

THE
LIBERTARIAN
COMMUNIST

Free or Donation

ISSUE 10
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
2010

Aim: the creation of a World wide
Libertarian Communist Society.

A Discussion Bulletin for the Anti State,
Non Market Sector

The purpose of The Libertarian Communist is to promote discussion amongst the Anti State, Non Market sector irrespective of whether individuals or groups consider themselves as Anarchist, Communist or Socialist as all such titles are in need of further qualification. If you have disagreements with an article in this or any other issue, wish to offer comment or want to contribute something else to the discussion then please get in touch. If any article focuses on a particular group then that group has, as a matter of course, the right to reply. So please get in touch with your article, letters and comments. You can do this by contacting com.lib.org@googlemail.com or writing to Ray Carr, Flat 1, 99 Princess Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset BH12 1BQ.

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Correction to issue 9 and what's in this issue.

We noticed a bit of an error in the last issue, now you may have spotted many mistakes, well we would respond by suggesting that most mistakes are deliberate, we just haven't organised the competition to go with them but we will own up and admit that this one was not deliberate. In the article, *Problems of Revolution, Labour Vouchers or Free Access*, at the top of page 8 the word "**needs**" should have been "**means**". So the sentence at the bottom of page 7, top of page 8 should have read as follows: "*Kropotkin [The Conquest of Bread page 221] argued that the day when any associations of individuals asked themselves the question what are the needs of all and what are the **means** of satisfying them?*"

With that out of the way what about this issue? The **Problems of Revolution, Labour Vouchers or Free Access?** feature prompted a reply by Kathy Summerson. This criticises the SPGB for being too concerned about socialism being a moneyless society and concentrating on star gazing about what the future society might look like rather than how we might get there. We are pleased to publish this response, (remember SPGB members you have the right of reply), but would also like to make clear, in case we are tarred with star gazing ourselves, that the "Problems of Revolution" feature is intended to investigate issues both of how we might achieve our goal and the problems we may face when we get there and whilst the former is the one that will mainly occupy our minds the latter is important because the problems

will not all be cleared up the day after the revolution. We are including another issue under the "Problems of Revolution" heading and this does focus on the here and now as it relates to the role that can be played by the renewal of an Independent Working Class Education movement, (IWCE) in developing a greater level of class consciousness amongst the working class and the difficulties in creating such a movement. In the news from the ASNM sector we have a couple of articles on the attempt to revive industrial syndicalism in light of the current attacks faced by the working class in response to the crisis created by the capitalist system. As usual we have news and contact details from around the anti state, non market sector.

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Problems of Revolution (1)

THE MONEY THING OR "SOCIALISM IS THE MONEYLESS SOCIETY", DISCUSS

That the SPGB has an obsession with money is obvious and unquestionable. The literature seldom lets slip the opportunity to blab out that socialism will be a moneyless etc, etc society. The moneyless is increasingly to the fore, and the etc, etc, increasingly marginalised or dropped altogether. This is really rather interesting because there is nothing specifically relating to money in the 'Declaration of Principles', supposedly the party's ideological basis. The emphasis here, in this well-crafted and well-cursed document, is on production. Not surprisingly, because socialism is

the social ownership of the means of production

While it is fair in an informal conversation about life after the class war to witter on about the abolition of money, to base one's whole propaganda effort on the "Socialism = Moneyless Society" equation is nothing less than rank utopianism. Because equating socialism with a moneyless society is immediately setting

preconditions, the preliminary to what the SPGB does 'best', the tedious and interminable debate about what socialism will be like. These preconditions, effectively setting up an imaginary society which is to be fulfilled, are nothing less than utopianism, the pre-modern form of socialism which should have died with Owen and Fourier. The SPGB differs only from the olds as to how to bring this wonder-world about.

Socialism and the moneyless society are not different names for the same thing. It is possible to formulate a number of possible theoretical societies, in SPGBish flight of fancy mode, in which money is abolished but class ownership remains. A case in point is the Zeitgeist movement - which essentially envisages the abolition of money but control of production by a technocratic elite, which, self-appointed and self-perpetuating, would effectively constitute a separate class. Whether this is feasible or not is entirely irrelevant. The point is that Zg World would be a moneyless society but not a socialist one. It is a far from encouraging sign that some SPGBers seem to be fans of the Zg.

