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# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

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## IRISH ANARCHIST MAGAZINE



WITH THIS ISSUE *Workers Solidarity* returns to regular quarterly publication. And it couldn't have happened at a better time. As the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe crumbled and collapsed, the whole Bolshevik tradition has come under examination. And not before time.

Only anarchists have always asserted that socialism and liberty must be one and the same. In opposition to the authoritarian 'socialist' tradition, anarchism is uncontaminated by support - 'critical' or otherwise - for dictatorships that made millions of workers into virtual slaves and dragged the good name of socialism into the mud.

Now is the time to step up our level of activity and let a lot more people know the meaning of anarchism. This is a real socialism that has nothing to do with Lenin, Stalin, Gorbachev, De Rossa or Dick Spring. It has nothing to do with rulers, whether they be cruel or benevolent, who would place themselves in control of our lives. Anything that does not place ordinary working class people in control of their own lives is not socialism.

Our vision is about more than a vague 'redistribution of wealth'. We stand for an end to the division of society into

# For Starters

classes; by the working class taking power we can do away with this division into bosses & workers, order-givers & order-takers. We want a society where production is organised to satisfy human needs, not to make massive profits for people like Larry Goodman and Michael Smurfit who already have more money than they can count.

Such a society, anarchism, will be run by elected workers' and community councils rather than by a small collection of bosses and professional politicians. Everyone affected by a decision will have their say in making it. This requires a lot of organisation and we know our class will be quite capable of providing it. Unlike our rulers we do not think that working class people are stupid and only capable of being ruled. Everyone will enjoy real freedom. The only limit on an individual will be that they do not deny the freedom of others. These are the values we wish to assert.

Our politics mean we are involved in struggles that can bring workers together, fight the bosses, build confidence and win

improvements in the here and now. We are involved in our trade unions, unemployed groups, in the 'Trade Unionists & Unemployed Against the Programme', in the 'No to War in the Gulf Campaign'.

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Recently the Dublin-based Anarcho-Communist Group merged with us. We hope you will also want to find out more about our politics, and will consider joining the Workers Solidarity Movement. We need more members, more debate. We understand that real socialism cannot be created unless thousands upon thousands of people know how to change society, and have a clear vision of the type of society they want to live in. There is no way that a tiny handful of 'experts' or leaders can substitute themselves for this. We want to play our part in this process of spreading anarchist/socialist ideas and methods of struggle. We hope *Workers Solidarity* will attract readers to the WSM, to take part in the struggle for socialism, human dignity and freedom.

## THAT'S CAPITALISM

The HLD Publishing Co. of Los Angeles recently released a book called "Mafia Management". The company is promoting the book as appropriate "for executives who might improve the way they manage their organisations by studying the Mafia".

\*\*\*\*\*

Big farmers in Texas have little to worry about from the local pesticide regulatory board. Commenting on Chlordane, a pesticide used to kill termites, Othel Brand, a board member displayed a typically capit-alist mentality when he said "Sure it's going to kill a lot of people, but they may be dying of something else anyway".

\*\*\*\*\*

Like Father, like son. General Norman Schwarzkopf, the US Commander in the Gulf, is maintaining a family tradition. His father was one of the organisers of the CIA-backed coup in Iran in 1953. The US overthrew the government when it nationalised oil production.

Convicted murderer John McDonald was recommended for parole rather than the grisly state revenge that is capital punishment. The Oklahoma Parole Board, however, didn't recommend his parole because capital punishment is repugnant to them. Rather it did so because he has emphysema, heart disease and cancer, and because his execution would 'mean a lot of paperwork'.

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The US government has no problem finding £300 million a day to bomb Iraqi targets and civilians. Each Tomahawk missile fired costs a cool £1 million. Each Tornado warplane sets them back a massive £20 million. They can find the cash for killing but when it comes to saving lives it is a very different story. 900 million people in the world are malnourished. A quarter of a million children lose their sight every year though lack of vitamin A. A mere \$30 per year per child would put a stop to this. According to the 'experts' there is no money for 'non-essentials' like that.

That British Bastion of Censorship, the BBC, has made sure that we will neither see nor listen to anything that might undermine the Western war effort in the Gulf.

The list of banned programmes and records is getting longer each day. Among the programmes are *Monty Python* (it showed Graham Chapman as a British Major in a ballet dress), *Carry on up the Khyber* and the film *Airport*.

Records banned by the BBC include John Lennon's *Give Peace A Chance*, Lulu's *Boom Bang-a Bang*, Desmond Dekker's *Israelites*, the Bangles *Walk Like An Egyptian*, Phil Collins' *In The Air Tonight*, Eric Clapton's *I Shot the Sheriff*, the Bee Gees' *Staying Alive*, Abba's *Under Attack* and Queen's *Another One Bites the Dust*.





# FIGHT THE RICH, NOT THEIR WARS

From the tens of thousands of "Heck no, we won't go, we won't fight for Texaco" protesters in the USA to the anti-war marchers in Ireland it is clear that Bush is not able to fool all of the people all of the time. Even the most right wing of observers now admit that the war in the Gulf is about oil not Kuwaiti independence.

The facts speak for themselves: Kuwait came into existence in the 1920's with a line drawn on a map by the British imperialists who ruled the area at the time. It continued to be ruled by the British until 1967 when they withdrew and imposed a feudal system, giving all power to the Al Sabbah family. This included total control of the economy, police, army and the parliament.

The government which was elected by only 8% of the males in Kuwait was shut down over five years ago because it annoyed the "King". The majority of the population are classified as migrant workers and are thrown out of the country for causing any "trouble" such as forming unions or going on strike. Kuwait has been set up in this way to ensure safe oil exports to the West at a cheap price.

Iraq should never have invaded Kuwait and socialists should demand that they get out immediately. This does not mean taking the same side as the Western governments whose insistence that they are out to defend Kuwaiti democracy is rubbish.

## WHO PUT SADDAM INTO POWER?

Saddam Hussein is a murderous tyrant and this has been clear from his actions. You can read about his record even in the right wing press. But he was put in power by the big capitalist countries and his murderous regime was supported by them right up until last August.

Chemical weapons, which the 'civilised' governments pretend to be so shocked about, have been used before by Saddam Hussein when he massacred thousands of Kurds. This did not provoke any international condemnation. No surprise given that the USA and the USSR still have the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons in the world. Saddam has also been allowed to kill off any opposition including thousands of Shia Moslems and "communists" with impunity.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PRICE OF OIL

Even the eight year long Iran-Iraq war in which one million people died (an imperialist adventure by Iraq) was started with US approval. It is quite obvious that the bosses of the Western World fully supported Hussein's use of a police state

to suppress the population, because it ensured the output of oil at a reasonable price. For them the profit margin is far more important than human life.

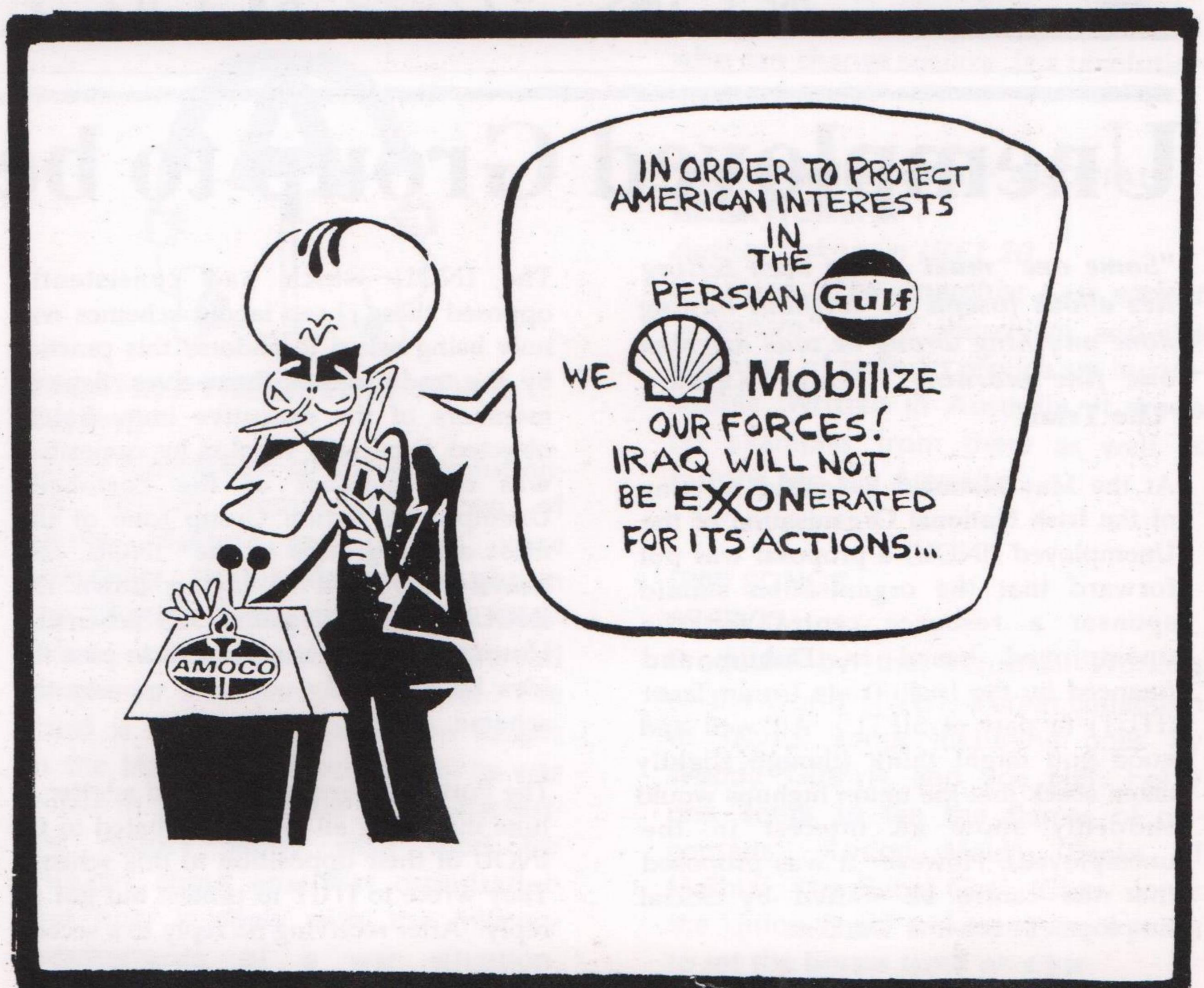
The UN has also been shown in its true light. It has never been the popular image it has created of itself of being some sort of mediator for all countries of the world. For example, it did not impose sanctions on South Africa as an effort to stop apartheid. In fact Margaret Thatcher is famous for saying that sanctions do not work (obviously for her this only applies in the South African case). It never objected to US invasion of Panama and Grenada; and it didn't do anything in 1967 when Israel annexed parts of Egypt, Jordan and Syria. This was something very similar to what Hussein has done in Kuwait.

## WHO CONTROLS THE U.N.?

The true nature of the UN can also be seen when you look at the role of the Security Council. This group of representatives of the five major powers (United States, USSR, China, France, Britain - Germany and Japan are out because they lost the Second World War) has the ability to veto any decision that is made in the UN. This means that only policy in favour of the superpowers, (i.e. policy for their large industries and oil companies) gets passed.

The total embargo on Iraq - denying all imports, including food and medicine, is a continuance of their pro-boss actions. It would be surprising if the UN behaved in any other way. An organisation that is

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composed of the Bushs, Majors (Thatcher junior) and Haugheys of the world is not going to suddenly become progressive just because they are all meeting in the same room. In fact they are going to try and run the world in their own interests, which means replacing Hussein with a dictator who will do their own bidding.

### GLOBAL POLICEMAN

The events in the Gulf signify a very important change in US foreign policy. Bush is trying to resell the idea of American troops as the "Global Policemen", which would enable him to restart the old US foreign policy of direct intervention in other countries affairs. US invasion of Iraq will see a return to the Korean and Vietnam style of foreign policy.

Since the end of the "cold war" the sham of invading countries to protect them from the "reds" can no longer be used. Instead the naked claim of protecting US interests (which means protecting the bosses' interests) must be used along with racist propoganda and media distortion.

