE, AGITATE!

School in capitalist society remains for the most part, a regulatory mechanism whereby the natural inquisitiveness and anti-authoritarianism of the young, is at first restrained and later modified. They become useful (exploited) members (tools) of society (the capitalist economy).

The challenge facing us is to change this. To make education a liberating experience for all involved. To dismantle the hierarchical structures which stifle initiative and involve everyone in the decision making process so that no-one dominates. Everyone becomes dispensable as positions of responsibility are rotated and all acquire the necessary skills.

Education alone will not change society but all those concerned with education have a part to play in creating a society which will liberate education. Freedom will not arrive in a glossy package from the Department for Education. If we want it we have to fight for it and in doing so we will gain a handhold on the future.

## ADULT EDUCATION



*Workers' sanatorium: Let the proletariat have light and air!*  
George Grosz's view of Plötzensee prison, Berlin, 1921.

## CANVASSING.

At the door the grey man said  
Rely on me I'll see you're fed  
And snuggled safely in your bed.

I'll put all criminals to flight  
Enable women reclaim the night  
Eliminate war, sustain the poor,  
A general order I'll ensure.

All that's needed is your vote  
For me, according to the rote,  
It is your duty, don't you see?  
I'll take responsibility,  
No need to worry, none at all.  
**NO! No! Aagh!...My teeth...The wall!**



## BOOK REVIEW:

# ANARCHIST ECONOMICS

an alternative for a world in crisis

Abraham Guillen

pub' ISEL/La Prensa - £1

PO Box 29, SWPDO,

Manchester, M15 5HW

ISBN 1 873605 01 3

This pamphlet from the Industrial Syndicalist Education League is a very welcome addition to the existing anarchist literature in English and an excellent introduction to an area which has been neglected in the past by libertarians.

Available from the address above, (for £1 plus p&p - cheques made payable to "La Prensa") it is a detailed examination of the economics of the Spanish libertarian collectives during the revolution 1936-9.

Using statistics from actual collectives in Aragon and Catalonia where the anarchists were the main political force, Guillen shows that where the dominant economic form was libertarian collectivism it was possible to release unparalleled productivity in both the rural and urban areas, create full employment and raise living standards massively *and all this during a period of terrible civil war.*

It has been pointed out elsewhere that when the troops under the Communist commander Enrique Lister invaded the Aragon in July 1937 to smash the workers' collectives and re-establish landlordism and private property relations, it was because the collectives were proving too successful, not as the Communist propaganda stated because they were a failure.

Yet Guillen is not uncritical of the anarchist role. Primarily, he claims that they failed to appreciate the need to create an alternative political structure to the state, to prevent the rise of authoritarian, bureaucratic socialism or the restoration of capitalism. This question and many others must be faced up to by libertarians today. This pamphlet starts the process, read it!

## Fighting Fascism

Fascists such as Le Pen's Front National and the British National Party enjoy sporadic flurries of media attention. Special half-hour long documentaries chronicle the rise of the new far right, always put over as dramatic, awesome, something to be reckoned with. Then with conclusions left open and the cheque in the bank they move on to the next hot issue.

However, tomorrow's would-be dictators don't just disappear due to some arty T.V. expose. Nor, by going to a gig or rally organised by some trendy, lefty front group (and here I mean the SWP/Anti Nazi League) do you do your bit to rid our streets of nazi scum.

For too long winging, woolly liberals have hidden between their placards and their platitudes. Having achieved nothing they either disband their cadres or keep them on the streets to collect money from other trendy lefties. While the coffers of the Revolutionary Communist Party runneth over and the Anti Nazi League eases consciences by selling membership cards at a quid a time, the activities of Fascist groups goes unchecked save for the actions of **Anti-Fascist Action.**

AFA distinguishes itself from other groups not only by its make up, but by its methods. The confrontational nature of its activities has earned AFA the title of "Red Fascists" - a misinterpretation of doctrine and tactics by the liberal left. These are the same people who, by taking a high minded, pacifist stance, use their abhorrence of violence to justify taking no part in any anti-fascist activity.

Marching endlessly round in circles, handing over petitions, the left calls on the state to bring a halt to fascism. They pin their hopes on a moral and rational conversion of the ruling class - that the Government will cease the passing of racist immigration and asylum bills. This is naive, the state plays the race card to meet its own ends, with its interest centering around the economy, not the niceties of political doctrine.

It was Adolf Hitler who wrote in *Mein Kampf* "Only one thing could have stopped our movement, that is if our adversaries had smashed our nucleus from the very beginning."

Today we must meet Europe's new fascists with force and destroy them.



## The Ideal and Realities of Anarcho-Syndicalism.

The following article is translated from **SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA**, (Workers' Solidarity) the newspaper in Catalonia (north-east Spain) of the CNT, a revolutionary union. We have included it to give an international view of libertarian ideas and because it is an excellent brief introduction to anarcho-syndicalism.

Historically, anarcho-syndicalism is of recent appearance, being based on the social idea of Anarchism and its most successful application has been among the workers of Spain. It is opposed to all purely political forms of organisation, from which it differs in principle, methods and objectives. It is the most human and just expression of social relationships conceived until now, with its tendency to social equality and the defence of genuine human rights.

The best of its content, both in terms of structure and objective, is its natural sympathy for the value of justice within the world of work and society in general. Undeniable evidence of this was found in the Spanish Revolution, of which there are references throughout the world in an infinity of publications.

To bring about human emancipation anarcho-syndicalism gives priority in its actions to the defence of wage earning workers, victims of the exploitation and oppression of the state and capitalist systems, without for one moment putting aside social questions. It signifies a daily struggle to win everything, which will enable improvement in the lives of the exploited and their families.

It is necessary to state that the whole anarcho-syndicalist struggle is based on distancing the workers from political collaboration, since all political systems and states are corrupt and oppressive. No-one knows this better than the workers of the old USSR. This same approach can serve as an example to religious believers and the followers of would-be prophets.

In practice, anarcho-syndicalism as a form of social organisation, has to struggle in the countryside, in industry, public services, etc. So it will not be exempt on occasions from violent endeavours, into which it is forced by those who wish to retain their hierarchical structures. These for anarcho-syndicalists entail the greatest danger of all. We are totally opposed to state systems and capitalist and religious politics.

In previous times, all considerations were able to be discussed at mass meetings in response to fundamental questions of the class struggle. Today we have to make clear that for the objectives of total emancipation of the working class to be achieved, we need anarcho-syndicalism. But we must also understand our social structures, their specific cultures; labour and universal social oppressions in order to secure a social revolution based on Anarchism.