It is not difficult to work out how the "*distributionist*" Heresy arose. Up to the 1970s, the SPGB was pre-eminently a street propagandist party, and as such needed a quick and easy way to show that Soviet Russia wasn't socialist. There was little better example than

the continued existence of money. More recently, the deindustrialisation of Britain and the rise of the consumer society means that production per se seems of little direct relevance. To producers, production is the crucial issue of the moment, to consumers, the indulgency of a world of free access is becoming vital.

Of course, the (extremely small number of) more educated SPGBers do not believe or say anything quite as crass. You may search, for instance, in Perrin's history of the party, for a hint of this sort of stupidity in vain. No wonder the old guard of the Socialist Studies Brigade hate him! A proper Marxist. How dreadful! However it is not the conscious minority but the majority that count – a group is no more or less than the sum of its members. And the majority view within the party is undoubtedly that the money thing separates the SPGB man from the leftist beast. It will, surely, not be long before the half-witted slackness that passes for the Socialist Case will become the official Party line.

So how, in my wise and humble opinion, would goods and services be distributed in a communist society? LTVs? Free access? Rationing? Trial by pitbull? Take notes: the precise means of distribution would depend on the circumstances of the revolution and the ethnological basis of society at the time. Thus, given the state of mid-Victorian society, Marx was quite right in *The Critique of the Gotha Programme* to envisage Labour Time Vouchers, the only form of non-exchange rationing then known. To go any further is to put the distribution cart before the production horse. We can indeed say, in unguarded moments or if pressed, that free access to goods and services would be the most likely mechanism given the current state of society and the envisaged revolutionary process. However, this is a long way

from the selling of socialism as the moneyless society. The abolition of money is, at most, a product of the common ownership of the means of production, rather than, as some SPGBers would have it, the aim itself.

My unasked for and unwelcome advice to SPGBers and others of their ilk is to de-emphasise the joys of the future ideal society and concentrate on boosting class consciousness. Or

Less ideal. More real.

Kathy Summerson

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Problems of Revolution (2)

The Class Struggle and Independent Working Class Education (IWCE)

"The Global village has made possible such an overwhelming cultural dominance by the capitalist class that almost without effort it has impressed its image on institutions, customs and social behaviour to the point where the working class does not recognize itself as a class at all and workers for the most part are simply not convinced that such a thing as the class struggle actually exists!"

So wrote comrade Mike Young to me **{Email Aug 3rd 2010}**. Writing in the Industrial Worker Jim Crutchfield argued that capitalism has de-educated workers by concentrating our minds on entertainment and pre-digested news and other propaganda so that our mental abilities never fully develop. In their present state the average worker can never be the self-disciplined self directed rebel worker we dream of. Many workers are angry and dissatisfied with their lives and

instinctively know there is something wrong with the current system. But under capitalism the vast majority of workers are taught and trained to be passive, to obey orders and to fear real change. In the early 20th century, Crutchfield argues, things were somewhat different, all IWW delegates carried educational pamphlets and as well as relating to organising they also focused on economics, history and the industries they were trying to organise. There were less distractions than today and so workers were more likely to spend time reading and trying to educate themselves, study groups and self improvement societies were formed and socialist and anarchist literature was widely available **{Industrial Worker 2009, posted on the world in Common forum October 22nd 2009}**.

Jim Crutchfield argues in relation to the IWW, (but the same applies to most of us involved in the anti state, non market sector and to others who consider themselves part of the revolutionary movement), that when we speak of education, organisation and emancipation we have badly neglected the first of these and unless we put more emphasis on it we will never be able to build the organisations needed to bring about emancipation. As he argues, simply getting workers to join the One Big Union or whatever does not turn them into women and men ready made to carry through a revolution **[ibid]** The point could readily be made that many of us are not at that stage yet either so in helping to educate others we will be educating ourselves

Anyone with an interest in the movement for independent working class education in Britain could do worse than start off with the work of Colin Waugh, **'PLEBS' The Lost Legacy of Independent Working-Class Education**. Much of the information in the following section is taken from this

source along with other pieces by the same author.

The League of the 'PLEBS' and the conflict over adult working class education.