### LITTLE IMPERIALISTS ...BUT STILL IMPERIALISTS

Iraq is a mini-imperialist country, not nearly as powerful as the US. Its invasion of Iran, and of course last August's invasion of Kuwait were both imperialist actions - an attempt by Saddam to gain control over more oil and get more money. Neither the US or Iraq has any right to be doing what they are doing. Neither of these governments is doing anything of advantage for the working class.

It is for these reasons that we do not take sides in the war between Iraq and the US. The war must be seen for what it is, like WWI and any imperialist invasion, it is a war in which the main losers on either side will be workers. The war will be fought using the working class as cannon-fodder; they will be the ones who will fight, suffer and die. In the West, the working class will be the ones most effected by price rises, recession, pollution - and possibly conscription. The only winners in this war can be the rich who will continue to reap massive profits no matter who wins.

Anarchists in the West must do all they can to encourage a mass movement against this bloody war. The Western governments have formed a war coalition. This means that the enemy is at home. The 26 county government has thrown its professed 'nueutrality' out the window. They are our principal enemy.

US Air Force planes are refuelling in Shannon Airport. An anti-imperialist, anti-UN movement should be built in Ireland which can appeal to workers in Shannon to refuse to service warplanes and to oppose overflights. This movement, if it was based around the unions and supported by their rank and file, would have the power to force the US planes out of this country.

We urge our readers to support these demands. If the Shannon refuelling was stopped, it would be a blow to the big bosses. More importantly it could be used as an example by anti-war campaigners in Britain and the USA.

Andrew Blackmore



## Unemployed Group to be Shafted

"Some one must have been telling lies about Joseph K, without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning" Franz Kafka - 'The Trial'

At the May National Executive meeting of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE) a proposal was put forward that the organisation should sponsor a resource centre for the unemployed based in Dublin and financed by the Irish Trade Union Trust (ITUT) (a part of SIPTU). All well and good you might think (though slightly taken aback that the union highups would suddenly show an interest in the unemployed). However it was proposed that the centre be staffed by Social Employment Scheme workers.

The INOUE which had consistently opposed these cheap labour schemes was now being asked to endorse this practice by the trade unions themselves. Several members of the executive immediately objected. Especially vocal in his opposition was one member of the Portobello Unemployed Action Group (one of the most active groups in the INOUE, and heavily involved in laying down the INOUE's position against SES schemes). However the Executive saw fit to pass the idea by a majority vote and sponsor the scheme.

The Portobello group circulated a letter in June informing all groups affiliated to the INOUE of their opposition to this scheme. They wrote to ITUT to protest but got no reply. After receiving no reply to a second

letter in August, they issued a press statement and received coverage in the 'Irish Press' and 'Irish Times'.

### SNIDE REMARKS

On August 14th the Portobello representative was asked not to attend an executive meeting by Mike Allen, secretary of the INOUE. Allen then circulated a letter attacking the group to all affiliates. He did this off his own bat without consulting the executive and ignoring laid down disciplinary measures in the INOUE constitution. Besides defending the use of SES workers by ITUT/SIPTU he added a number of snide remarks of his own.

He claimed that the Portobello group had



attempted "to embarrass the INOU" (which was never even mentioned in their press release) and he also referred to "other aspects of the groups activities", implying that they had been involved in some sinister underground activity. He further claimed that they would rather "do nothing" than aid and abet the INOU in its present dirty work.

### EXPLULSION THREAT

This a childish thing to say since the Portobello unemployed action group is extremely active having been involved in the INOU at all levels up to executive, having had extensive involvement in formulating the INOU's policy and being involved in INOU fund raising as well as producing its own bulletin and initiating a national campaign against the government's "Programme for National Recovery"!

At an emergency executive committee meeting a committee was set up to

"investigate" the group. They now find themselves under threat of expulsion for the crime of taking seriously the policies of the organisation to which they belong!

### £69 A WEEK

INOUE policy attacks SES schemes, correctly describing them as "cheap unprotected labour". Single SES workers are paid £69 a week, barely more than the maximum long-term dole if fuel vouchers, etc are taken into account. SES workers are entitled to no holidays or maternity leave, no sick pay and virtually no job security.

The INOU called for pay rates substantially higher than the long-term dole and trade union rates for a 39 hour week as well as full holiday, sickness and maternity benefits. Now Mike Allen defends ITUT's use of such workers.

ITUT offer a nudge-nudge wink-wink, under the counter improvement of

conditions over normal SES workers. This is a pathetic evasion. They should be leading a fight against the SES and as part of this giving their own employees full union pay and conditions. SIPTU the joint sponsors of the centre pay their own six national officers £62,500 a year each and then claim they haven't enough money to properly fund resource centres for the unemployed!!

We call on unemployed groups to defend the Portobello group for having the courage to put INOU policy into action. Mandate your delegates to the INOU national congress to call for their re-affiliation, after all they are fully paid up members who have done absolutely nothing wrong! Send protest letters to Mike Allen, General Secretary INOU, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2. The Portobello Unemployed Action Group can be contacted c/o 11, Upper Clanbrassil Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01-542166.

Conor Mc Loughlin

## 1916: What Are You Commemorating?

**THIS YEAR** marks the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising. There will be all sorts of commemorations throughout the country, organised by forces ranging from Fianna Fáil to Sinn Féin. We will hear a lot of talk about the "spirit of 1916", what does it mean today?

The rising was heroic. Some would even say stupid. It had little popular support. Most Irish people at the time believed that Irish men should be off fighting the Germans. It was widely thought that in return Home Rule would become a reality. The leaders of the rising were not too worried about this. They believed that the blood sacrifice was all that was needed to inspire future generations.

### NATIONALISTS

The rising itself was led by middle class nationalists. Their one and only objective was the liberation of the country from British rule. This has not yet been achieved. Indeed all the major parties, including the Workers Party, have given up on this. The Anglo-Irish Agreement was only the most recent attempt to come to terms with partition. For all the waffle about being the true inheritors of the

Rising, not one government of the Free State has implemented the limited demands of the rebels.

The Proclamation declared the following "The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities for all its citizens and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally."

### EQUALITY

Here we see a general liberal desire for equality. But far from equality, all we see around us in the Irish Republic is inequality. Workers are thrown on the dole and expected to live on a pittance while the bosses make enormous profits and eat in outrageously expensive restaurants. There are plush new private hospitals while workers get second rate health care. Women are denied the right to participate fully in society. Their role as

wives and childminders is enshrined in the Constitution.

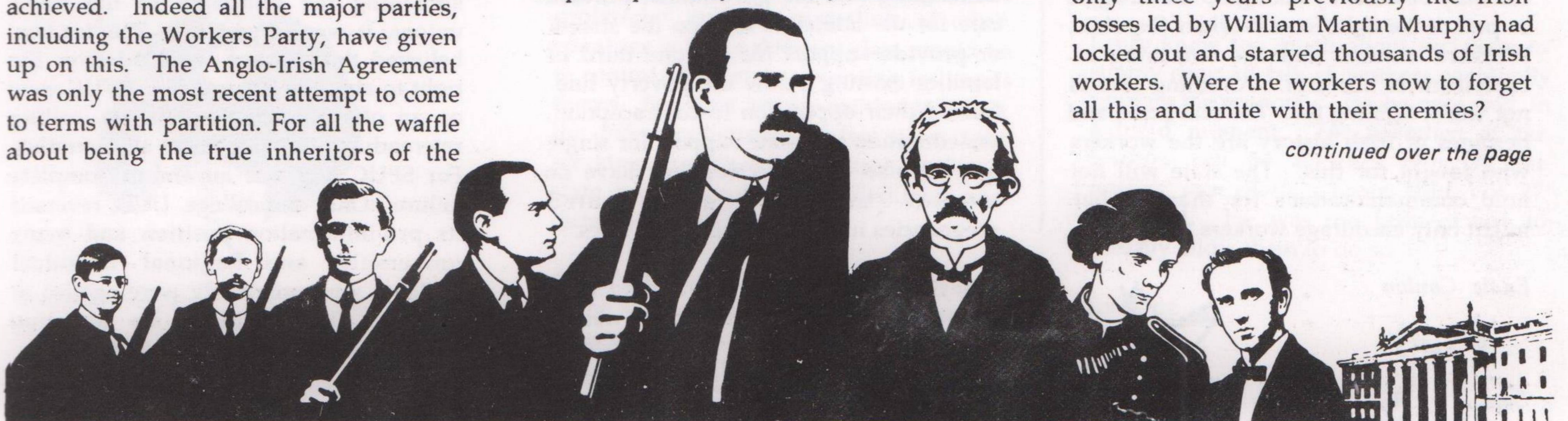
Far from cherishing all the children of the nation equally, working class children are denied the right to attend third level education yet their parents fork out a fortune in taxes to subsidise the children of the rich.

### NOT SOCIALIST

Not that the leaders of the Rising were socialist or anything like it. Their only concern was to get the British out. The new Ireland was clearly going to be capitalist. The Proclamation calls on all Irish people to unite, saying that all previous differences which "have divided a minority from the majority" were "carefully fostered by an alien government". So the only problem was British domination.

It obviously was a problem but this perspective totally overlooks the fact that only three years previously the Irish bosses led by William Martin Murphy had locked out and starved thousands of Irish workers. Were the workers now to forget all this and unite with their enemies?

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The presence of Connolly did not give the Rising a socialist tinge. Connolly had clearly decided that socialism should be put in cold storage. He believed that the World War was a great opportunity to strike at Britain. Also the defeat in the 1913 Lockout had left the working class demoralised. Rather than get stuck in and rebuild union organisation and militancy, Connolly chose to go with the nationalists. He was not fighting for socialism when he went into the G.P.O.

The executions following the Rising (rather than the Rising itself) and the British attempt to introduce conscription set the country alight. British rule was totally undermined by 1919. The War of Independence and the First Dáil not only showed that the majority of the people opposed the British, but also highlighted what Sinn Féin was fighting for.

### IRISH "SOVIETS"

In many parts of the country land was seized and "Soviets" were established in many workplaces. These workers wanted more than a united capitalist Ireland. They wanted the whole set-up changed. They wanted real control over their lives. But this did not fit into the policy of uniting all the Irish people. Sinn Féin land courts were established and the land was handed back to its former owners. The Countess Markiewicz, one of the heroines of the rising, warned against the "dangers of social revolution".

Today Sinn Féin claim, louder than anybody, to be the inheritors of 1916. Without a doubt they are. They carry on the tradition of armed struggle and the blood sacrifice. Despite all the left wing posturing they are still nationalists whose aim is to unite all the Irish people against the British. As in 1916 there are not just "Irish people". There are Irish workers and Irish bosses, and they have nothing in common.

### A WORKERS REPUBLIC

The task remains to free the country from British domination. For Anarchists this can only be done by taking up the struggle as part of the fight for a Workers Republic. Workers' control and the smashing of capitalism is our aim. Anything less is not worth fighting for. The real heroes and heroines of Irish history are the workers who fought for this. The state will not hold commemorations for them. That might only encourage workers today.

Eddie Conlon



## the Abortion Information campaign WHAT WENT WRONG?



**THE LAST COUPLE of years saw student unions in the 26 counties disobeying the courts and distributing information about abortion to any woman who wanted it. That campaign was defeated and has since faded away. Student members of the WSM talk about what happened.**

"The campaign against the Hamilton injunction which banned the provision of information about legal abortion services in other countries was one the Workers Solidarity Movement was involved in. We were involved not just because we are against censorship but also because we support the right of women to free, safe abortion on demand.

"For us the whole debate about abortion is essentially not one of when life starts but rather the right of women to control their fertility. It was only in the last century that abortion became a crime throughout Europe as one country after another passed anti-abortion laws.

### "RIGHT TO LIFE"?

"These laws were also obviously not about a 'right to life' for some of these states still executed kids for stealing bread. In a similar way the most prominent anti-abortionists today are never seen demanding that the government provide care for the homeless kids on the streets or provide support for the one third of families existing below the poverty line. Indeed their opposition to contraception, sex-education and state support for single parents also demonstrates they have no interest in changing unwanted pregnancies into wanted, planned ones.

"They oppose abortion in order to keep women in the home as the cheap 'welfare system' of the state, they oppose abortion in order to maintain the 'sanctity' of 'the family', the first model of oppression in society. Indeed in other countries, at

times where an expanding capitalism needed women in the workforce, the laws proscribing abortion were loosened. In Japan, for instance, abortion is just about free and on demand.