The League of the 'Plebs' was founded in October 1908 by industrial workers who were trade union sponsored students at Ruskin college. The 'Plebs' were supported by former students who had returned to their jobs as industrial workers. From January 1909 they began to organise socialist classes in places such as South Wales, the North East, Lancashire and other working class areas. By 1926-7 there were over one thousand such classes in Britain with 31,635 students organised under the name of the National Council of Labour Colleges (NCLC). Many classes similar to these were still running in 1964. In February 1909 the students launched a monthly called *The Plebs Magazine* which lasted until 1970. In 1909 from March 26th till April 6th they conducted a strike, or boycott of lectures at Ruskin College **{Colin Waugh, The Working Class Self Education Movement: The League of the 'Plebs', www.workersliberty.org }**. The Ruskin strike or boycott of lectures was in protest against the forced resignation of Dennis Hird a lecturer and "left wing socialist" whose ideas about education at Ruskin was similar to the students. In reality this incident was part of a conflict between the students and those now in control of the college over what adult working class education should be about. The 'Plebs' developed from this conflict at Ruskin where the purpose of those in control was to shift the education emphasis towards teaching the idea that the working and ruling class had common interests. This conflict over education for working women and men has to be seen as part and parcel of the class struggle at that time. The students at Ruskin in the early 1900s

saw mainstream and higher education, what they termed as orthodox education, as a means to enslave the working class. In their view the content of education for trade union activists should be Marxian economics, industrial history and philosophy, regarding teaching and learning methods they favoured participatory small group discussions of texts integrated with public speaking, most of this was based on the practice of the Socialist Labour Party in Scotland **{Colin Waugh, article based on talk given at Ruskin College meeting 27/3/10}**. In essence their ideas on education for working class people were separate and independent of the formalised system and in conflict to how those gaining control at Ruskin saw the future for that college.

Ruskin, the University extension movement and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

The founding of Ruskin College in 1899 by two American socialists Charles Beard and Walter Vrooman and the establishment of the Workers Educational Association (WEA) in the early 1900s came during a period of heightened class struggle. This can be seen not only in terms of increases in trade union membership and number of strikes but also in terms of the radicalisation of working class activists. The years 1903/4 saw splits in the Social Democratic Federation (SDF). A speaking tour of Scotland and England by De Leon was influential and SDF dissidents in Scotland formed a British wing of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and syndicalist ideas which emphasised the inherent conflict of interests between workers and employers were more readily accepted. Between its establishment in 1899 and 1908 Ruskin made a substantial impact. Around 450 people attended Ruskin Hall in Oxford as full time residential students and over 8,000 enrolled on the correspondence course some of whom

also took part in the scheme where correspondence students could meet in small local discussion groups. By 1902 it had 96 classes across the country, mainly in industrial areas and this became the main route for industrial workers to progress to becoming residential students at Ruskin College in Oxford **{Colin Waugh, 'PLEBS'}**.

Following the demise of Chartism in 1848 some sections of the ruling class felt that extending adult education to sections of the working class could be one way of heading off future working class revolt. The idea was to create a layer of articulate working class people who would preach class harmony rather than conflict. One such project was the University extension movement where academics travelled around the country lecturing to people unable to attend university. However by the 1890s it was clear that such projects were attracting better off people rather than members of the working class **{ibid, pp.3-4}**. The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) developed in the early 1900s, its founder Albert Mansbridge was the type of person that "Christian Socialists" in the extension movement had in mind, a working class person who believed in class harmony and felt that adult education could help bring it about. A related development was the 1902 Education Act, partly inspired by the Fabian Sydney Webb and R L Morant, (Later Sir Robert Morant). This brought in Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to replace elected School Boards and Morant, wrote into the act a clause which allowed LEAs to organise or assist evening classes for adults **{ibid.p.7}**. Since the WEA project of Mansbridge and that of the extension movement had the same aims of using adult education to promote class collaboration it suited them to form an alliance and as Ruskin Hall was on the doorstep of Oxford University and was recruiting and retaining working class

students it was ripe for the WEA/Extension movement to make a move to take control of it. From the summer of 1907 onwards the alliance increased activity aimed at gaining a foothold at Ruskin. One such move was to seek outright funding so that the college was not dependent on union funding alone although the aim did not extend to cutting off that source of funding completely **{ibid, pp. 9, 17-18}**.