### BACK IN THE HEADLINES

"The loss of the anti-amendment campaign in 1983 was a crushing blow to all in this country fighting for women's rights. It was felt it would be many years before any large organisations would dare raise the question again. By last year however abortion was back in the headlines due to the courageous stance of student unions throughout the country.

"Despite being injuncted by SPUC and threatened with prison or fines 14 officers of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), T.C.D. and U.C.D. student unions published the telephone numbers of British abortion clinics. When SPUC took the students to court demonstrations outside the court resulted in SPUC backing down on jailing individual students. The case was referred to the European courts but the students were ordered to pay SPUC's court costs.

### THE 'LEADERS' RETREAT

"What happened next was a tragedy, instead of seizing the initiative and spreading the campaign to the trade unions, it was wound up. The 'leaders' believed that Europe would deliver the right to abortion information. SPUC went on an offensive in the colleges, calling referendums in one college after another. For SPUC this was an almost complete failure. Only one college, UCD, reversed its pro-information position and many universities and Regional Technical Colleges who previously were against or did not have policy on abortion information voted to distribute it.

"This provided a real national basis for a campaign, with student unions in every



sizable town in Ireland prepared to distribute information. At this time similar motions were being put through some trade union branch meetings by union activists. The campaign continued to be wound up however as those leading the student unions saw the courts as neutral arbitrators which would decide in their favour if the right arguments were made. They refused to see them as the instruments of class rule that they are.

### DON'T UPSET THE JUDGE!

"Those of us who argued for a fighting campaign based around the trade unions were led to lawyers who warned us of the danger of such actions upsetting the Judges. The success of such a campaign could not of course be guaranteed but it was clear that this was the first major opportunity to turn the tide since the referendum.

"U.S.I. stopped defying the law by switching publication of the national student paper, which included the telephone numbers of abortion clinics, to a legally un-connected organisation in the North. Soon after that the leadership of the TCD students union signed an agreement forced on them by their staff SIPTU section which stopped them providing the information. The majority of the staff were afraid that a breach of the injunction would lead to the seizure of student funds, which would threaten their jobs.

"At the USI national congress only student members of the WSM and a few others argued for the continuation of a campaign defying SPUC. Every time the vote came up we were defeated. This essentially buried the campaign within the student unions.

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**For information  
about abortion  
phone 01-6794700  
it's a woman's right to  
know**

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"In the closing weeks of the autumn term of 1990 WSM members in Trinity along with some other student activists tried to revive the campaign and raise some of the money to pay off the court costs. Although some money was raised this initiative failed to draw the numbers of students necessary to re-build the campaign. The week ended with a picket displaying the banned telephone number outside the Dail on December 8th and distribution of leaflets including the number in central Dublin on December 9th.

### GO TO THE UNIONS

"In the present circumstances it is clear that the student unions are unwilling to continue any campaign on the issue and so unless the initiative comes from some other quarter nothing is likely before the

European court case. Whatever the outcome of the case it is vital that in Ireland the campaign is re-built during it, drawing in as many trade union branches as possible.

"If your branch does not already have policy in favour of information you could help by submitting a motion committing it to fighting for this right and displaying the Women's Information Network number (01-6794700) on union notice boards.

### NO TRUST IN POLITICIANS

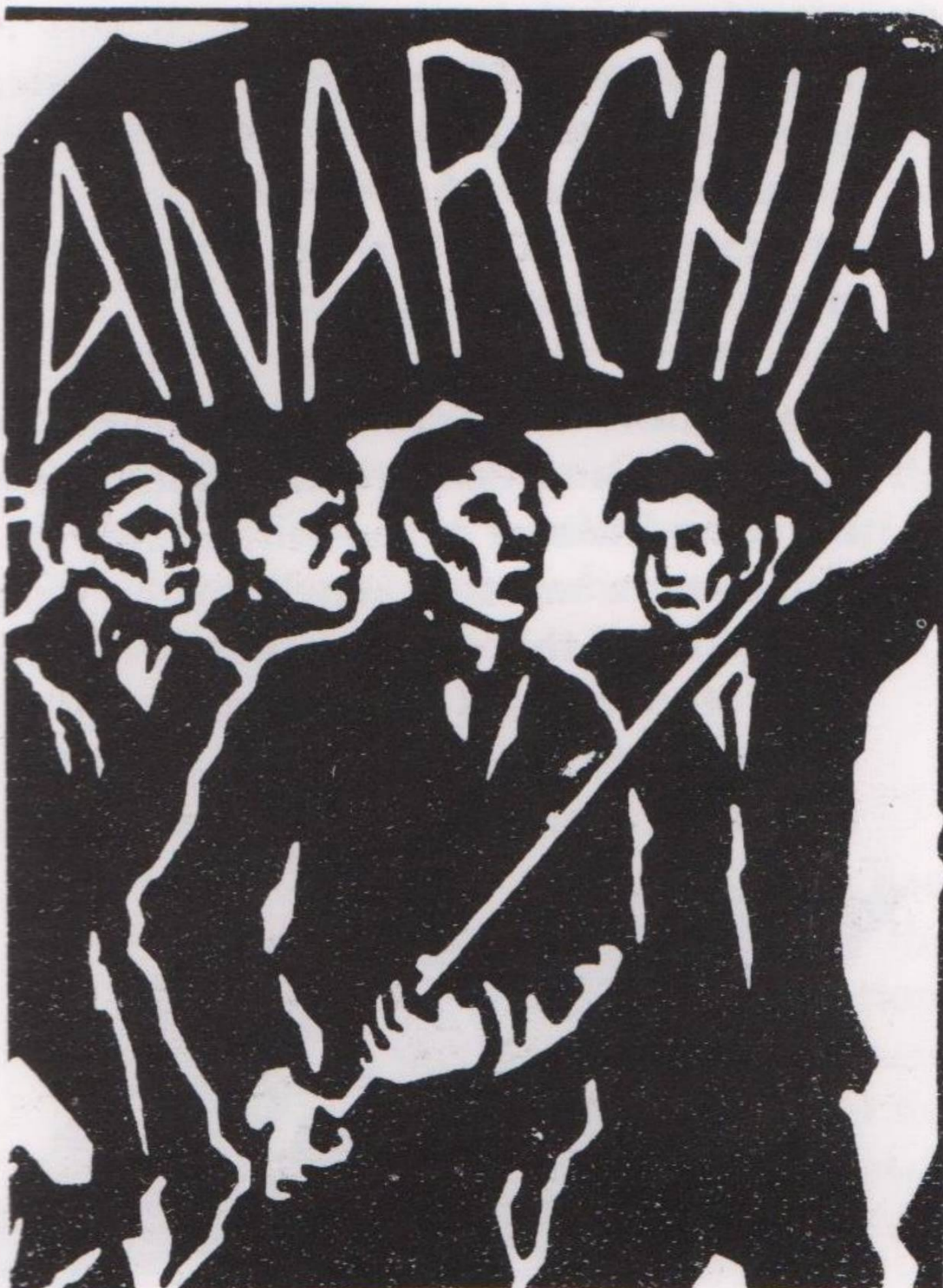
"If Europe decides in favour of the right to information a campaign will be needed to force the government to recognise this, lest it suffer the same fate as the Norris judgment. This judgment, passed in 1988, found the outlawing of homosexuality in Ireland illegal. The government has still not changed the law to comply with this judgement.

"If Europe throws the case out we will still fight to make information legally available. As well as being an end in itself, such a campaign will lay the basis for taking on the anti-abortion laws and breaking the back of clerical power in this country."



# Eastern Europe...Eastern Europe...

## The collapse of Stalinism and the return of the Anarchists



The collapse of the Eastern European regimes is presented by all on the right and many on the left as the end of socialism. Although these regimes called themselves socialist it is hard to see what this was based on. It was certainly not the case that the working class were in control of these societies.

Most workers there found - like workers in the west - that they had no role in decision making, and suffered from bad working conditions and bad pay. Working class people were faced with the same problems as we face here, lack of funding for their housing, healthcare and education. But special privileges for their bosses.

Like us in the West, when they tried to organise against this repression they were

subject to state harassment and imprisonment. The only difference was that most workers in the East had governments as their bosses whereas most workers in the West have some individual or group of shareholders as their boss.

### STATE CAPITALISM

Those that work for the State in CIE, An Post or the rest of the public service certainly don't think they work in socialist enterprises. Anarchists say these are two different forms of capitalism, market capitalism in the West and state capitalism in the East. Neither of them have anything to do with socialism.

The Soviet Union was not always like this. When the workers rose up in Russia in October 1917 this was not what they  
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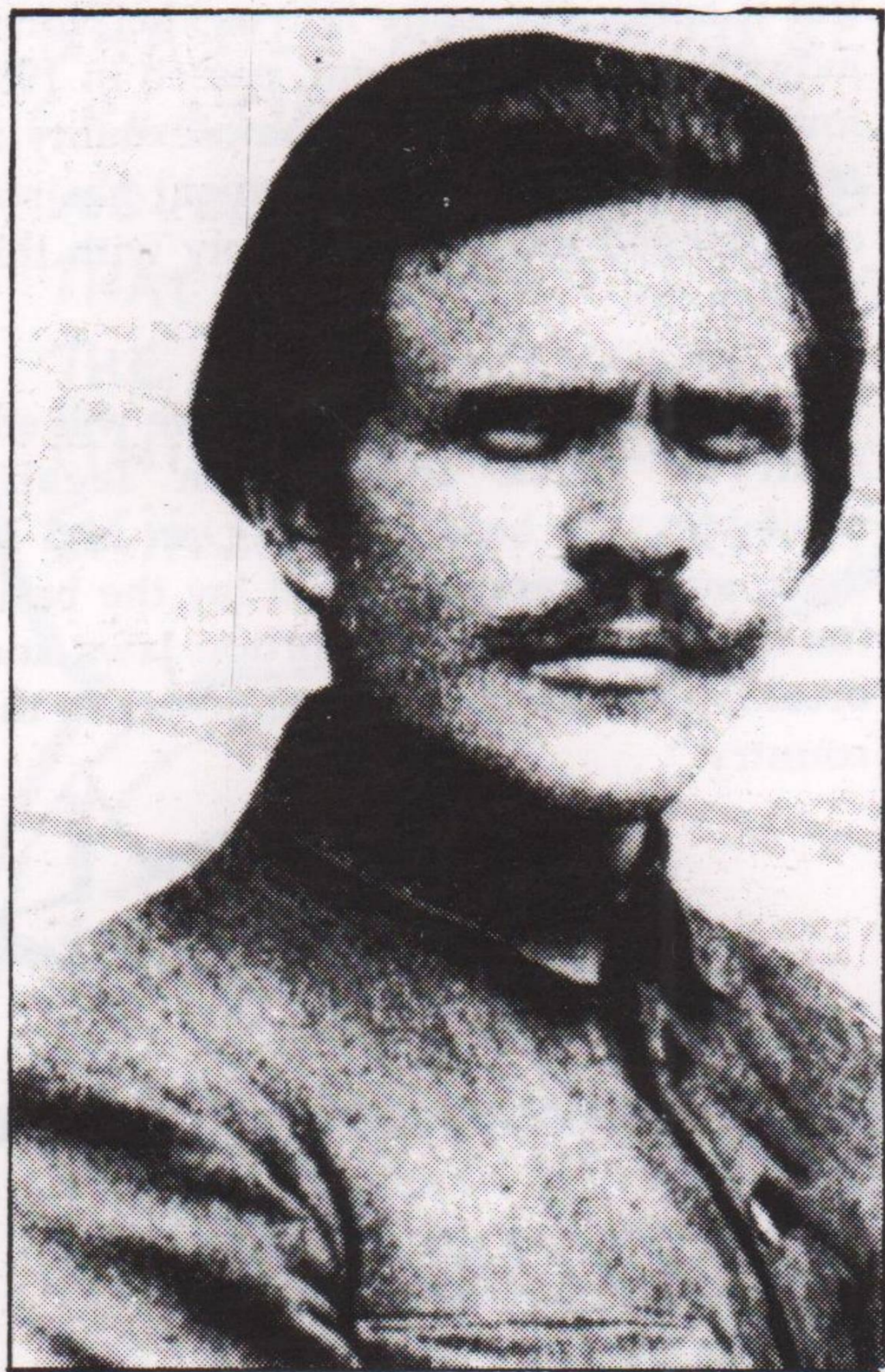


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fought for. They sought a society which would be controlled by the working class ("all power to the soviets") and in which there would be no war and no want (Bread, Peace, Land).

### ANARCHISTS AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The anarchists in Russia played an important part in the Revolution. There were four anarchists on the military revolutionary committee that co-ordinated the first days of the revolution and it was an anarchist that led the delegation that dissolved the constituent assembly.



NESTOR MAKHNO

From 1918 to 1921 the southern Ukraine was controlled by the anarchist Makhnovist army. The anarchists fought for power to be in the hands of the working class, through its organs - the soviets and factory committees. Indeed immediately after the revolution this was very much the case. The working class did control the factories, the soviets were democratic and workers set about organising the new society through these bodies.

### WHO WILL RUN SOCIETY?

However the anarchists were in a minority on the revolutionary left and the Bolsheviks under Lenin had a different scheme of running things. They believed that the workers were not capable of running society for themselves. First, they said, a 'transitional' period where the Bolshevik party ran the state on 'behalf' of the workers was necessary.

By the time the civil war had broken out in 1918 the Bolsheviks had started the repression of the working class that was

necessary for them to put their programme into effect. The election of officers in the army was stopped and military discipline, including saluting, returned. The factory committees were prevented from organising the distribution of goods and raw materials for themselves. Workers' control, they were told, just meant bookkeeping. Soviets that voted against Bolshevik decisions were banned and the other soviets were made powerless.

### ANARCHISTS EXECUTED

Naturally the anarchists argued against all this and so the Bolsheviks used the Cheka (secret police) to smash anarchist newspapers, ban their meetings and arrest the activists. Raids on anarchist clubs in Moscow and Petrograd resulted in 40 anarchists being killed. Hundreds more were to be executed in the Bolshevik run prisons. All this occurred before the outbreak of the Civil War and Allied intervention in 1918.

When the Civil War broke out the remaining anarchists still fought alongside the Bolsheviks. They recognised that as yet the Bolsheviks had not succeeded in completely crushing the working class and so the "whites" represented a much greater danger to the revolution. In the Ukraine the Makhnovists bore the brunt of the assaults first of Denikin and then of Wrangel, both white generals.

### TROTSKY AND BETRAYAL

Three times they were betrayed by the Bolsheviks and attacked from the rear, yet twice they went back and again entered into a treaty with the Bolsheviks. This clearly demonstrated their loyalty to the survival of the Revolution. The third time they were betrayed by the Bolsheviks they were destroyed, their best activists captured and executed along with many of the rank and file of the army by the Red Army under Trotsky's command.

In Russia the Bolsheviks had all but smashed independent working class organisation by 1921 and many more workers had been killed or fled the cities in the Civil war. A wave of strikes occurred in Petrograd and the Kronstadt garrison rose in support of the Petrograd workers issuing a list of demands which included the un-banning of the left wing parties and press.

### THE KRONSTADT UPRISING

The initial Red Army regiments the Bolsheviks sent against Kronstadt refused to fight or deserted to the Kronstadt rebellion. In a move which was to be repeated in Hungary '56 and Czechoslovakia '68, the Bolsheviks were forced to bring up regiments from outside the area. These did not speak the same

language as the garrison and so could not be won over to the side of the garrison. Just to be certain, hundreds of party bureaucrats and thousands of Cheka were also sent to the area.

The rebellion was crushed and those who did not flee to Finland across the ice were brutally executed. Ironically, this happened on the anniversary of the crushing of the Paris Commune. The remaining anarchists fled into exile to warn workers in the West of the Bolshevik counter-revolution, an event they realised would have dire effects on future workers' movements everywhere.

### YET MORE BETRAYALS

History has shown them correct as a wave of revolutions and risings have been betrayed or crushed by Bolshevism (or as it later became, Stalinism). In the West the Stalinists betrayed or distorted revolution after revolution. The best known of these was the Spanish revolution in 1936.

National liberation movements in other countries like Vietnam were controlled by their reliance on Russian support. In return they purged their own left wings and made peace with capitalism. In Eastern Europe the Stalinists crushed many workers risings from Berlin in 1953 to Hungary in 1956 to Tienanmen Square in 1989. Anarchists therefore welcome the collapse of the Stalinist states and the resultant erosion of the influence of Stalinism on the Western working class. A historical logjam which has impeded the working class cause since 1918 has been cleared.

### STALINISM GOES DOWN THE DRAIN

The collapse of the Stalinist system essentially occurred because the state capitalist, bureaucratically driven economy started to collapse. It was no longer capable of keeping up with western growth rates. Between 1986 and 1989 exports for all the western countries increased by 50%. In the Soviet Union they only increased by 11%.

Gorbachev tried to re-structure the economy using Perestroika (which meant reducing the size of the bureaucracy and launching a massive attack on the living standards of the working class). In order to protect himself from sections of the bureaucracy he was also forced to introduce a measure of Glasnost to gain





intellectual and workers support for Perestroika. He also needed to end the cold war, as it was a massive drain (17% of GNP) on the Soviet economy. So he pulled out of Afghanistan and reduced or stopped support for third world Stalinist controlled liberation movements.

**DESIRE FOR FREEDOM**

He discovered that once you give people a little freedom they quickly demand more and so has been forced to grant very much more than what he first intended. In Eastern Europe the Soviet army could no longer be used to crush workers' or civil rights movements as it had in the past without risking major conflict. This does not mean that he won't try to reassert control by military means. It does mean that there will be more resistance when he sends the troops in.

In the early days of the revolution in Romania armed workers' militias and factory councils had been created. Bush was quick to say that America would not oppose soviet intervention to 'restore stability' (i.e. crush any independent workers movements).

**BOSSSES' COMMON INTERESTS**

This clearly exposed the common interests of Western and Eastern bosses. In his time in power Gorbachev has banned strikes, crushed nationalist movements with the soviet army and defended the leading role of the party, remaining true in a fashion to the heritage of the Bolsheviks.

We are now in the situation where most of the 'communist' regimes have gone and been replaced with regimes favouring market capitalism. In many cases however, although a handful of individuals at the top may have changed the remainder of the old structures and personnel remain.

**THE SECRET POLICEMENS' BALL**

The East German Stasi now happily fulfil their role of suppressing the workers movement but now as part of the West German police. After the first 'democratic' East German parliament was elected it was found that forty of the M.P.'s were former Stasi officials, twenty four of this forty now being in the Christian Democrat CDU party.

In Hungary and Poland workers are commenting on the fact that the biggest individual buyers of state enterprises are ex-Communist Party officials and factory managers. The social democratic and christian democratic parties of all these governments are largely comprised of ex-Communist Party officials.

All this demonstrates that the events of the last couple of years have been more

about settling an argument inside the ruling class than advancing the cause of the workers. Indeed the workers are being asked to pay for the past mistakes of the bosses. The massive costs of restructuring the Eastern economies is being paid for by brutally slashing the living standards of the workers at every point.

Even in East Germany, the most healthy of these economies, it is estimated that 60% of East German industry will go to the wall causing mass unemployment. In Poland inflation over the six months from January 1990 reached 100% and the World Bank forecasts that unemployment in that country will rise to 1.7 million.

**SCAPEGOATS**

With workers not seeing any hope in discredited 'socialism' there is an increasing level of anti-semitism or other attacks on national minorities as they are scapegoated for the economic crisis of the country. In Hungary this is directed at Gypsies, in Romania against ethnic Hungarians, in East Germany against migrant workers and in Poland and the Soviet Union against Jews.

Workers in Eastern Europe will have to fight against such attacks, defending the various national minorities. They should accept no responsibility for the mess the economy is in, the crisis was created by the bosses and the bosses should pay for it. This means fighting at every level against unemployment, pay cuts due to rising

inflation, factory closures, loss of social services like healthcare, etc.

**CONFUSION ON THE LEFT**

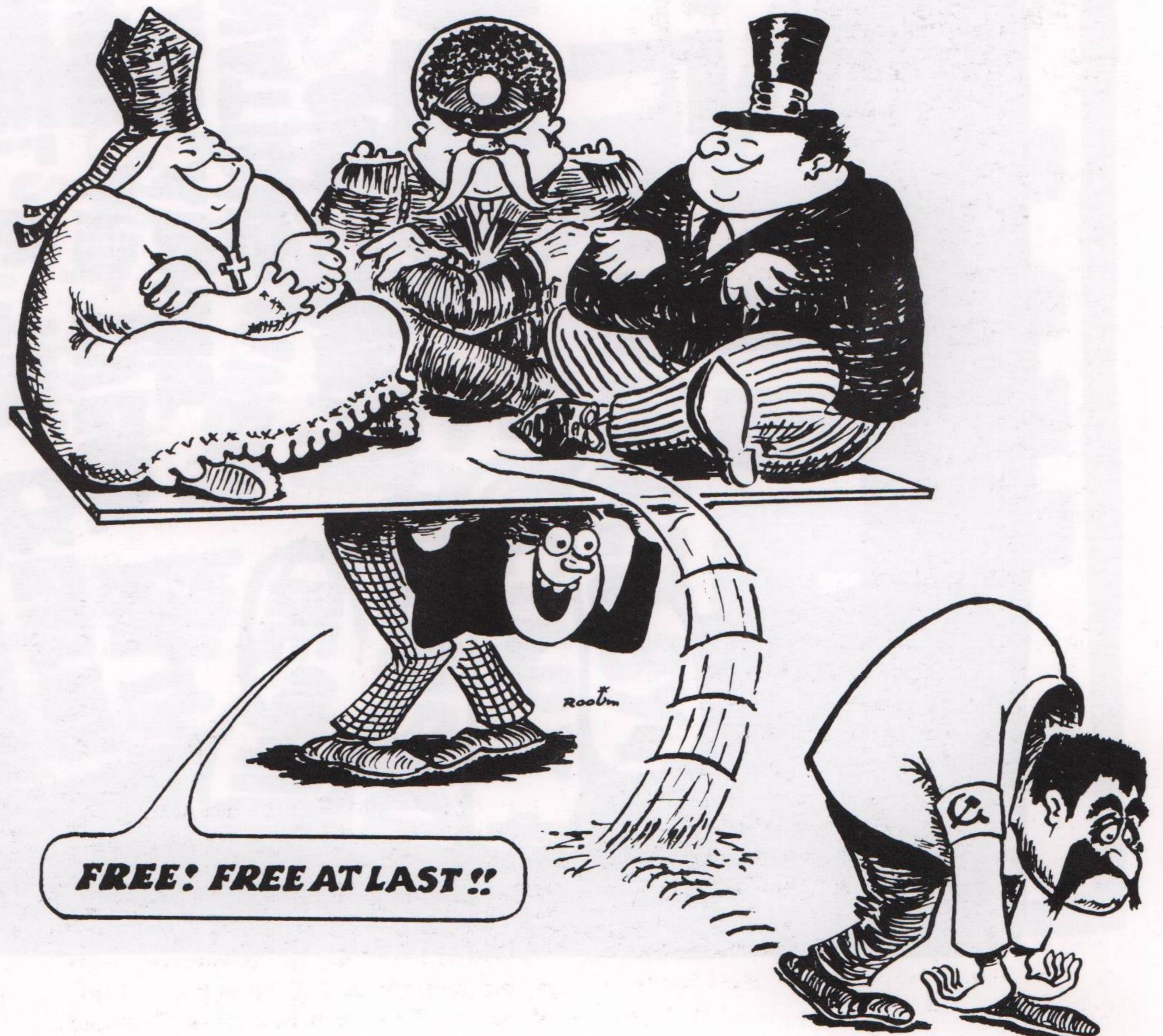
In the long term however they must be won to the fight for Anarchism as the only socialist tradition untarnished with dictatorship and attacks on the working class. Both Leninism and social democracy have exposed their uselessness as a tool of workers' struggle over this century.

A left that is independent of the Communist Parties is slowly appearing in all the East European countries. In many cases like that of the 'Left Alternative' in Hungary these movements are full of confusions about the role of the market and so talk about workers self-management in a market economy. However even here these illusions are being dispelled as they come into increasing contact with the realities of market capitalism and now talk of self-management at the regional and national levels.

**THE ANARCHISTS ARE BACK!**

Certainly most if not all of these movements have explicitly rejected the concept of the Leninist party. Some have progressed much further and all Eastern block countries have one or more explicitly anarchist movements.

continued on page 12





# JOE

# HILL

GÄVLE, SVERIGE  
 7 OKTOBER 1879  
 SALT LAKE CITY, U.S.  
 19 NOVEMBER 1915  
 UNION ORGANIZER  
 LABOR AGITATOR  
 CARTOONIST. POET  
 MUSICIAN. COMPOSER  
 ITINERANT WORKER  
 ARBETARSÅNGAREN

MURDERED BY THE  
 JUDICIARY IN  
 COLLUSION  
 WITH THE MINE  
 OWNERS WHO WISHED  
 TO SILENCE HIS SONGS  
 BUT THE SONGS ARE  
 STILL BEING SUNG!

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD  
 3435 N. SHEFFIELD AVENUE, Suite 202  
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60657 USA

IF WE WORKERS TAKE A NOTION  
 WE CAN STOP ALL SPEEDING TRAINS  
 EVERY SHIP UPON THE OCEAN  
 WE CAN TIE WITH MIGHTY CHAINS  
 EVERY WHEEL IN THE CREATION  
 EVERY MINE AND EVERY MILL  
 FLEETS AND ARMIES  
 OF ALL NATIONS  
 WILL AT OUR COMMAND  
**STAND  
 STILL**



SEAL 79



# The collapse of Stalinism

continued from page 9

Some of these include 'Autonomia' (Hungary), the Czechoslovakian Anarchist Union and Federacja Anarchistyczna (Poland). The most influential of these would appear to be the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS) in the U.S.S.R. which is named after the anarcho-syndicalist organisation crushed by the Bolsheviks in 1918 (when it had a membership of 50,000).

The K.A.S. today claims about 3,000 supporters and a paper with a circulation of about 40,000. It was active in the Siberian miners strikes of last year and is based in the major cities of Russia, Bylorussia and the Ukraine. Minor mistakes will no doubt be made by these movements as they develop and learn but ultimately they are laying the seeds of a successful revolutionary workers movement throughout Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.

Andrew Flood



# LENIN: Maker or Breaker of the Revolution?

THE COLLAPSE of the regimes in Eastern Europe has thrown up all sorts of questions about socialism. So let's go back to the beginning. The Russian revolution of 1917 was, initially, a shot in the arm for socialists everywhere. It was possible, it existed and now it only remained to imitate it everywhere else.

But as time passed it became obvious that something had gone terribly wrong. Instead of being the inspiring picture of our future, Russia had turned into a squalid class-ridden dictatorship.

As purge followed purge and the new rulers allocated themselves the best of everything, the socialist movement in the West floundered as it sought explanations

for what had gone wrong.

## FLAT EARTH SOCIETY

There were those who found the idea of an existing socialist society so attractive that they refused to believe all the evidence to the contrary. These were the people who wrote glowing articles about the mechanisation of agriculture while old Bolsheviks were being tortured in the cellars of Stalin's secret police.

With the upheavals in Eastern Europe most of these Stalinists with rose-tinted spectacles have had to start facing reality, albeit begrudgingly. Those who still refuse to do so are no different in attitude or degree of stupidity from the Flat Earth Society or the fanatics of the Bermuda Triangle.

Among those socialists who accept that something went badly wrong (and not just in the last year or two!), the debate continues. Why should a revolution led by dedicated followers of Lenin have produced an oppressive regime where workers had no rights and bureaucrats had all the power and privileges.

## TROTSKY

Two explanations seem the most worthy of consideration. The first, put forward by Trotsky and his subsequent followers, comes down to this: no amount of dedication on behalf of the communists could offset the dreadful weight of the material difficulties.



In such a backward country, beset by civil war on all sides, with much of its working class destroyed in battle, degeneration was avoidable. Perhaps if Lenin had lived, or if Trotsky had replaced him as the no.1 leader, things might have been different - but it was not to be.

### LENIN ...AND FATE

"Lenin certainly did not call for a dictatorship of the party over the proletariat, even less for that of a bureaucratized party over a decimated proletariat. But fate - the desperate condition of a backward country besieged by world capitalism - led to precisely this". Tony Cliff, *Lenin*, Vol.3, page 111.

"The proletariat of a backward country was fated to accomplish the first socialist revolution. For this historic privilege it must, according to all the evidences, pay with a second supplementary revolution against bureaucratic absolutism" Trotsky, *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*, page 278.

Thus according to the Trotskyists, it was hard material factors such as backwardness and the isolation of the young Bolshevik state which resulted in the tragic degeneration of the revolution. And don't forget "fate" - a most unusual term for 'scientific socialists' to use.

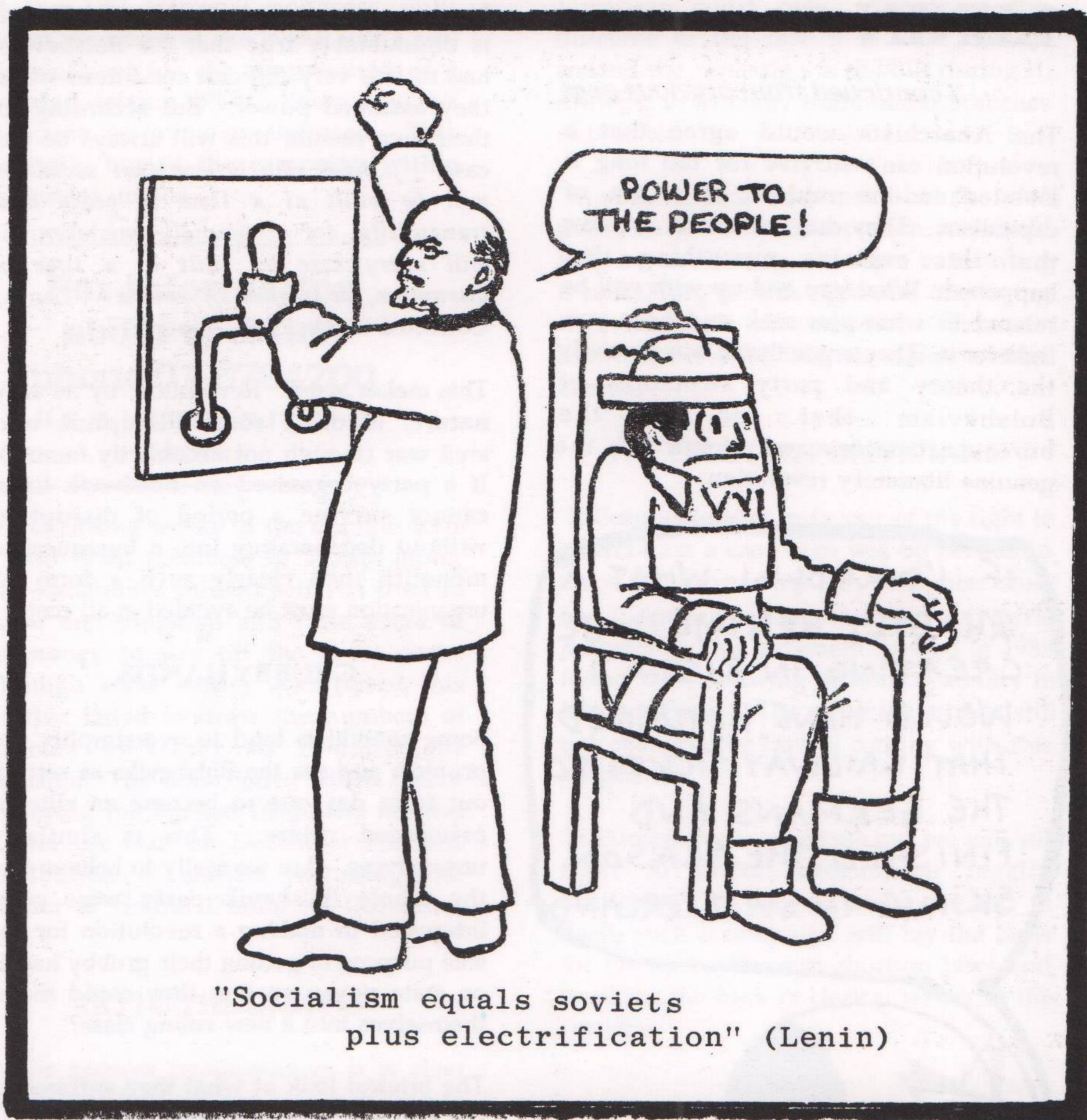
### ANARCHISTS

An alternative explanation of events in Russia is provided by the anarchists, who see the prime cause of the revolution's failure in the ideas of the Bolsheviks. The anarchist argument has the great advantage that it was not constructed to explain events after they took place but was formulated before and during the revolution.

Anarchists had always gone in for dire predictions of what would happen if revolutionaries attempted to take over the state instead of smashing it at the first opportunity. They understood two things: firstly, either the working class has direct and absolute control or some other class does; secondly, the state only serves the needs of a minority class which seeks to rule over the majority. No party could claim the right to make decisions for the working class, this would be the start of their progress towards becoming a new ruling class.

### TOLD YOU SO!!!

Forty five years before 1917, Michael Bakunin, the leading anarchist in the International Working Mens' Association, warned of just such a prospect. He saw that the authoritarians would interpret the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to mean their own dictatorship which "would be the rule of scientific intellect, the most



autocratic, the most despotic, the most arrogant and the most contemptuous of all regimes. They will be a new class, a new hierarchy of sham savants, and the world will be divided into a dominant minority in the name of science, and an immense ignorant majority" Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, page 93.

While a small minority of anarchists thought it would be possible to co-operate with the Bolsheviks, the majority were positive that, though the Bolsheviks did not set out to create a new class system, this was precisely what they were achieving. The anarchist Sergven recorded in 1918 that "The proletariat is being gradually enserfed by the state. The people are being transformed into servants over whom there has arisen a new class of administrators - a new class born mainly from the womb of the so-called intelligentsia. Isn't this merely a new class system looming on the revolutionary horizon". Paul Avrich, *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution*, page 123

### CENTRALISED POWER

And he could point a finger at the cause of this enserfment. "We do not mean to say ...that the Bolshevik party set out to create a new class system But we do say that even the best intentions and aspirations must inevitably be smashed against the evils inherent in any system of centralised power" *Ibid* page 124.

In other words, unless centralised state power is immediately destroyed, the revolution is doomed to create a new ruling class. Either the masses have real power or the state does. For the anarchists it was a case of either a federation of workers' councils where the power came from below or the authority of the party/state giving orders to the masses. The two could not co-exist.

### "SCIENTIFIC" SOCIALISTS

Thus the two most plausible explanations for the failure of the revolution are opposed to each other. On the one hand we have the Trotskyists who, being 'scientific socialists' see the cause of the failure in 'material circumstances' such as Russian backwardness, civil war and the failure of the revolution to spread across Europe. The Bolsheviks, had, it appears, understood Marxism and applied it correctly and yet were faced with events beyond their control that conspired to defeat them. Consequently the theory and party structure put forward by Lenin, remain, according to this school of thought, adequate today.



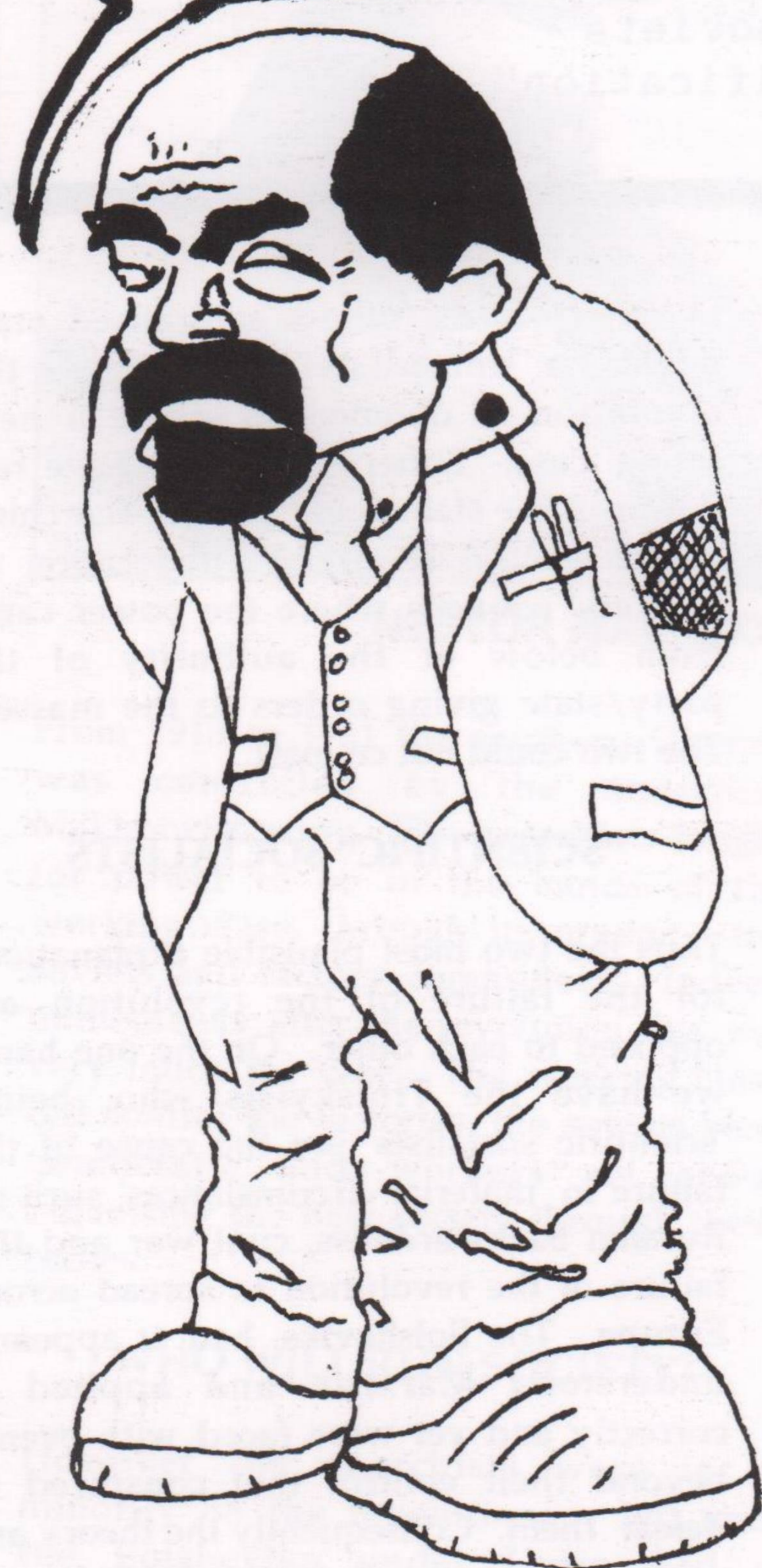


# LENIN

*continued from previous page*

The Anarchists would agree that a revolution can't survive for too long if isolated in the middle of a sea of capitalism. They don't, however, believe that this explains everything that happened. What you end up with will be related to what you seek and how you fight for it. They argue that it was precisely the theory and party structures of Bolshevism that led to the bureaucratisation and death of the genuine liberatory revolution.

IF I'D KNOWN WHAT A GHASTLY REGIME I'D BE CREATING IN RUSSIA I WOULD HAVE RETURNED THAT RAILWAY TICKET TO THE GERMANS AND FINISHED THE SEASON SKIING IN SWITZERLAND



Neither argument is entirely satisfying. It is undoubtably true that the Bolsheviks had to face very difficult conditions when they assumed power. But according to their own mentor this will always be the case. "...those who believe that socialism will be built at a time of peace and tranquillity are profoundly mistaken: it will everywhere be built at a time of disruption, at a time of famine. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.27 page 517.

This makes sense. Revolution, by its very nature, involves some disruption and civil war (though not necessarily famine). If a party organised on Bolshevik lines cannot survive a period of disruption without degenerating into a bureaucratic monolith then clearly such a form of organisation must be avoided at all costs.

### GRUBBY HANDS

Some anarchists tend to oversimplify the problem and see the Bolsheviks as setting out from day one to become an elite of privileged rulers. This is similarly unsatisfying. Are we really to believe that the whole Bolshevik party were only interested in making a revolution for the sole purpose of getting their grubby hands on state power so that they could make themselves into a new ruling class?

The briefest look at what they suffered in the Tsarist prisons, in Siberia, in exile and later in Stalin's purges suggests that such a notion is highly suspect! We must accept that most of them were courageous men and women with high ideals.

### WHAT POLITICS?

Nevertheless there is a great strength to the anarchist case. It points to errors in the theory and practice of Bolshevism itself. It says that no matter how honest their intentions, their politics still lead them to be objectively opposed to the interests of the working class. It turns our attention to the theories of those who led Russia from workers' control to Stalinism.

It is too often taken for granted among socialists that we know what the Bolsheviks stood for. Before we can understand why things went wrong in Russia we need to know what exactly the Bolsheviks proposed to do on coming to power, what kind of structure they put forward, what form they thought the revolution would take, and what kind of society did they set out to create.

### FROM LENIN'S MOUTH

It is particularly interesting to look at the ideas of V.I.Lenin - he was the unquestioned leader of the Bolsheviks and is still regarded as the greatest ever socialist, after Marx, by the vast majority of those who see themselves as revolutionary socialists.

It can be a dangerous practice to pick quotations for use in an article such as this. Who is to say that they are not taken out of context. To allow the reader to make up his/her own mind all sources are provided so that the complete piece can be read if desired. It is felt necessary to use Lenin's own words lest there be an accusation that words are being put in his mouth.

### LENIN'S SOCIALISM

The starting point must be Lenin's conception of 'socialism': "When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organises according to plan the supply of raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three fourths, of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when raw materials are transported in a systematic and organised manner to the most suitable places of production, sometimes situated hundreds of thousands of miles from each other; when a single centre directs all the consecutive stages of processing the materials right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when the products are distributed according to a single plan among tens of millions of customers.

"...then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production, and not mere 'interlocking'; that private economic and private property relations constitute a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed, a shell which may remain in a state of decay for a fairly long period ...but which will inevitably be removed" Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.22, page 303.

This is an important passage of Lenin's. What he is describing here is the economic set-up which he thought typical of both advanced monopoly capitalism and socialism. Socialism was, for Lenin, planned capitalism with the private ownership removed.

"Capitalism has created an accounting apparatus in the shape of the banks, syndicates, postal service, consumers' societies, and office employees unions. Without the big banks socialism would be impossible.

The big banks are the "state apparatus" which we need to bring about socialism, and which we take ready made from capitalism; our task is merely to lop off

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what characteristically mutilates this excellent apparatus, to make it even bigger, even more democratic, even more comprehensive. Quantity will be transformed into quality.

"A single state bank, the biggest of the big, with branches in every rural district, in every factory, will constitute as much as nine-tenths of the socialist apparatus. This will be country-wide book-keeping, country-wide accounting of the production and distribution of goods, this will be, so to speak, something in the nature of the skeleton of socialist society. Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol.26 page 106.

### HEY PRESTO!

This passage contains some amazing statements. The banks have become nine-tenths of the socialist apparatus. All we need to do is unify them, make this single bank bigger, and "Hey Presto", you now have your basic socialist apparatus.

Quantity is to be transformed into quality. In other words, as the bank gets bigger and more powerful it changes from an instrument of oppression into one of liberation. We are further told that the bank will be made "even more democratic". Not "made democratic" as we might expect but made more so. This means that the banks, as they exist under capitalism, are in some way democratic. No doubt this is something that workers in Bank of Ireland and AIB have been unaware of.

For Lenin it was not only the banks which could be transformed into a means for salvation. "Socialism is merely the next step forward from state capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state capitalist monopoly which is made to serve the interests of the whole people and has to that extent ceased to be

DON'T YOU KNOW THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BY THE WORKING CLASSES THEMSELVES?



capitalist monopoly" Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 25 page 358.

"State capitalism is a complete material preparation for socialism, the threshold of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history

between which and the rung called socialism there are no immediate rungs". Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 24 page 259.

### BUILDING CAPITALISM

This too is important. History is compared to a ladder that has to be climbed. Each step is a preparation for the next one. After state capitalism there was only one way forward - socialism. But it was equally true that until capitalism had created the necessary framework, socialism was impossible. Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership saw their task as the building of a state capitalist apparatus.

"...state capitalism would be a step forward as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will become invincible in our country" Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 27 page 294.

NO, BUT IF YOU HUM A FEW BARS I'LL TRY AND FAKE IT



"While the revolution in Germany is still slow in "coming forth", our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare no effort in copying it and not shrink from adopting dictatorial methods to hasten the copying of it" Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 27 page 340.

### WHAT DIFFERENCE?

The sole difference between state capitalism under the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and the capitalism of other countries is that a different class would be in control of the state, according to Lenin's theory. But what, we are entitled to ask, is the difference between the two states if the working class does not control the Soviet state, becomes in fact controlled by it, and dictated to by it?

Anarchists have always held that the state, in the real sense of the word, is the means by which a minority justifies and enforces its control over the majority.

Lenin underlined this point when in March 1918 he told the Bolshevik Party

that they must "...stand at the head of the exhausted people who are wearily seeking a way out and lead them along the true path of labour discipline, along the task of co-ordinating the task of arguing at mass meetings about the conditions of work with the task of unquestioningly obeying the will of the Soviet leader, of the dictator during the work. Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 27 page 270.

### NO TIME FOR SOCIALISM!

Lenin could not accept that working class people were more than capable of running their own lives. He continually sought justifications for the dictatorship of his party.

In June 1918 he informed the trade unions that "there are many...who are not enlightened socialists and cannot be such because they have to slave in the factories and they have neither the time nor the opportunity to become socialists" Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 27 page 466.

The month previously he had written "Now power has been siezed, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat...". Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 27 page 346.

### WHOSE PARTY?

One could be forgiven for thinking that the party which had siezed power was not a party of the proletariat when it so clearly distrusted them, dissolved their workplace councils, suppressed the rising of the Kronstadt workers in 1921, when it gradually strangled criticism from within its own ranks, and when its own leader flatly instructed the workers in October 1921:

"Get down to business all of you! You will have capitalists beside you, including foreign capitalists, concessionaries and leaseholders. They will squeeze profits out of you amounting to hundreds per cent; they will enrich themselves, operating alongside of you. Let them, Meanwhile you will learn from them the business of running an economy, and only when you do that will you be able to build up a communist republic." Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 33 page 72.

Lenin knew too much about socialism to simply drop all talk of workers eventually running the economy. As he once said, in a lucid moment: "The liberation of the workers can be achieved only by the workers' own efforts". Lenin, *Ibid*, Vol. 27 page 491. He was too little of one to actually allow them to do so.

Joe King





# REVIEW

**THE BOLSHEVIKS AND WORKERS' CONTROL** by Maurice Brinton, (Solidarity, London). £3.95 inc. postage from the WSM Bookservice.

If a revolution were to occur in Ireland what exactly do we think would happen, how do we think it would come about and in what way would society be run. What changes would be made? These questions are of fundamental importance to any socialist, and in many ways the answers can be found by looking back at the successes and failures of earlier revolutions.

## WHAT DID HAPPEN IN RUSSIA?

This book details the events leading up to October 1917 and the course the revolution took until the 10th Communist Party Congress in March 1921. The Russian Revolution is of fundamental importance to socialists today as it provides a model of how capitalism can be overthrown. However when looking at the Soviet Union, it is obvious that the Russian Revolution ultimately failed. The position of the working class there is no better than here in the West. By looking at the arguments made then, we can learn from the mistakes of the past, so next time the revolution will progress in a more successful way.

## WORKERS' CONTROL

One of the key demands of the working class in 1917 was 'All power to the soviets' and similarly revolutionaries today call for 'workers control'. Unfortunately today, as in 1917, the term means very different things to different groups. The question of workers' control today and the controversies that surrounded it at the time of the revolution are not just theoretical questions. As Brinton states "self management is what the revolution is all about". Discussion of the Bolsheviks, of the politics and parts played by Lenin and Trotsky aren't just dead and academic exercises; they epitomise the ideologies that many socialists hold today.

The central argument of the book is, in Brinton's own words;

"In 1917 the Russian workers created organs (Factory Committees and Soviets) that might have ensured the management of society by the workers themselves. But the soviets passed into the hands of the Bolshevik functionaries. A state apparatus, separate from the masses, was

rapidly reconstituted. The Russian workers did not succeed in creating new institutions through which they would have managed both industry and social life. This task was therefore taken over by someone else, by a group whose specific task it became. The bureaucracy organised the work process in a country of whose political institutions it was to become master."

## MISTAKES?

Furthermore Brinton points out that this wasn't due to some mistake or miscalculation on behalf of the Bolsheviks. It wasn't due to conditions beyond the Bolsheviks' control, such as the civil war, the famine or the destruction of the working class that followed. The Bolsheviks were clear in arguing for this form of organisation before the revolution.

The Factory Committees were set up after the February revolution, often taking over the management of factories, as the original owners had fled. They set as their tasks:

"...The factory committee controls managerial activity in the managerial, administrative, economic and technical fields.."

"...The factory committees must take over production, protect it, develop it..."

"...all decrees of the factory committees were declared compulsory for the factory administration as well as for the workers and employers..."

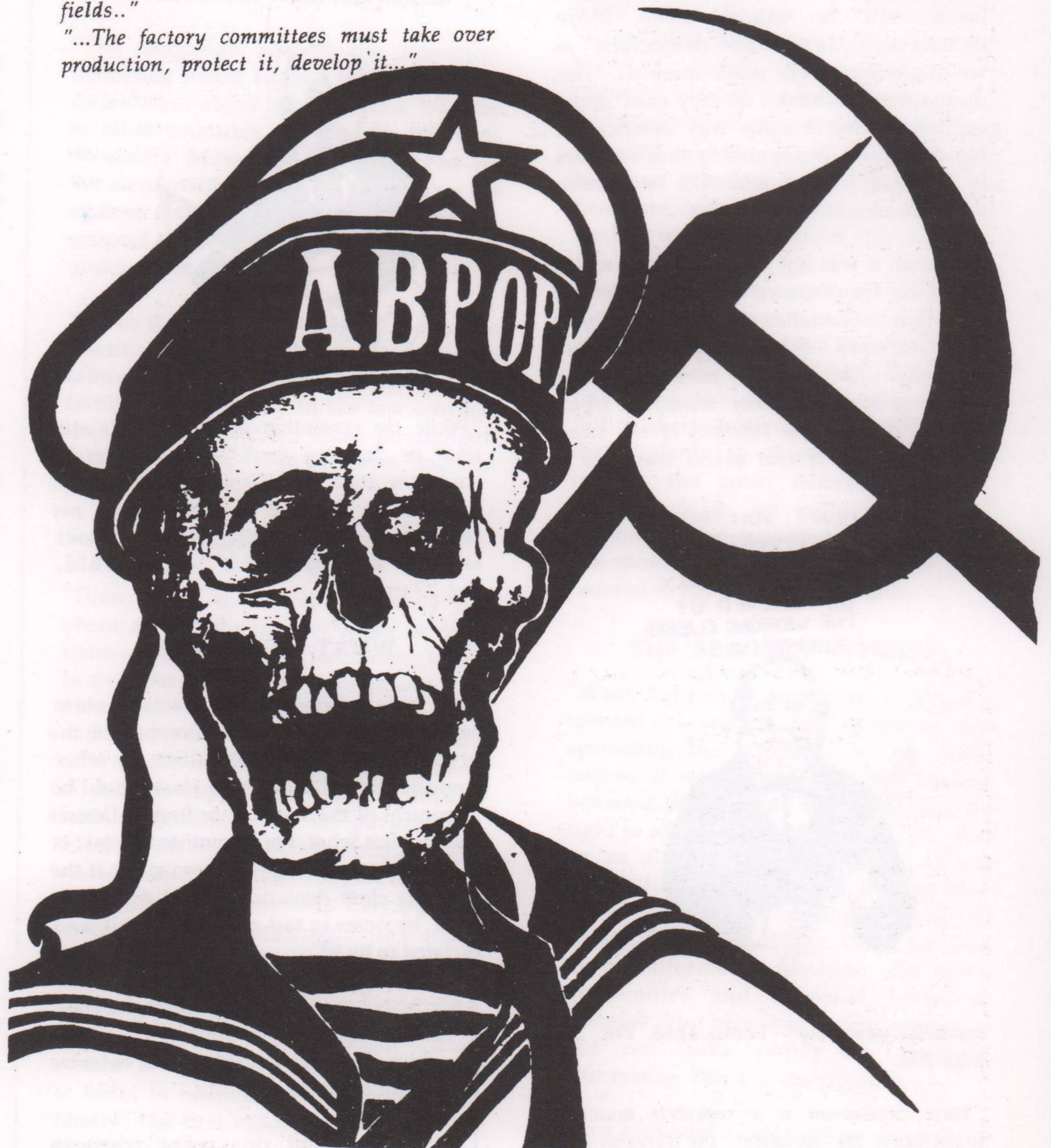
## LENIN

Lenin saw workers' control in somewhat different terms.

"...Workers Control can become a national all-embracing, omnipresent, extremely precise and extremely scrupulous accounting (emphasis in the original) of the production and distribution of goods"

Lenin equated workers control with 'accounting' (i.e. checking the implementation of decisions taken by others). Nowhere in his writing does he ever equate workers' control with fundamental decision making (i.e. with the initiation of decisions relating to production).

Lenin also saw the role of control as a "curb on the capitalist" and "a means of preventing collapse" and more significantly as a "prelude to nationalisation". Instead of seeing workers control as the ultimate goal of socialism, he saw it as a handy step





towards having the means of production controlled by state power (rather than by the workforce). On the other hand the factory committees proclaimed that they must become "organs of the revolution...aiming at consolidating its' victories". ..... It was argued by the factory committees that "they, not the state should now administer".

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

However the Bolsheviks succeeded in taking power away from the working class, away from the point of production. Indeed this began to happen well before the Civil War began in 1921.

The first soviet was dissolved on November 9th 1917. On November 14th, the first layer of the Bolshevik controlled bureaucracy was installed. Instead of the factory committees organising centrally and controlling production, the 'All Russian Council of Workers Control' was installed, giving the factory committees only 5 seats out of 21. The others went to trade unions. This was a clear attempt to by-pass the committee movement.

This 'All Russian Council', for the most part separate from the workers themselves, was given the function of managing production. It is the separation of productive labour from the means of production that leads to class society. Once this occurred the Russian revolution was on its way out and state capitalism on the way in.

Brinton details the steps the Bolsheviks took in order to ensure that power lay with them and their state, rather than with the working class. Discussion about this period of history and the facts around it have often been conveniently ignored. This book is extremely detailed but also easy to read. If you want to find out what the Bolsheviks did (and not just talked about), this book is a must for your bookshelf.

Aileen O'Carroll

### War News

Workers Solidarity Movement members active in the anti-war movement have produced a bulletin, *War News*. The first issue covered the reason the Western powers went to war, the role of the United Nations, why we don't line up with the Iraqi regime, the refuelling at Shannon and the Russian invasion of Lithuania.

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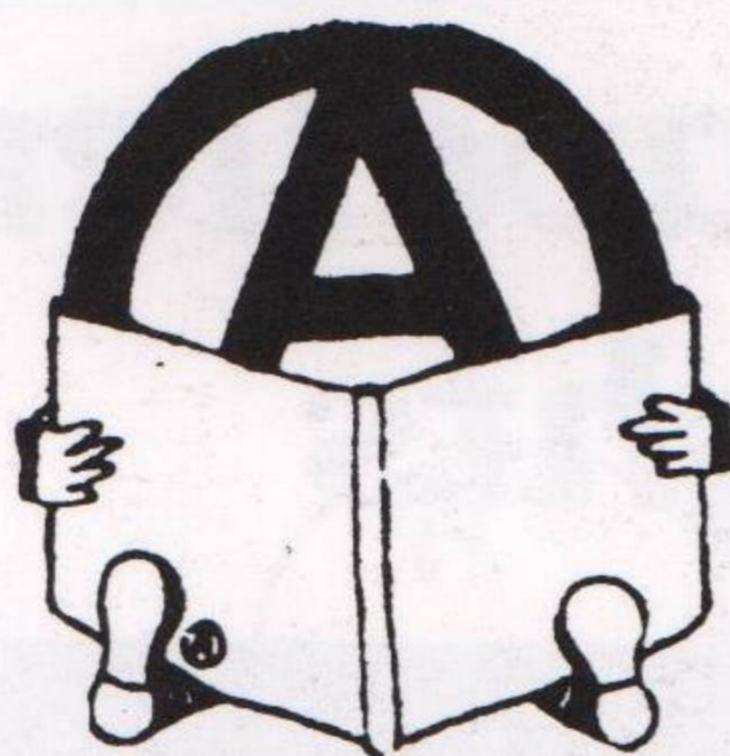
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### ANARCHISM

*Daniel Guerin, IR£4.95.*

Written by the noted French anarchist who died last year, it is a good introduction to the essential ideas of anarchism. Explains why anarchists oppose the State, criticises authoritarian socialism, puts forward a democratic alternative to the parliamentary system. How the ideas were put into practice by the anarchist movement in Russia, Spain and Italy. *New Statesman* described it as "perhaps the best short introduction to anarchism there is".



### FIGHTING THE REVOLUTION 1

*IR£1.10*

Short biographies of three revolutionary military commanders, two of whom, Makhno and Durruti, were anarchists. Nestor Makhno fought in the Ukraine during the Russian revolution and Buenaventura Durruti fought in the Spanish Civil War. The third is Emiliano Zapata who fought in the Mexican revolution until he was killed in 1919. A little bit of interesting history along with food for thought about anarchist organisation and how it deals with the military requirements of a war situation.

### FIGHTING THE REVOLUTION 2

*IR£1.30*

Largely a selection of writings by Peter Kropotkin, the anarchist theoretician. About half the material is about the Paris Commune in 1871 which was the first time workers took over rather than just rebelling. Included is the defence statement of Louise Michel, an anarchist sentenced to life transportation to New Caledonia for her part in the Commune.

### THE IRRATIONAL IN POLITICS

*Maurice Brinton IR£1.50*

"How modern society manipulates its slaves into accepting their slavery". Why people accept authoritarian, hierarchical and class society. Looks at how the ideas of the ruling class are passed on to the rest of us. An appendix is an excerpt from Clara Zetkin's *Reminiscences of Lenin* which illustrates an aspect of Lenin's thinking little known – or deliberately 'forgotten' – by all the Leninists who tried to put themselves at the head of the movement for women's liberation.



### ABC OF ANARCHISM

*Alexander Berkman, IR£2.00*

Answers those questions you always wanted to ask: is anarchism violent, can we really live without government, how would society be organised, who can change society, is a revolution necessary?

### YOU CAN'T BLOW UP A SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

*Author unknown IR£1.20*

Subtitled "*The Anarchist Case against Terrorism*". Why anarchism and the activities of terrorist groups are incompatible. Written in Australia, it draws on examples from there as well as Europe and the Americas.

### IWW SONGS

*IR£2.00*

Produced by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a great collection of labour songs including ones by Woody Guthrie and Joe Hill. Forty one 'songs to fan the flames of discontent'. 'Union Maid', 'Banks of Marble', 'The Rebel Girl', 'Casey Jones the Union Scab' and many more tunes to set the bosses teeth on edge.



# The Truth about Mulhuddert

**A STORM of protest blew up last October when Dublin County Council proposed a huge "temporary" halting site for Travellers at Mulhuddert. The protest came from local residents and Travellers, or did it? To understand what the issues really are it is necessary to take a brief look at the background.**

There are still over 200 Traveller families living in fields and on roadsides in Greater Dublin area, waiting for suitable accommodation. The development of halting sites by Dublin Corporation and County Council has been pathetically slow since the County Council adopted its plan in 1984 for five-family halting sites.

The idea behind their plan was that five Traveller families per area was sufficient to "spread the burden", essentially a racist concept. Travellers are seen as the problem, whose numbers in each area must be restricted, rather than as people who have problems with lack of accommodation and lack of access to a whole range of services and rights taken for granted by the majority of us.

## WITHOUT TOILETS

The biggest concentration of Travellers since the early 1980s has been in Blanchardstown and Clondalkin. This is because there is still open space in these suburbs. These families, over 90 in Clondalkin and up to 100 in Blanchardstown, live in fields without toilets, without hot water and with only one or two skips for rubbish.

The few efforts made by the County Council to build five-family sites in Leopardstown and Templeogue have been met with fierce opposition from residents' groups, and this has been the pattern throughout the country wherever accommodation for Travellers is proposed.

## GHETTO

So when Dublin County Council wanted to build a massive "temporary" halting site in Mulhuddert the usual opposition was expected. However this development was different. The Council wanted to put eighty families into one field, and give them next to no facilities. All that was to be provided were cold taps, a few skips and one toilet for each five families. There was to be no electricity. Big ten feet high mounds of earth were to be erected around each family group to keep them out of the sight of local people.

The local residents' association

immediately objected and placed a 24-hour picket on the site which prevented work being done. The local Travellers also opposed the site, but for different reasons - the lack of facilities and the size of the site. Most Travellers prefer to live in groups of ten to fifteen families, though this does not mean that only that number should live in an area the size of Blanchardstown. Both residents and Travellers opposed the site for different reasons, at least initially.

**In Ireland  
the fight  
against  
racism  
starts with  
the fight  
for  
Travellers'  
Rights**

## NUMBERS GAME

A joint Travellers & Residents Committee was formed but until the end of the protest campaign there was little real Traveller involvement. This was basically due to some of the residents deliberately misrepresenting the reason for the Travellers opposition. Their demand for "five and ten family sites only" and or a ten family site in Blanchardstown was essentially racist because it meant that only ten of the hundred families living in Blanchardstown had a right to accommodation there.

What did the residents group propose should happen to the other eighty or ninety families? That they should be evicted? To where? The Travellers did not accept this as fair or reasonable. They wanted sufficient small, properly serviced sites to cater for all the families who wanted to live in the area. Quite a different position!

## PARTIAL VICTORY

A public meeting, attended by both residents and Travellers, was held in December and these contradictory positions were finally clearly stated. The final outcome was a victory of sorts: a ten family permanent site with proper facilities, a fifteen family temporary site, and emergency facilities (taps and a hard surface) for all the other Traveller families.

This last demand was put by Travellers at the public meeting as their price for supporting the residents group, several of whose members faced jail for breaking a court injunction ordering them to end the picket at the site. Working class residents and Travellers did come together on an anti-racist basis, but it was very late in the campaign.

## STRANGE SOCIALISTS

The role of the Labour Party's *Militant* tendency throughout the whole episode was very interesting. Joe Higgins, one of their leading members, was secretary of the residents' group. The *Militant* newspaper and its members lent their support to an essentially racist slogan and to what was, until near the end, a basically racist campaign. Strange behaviour for a tendency which endlessly proclaims its 'socialism'.

Travellers distrusted the joint committee because of bitter experience of being used in other areas, used to give a credibility to groups who really wanted to stop plans for halting sites regardless of size or services. Some mutual understanding and common activity did take place eventually, and this is very welcome.

It remains to be seen whether this will now lead to anti-discrimination campaigns and protests against refusals to serve Travellers in pubs, shops and banks. Will there be a fight against those school managers who try to keep Traveller children out of 'their' schools? We hope so. We want to see working class people and Travellers fighting together for a better life for all.

Patricia McCarthy



## GOOD MANNERS

COMPANIES in South Korea and now in the rest of South-East Asia have initiated a process of decentralisation of production into the countryside. The purpose? As ever, to be able to pay as little for labour as possible. And the workers aren't taking it lying down.

The struggles that have been taking place have involved strikes, factory occupations and hunger strikes - but our Asian colleagues have added a personal touch to the class struggle. At the end of conflicts they demand a letter of apology from the bosses. Here is an example from a Director of a company that tried to lock-out its workforce:

*"To the officials of the workers union of AZIA SWANY. When I closed down the company I broke the contract between the company and the union and I inflicted sufferings on 217 workers. I assume full responsibility, and with all my heart I beg pardon from the workers AZIA SWANY and the South Korean nation.*

*As of now, I will respect agreements, I will continue negotiations sincerely and I undertake to resolve this conflict."*

## No Blood For Oil!

The No to War in the Gulf Campaign is supported by a wide range of organisations and individuals, including the Workers Solidarity Movement. We urge our readers to support all the major anti-war protests and to join their local action group of the campaign.

For information about the next meeting of the action group in your area write to: NTWGC, P.O.Box 1648, Dublin 8.

The WSM say:

- Western Troops Out of the Gulf
- Stop the Refuelling at Shannon
- Iraq Out of Kuwait

# 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.

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As part of our fight for anarchism we are involved in the struggles for higher wages, for trade union democracy, for women's 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 people's right to fight back. But we are not nationalists, we do not want to merely get rid of the border. We want to unite our class and create a totally new Ireland.

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I want more information about the WSM.

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## A touch of class

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around talking rubbish about a new 'sub class' and a 'natural conflict' between those with jobs and those without.

Class consciousness, an awareness of our common interests and the potential we have for real change, needs to be encouraged and strengthened. This is one of the tasks of an anarchist organisation.

The struggle between the classes will only come to an end when the boss class and the state which protects their privileged position are overthrown. Nationalisation or state control of the means of production would not mean an end to class society. It would simply mean the replacement of individual capitalists by a bureaucratic state capitalism. Like their predecessors they would be in control and would have the final say about what happens to the wealth we

create. Whether they like it or not this would be the logical outcome of the statist politics of the Workers Party, Sinn Fein and the Labour Left.

### THE WAY TO FREEDOM

Only the direct control and management of production by the working class themselves can end the class division. A classless society is not possible without this.

Everyone affected by a decision should have a say in making that decision. Production in an anarchist society would be managed by an elected workers' council in each workplace. Planning on a higher level would be subject to the agreement of delegates from the councils, delegates who would be subject to a mandate from their members and instantly recallable if they don't do the job they were elected to do. In such a society the wealth would be created and managed for the benefit of all. There would be no elite of bosses or rulers. This is the vital precondition for real freedom.

Alan MacSimóin



WHY IS THE concept of class so important to anarchists? Why are we constantly talking about classes and class struggle? Some of our opponents accuse us of living in the past, they claim the working class is dying out. After all you don't see too many workers wandering around in donkey jackets, cloth caps and heavy boots. So that settles the question, doesn't it? No, it doesn't, so let us get away from silly caricatures and get down to basics.

The modern world, like the societies that preceded it, does not consist of a single group of people who have more in common than they have dividing them. Sadly there is no single 'humanity', not yet. In every country there is still a division of people into classes which have conflicting interests.

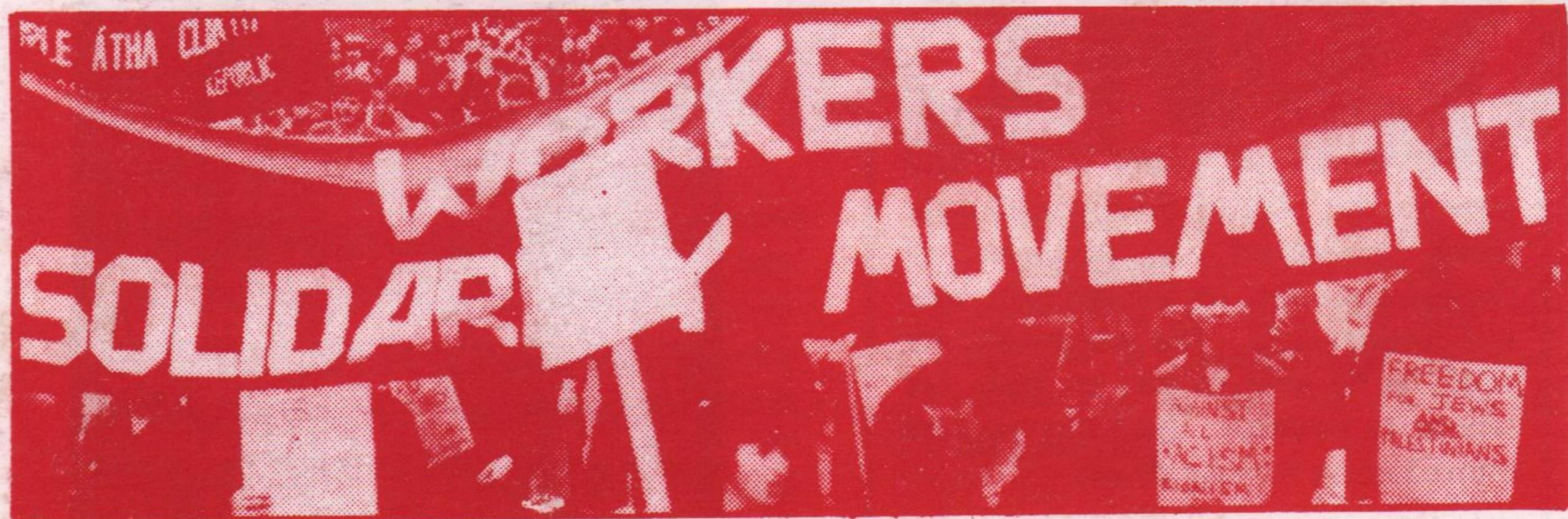
Classes are defined by their relationship to the means of production; their relationship to the factories, machinery, natural resources, etc. with which the wealth of society is created. Although there are groups such as the self-employed and the small farmers, the main classes are the workers and the bosses. It is the labour of the working class that creates the wealth. The bosses, through their ownership and control of the means of production, have legal ownership of this wealth and decide how it is to be distributed.

### STOLEN WAGES

Only a part of this wealth is returned. Some is paid as wages, some as the "social wage" (hospitals, schools, public services, and so on). The rest is creamed off as profit. But labour creates all wealth. An apple on a tree is worth nothing until someone picks it, coal in the ground has



# Thinking about Anarchism



## A Touch of Class

no use until someone mines it. What is known as surplus value or profit is stolen wages.

The working class is the majority in Ireland today. All who work for a wage, salary or commission are in its ranks. It consists of all who have to sell their ability to work to those in control. It makes no difference if you work in a factory, office, school, hospital or shop. It makes no difference if you work with your hands or your brain, whether you wear overalls or a suit, whether you earn 'good' or bad wages.

### WHAT ABOUT THE UNEMPLOYED?

The unemployed also form part of the working class. Social welfare payments are made to those who have worked and those who may potentially provide some employer with their labour power. It is a condition of payment that a claimant is "available for and actively seeking work". Needless to say, the partners and children of workers are also part of the same class, as are the retired.

The interests of the working class (wages, working conditions, jobs, useful public spending, etc.) are in constant and inevitable conflict with those of the boss class. They seek to maximise their profits and gain an advantage over their competitors at the expense of the workers.

### NONSENSE

Anyone who talks about 'social partnership', about labour and capital working together for the benefit of all is talking nonsense. What rights we have and gains we have made have been the result of long and often bitter struggles. The bosses only give such rights and concessions as they are forced to. In times of recession, such as now, they try to make workers pay through job losses, cuts in real wages, cuts in public spending, productivity deals, etc. for the crisis that is a periodic and inevitable product of capitalism.

Although capitalism oppresses people on many different levels, race and sex to name but two; it is the exploitation of our labour that is fundamental to the system. It is on this front that the fight for a new society will be won or lost. If we can reclaim that aspect of our lives, the system can be overturned and replaced with something much better.

### TAKING OVER

The working class are brought together in large towns and cities. At work we cooperate with others. Each person has to do their bit so that the person at the next stage of production can do theirs. In the services it is the same; in hospitals, schools and offices. This means that the working class *can* be a force capable, not only of rebelling against injustice but of taking over and recreating society in it's own interests.

As a class we have to think and act collectively. In a strike you need the support of your workmates and of the workers in supplier firms. Individual action won't get you very far. We have to co-operate. The same applies to the mammoth task of creating a new society. We cannot divide up an office or factory between all the workers there. We act as a group or not at all. This collective nature that is part and parcel of our class provides the basis for the solidarity and mutual aid we will need to scrap the old order and build a truly free and egalitarian society.

### POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

However just because someone is a worker it does not always follow that he or she will think of themselves as a worker, or realise the potential for change that the working class collectively possesses. We all know of workers who sometimes identify with their boss, or unemployed people who become demoralised and totally isolated from any sense of belonging to the working class. And there are plenty of ignorant academics running

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