In October 1907 there was a move to promote closer links between Ruskin and the university. At a meeting where Dennis Hird and Lord Curzon, the Chancellor of Oxford and former viceroy of India, who was invited to Ruskin, both spoke, with students in attendance, a clash developed between the two which resulted in Lord Curzon walking out. Following this a sub committee of the executive, including Lee Smith who had been appointed over the head of Hird, proposed that Hird, who had been appointed by Beard and Vrooman as Principal/warden, should be forbidden to teach economics and sociology. In the spring of 1908 student representatives tried but failed in an attempt to get more union funds for the college. In the summer of that year, the executive, again over the head of Hird, brought in revision papers, compulsory written tests for all first year students these replaced the previous system of assessments through tutor comments based on monthly essays, given in one to one interviews. Students who protested against the new system were informed that they had to take them or would not be able to take the second year. From autumn 1908 to early 1909 Ruskin students were often invited to tea with oxford dons but at the same time attempts were made to clamp down on them speaking at meetings in Oxford and elsewhere. In October a sub committee of the executive condemned the formation of the League of the

'Plebs' and because students had, by this time, started to stay away from lectures of Furniss and Buxton, more appointments over the head of Hird, ruled that attendance of all lectures was compulsory. Hird although banned by the executive from openly associating himself with the 'Plebs' took the side of the students and in March 1909 the governors claimed he was failing to maintain discipline and demanded his resignation, which he gave. As Waugh argues the student protests against the treatment handed out to Hird probably suited the purposes of the WEA/extension alliance as it enabled them to identify and purge the most left wing students and intimidate the others **{ibid, p.18-19}**.

Some thoughts about IWCE today.

In the Conclusion to the 'PLEBS' Colin Waugh makes the following analysis.

"By 1910 both sides in the Ruskin struggle probably thought that they had won. The WEA/extension alliance had taken control of Ruskin and absorbed it within their project. They had also succeeded in setting up tutorial classes in many areas and these were, for the moment, attracting high levels of working class participation. The Plebs League had set up a big network of local classes and the Central Labour College. Further historical research can and should throw light on which, if either, was right. But the essential struggle between them is still going on, and in the end only we, by our actions, can settle it". {PLEBS', page 25}

There are several points to be raised about IWCE today. The first of these is that the problems raised by Mike Young and Jim Cruthchfield about the hold capitalism has over a majority of the working class are very much with us and you can not involve people in an independent educational movement to enlighten them to the nature of modern day capitalism and the alternative to it unless they are interested in being enlightened and believe that such a

process is necessary. However if as groups and individuals seeking radical change we have given up on the process of education because of these precise difficulties then we are failing to appreciate the reality of our situation. What must also be remembered in all this is that we are not just talking about educating those outside our movements but also of educating ourselves as part of the process. Jim Crutchfield in the previously mentioned piece in the *Industrial Worker* suggests that in the next period, the IWW devote the majority of its energies and resources in preparing the groundwork for this educational process. He states, and this applies not just to the IWW but all of us in the ASNM sector:

"If we fail to educate ourselves and the workers we want to organise, then the best we can hope for is to become a vanguard- and enlightened elite at the head of a mass of pure and simple, unthinking foot soldiers capable only of destroying the old society, instead of building a new and better one within the shell or the old." *{Industrial Worker, October 2009, WiC forum 22nd October 2009}*

The first question is how do we go about organising independent working class education? It is not going to come from the trade union movement we need something more than simple and pure trade unionism. So it probably needs to come from an umbrella organisation of groups who agree that socialism/communism is about something more than re-arranging capitalism with state bureaucrats and committees replacing private capitalists and corporations. Local, district or regional educational groups are a good starting point and these could develop out of discussion groups. In this context it is an encouragement to see the development of Radical History Groups in several places and The Libertarian Communist would be pleased to hear from people involved in these and similar projects. Internet web site discussion forums can also play a role,

the World in Common and Libcom.org forums are a good example here but these need to make the move from purely online discussion forums and branch out into discussion groups based on participants in given areas meeting up and taking it forward. In the context of the internet an interesting piece was placed on the WiC forum by Julian Prior about a development called Open Education(al) Resources (OER) The OER is open to all, no charge or deadlines and life-long participation. There is up to date content which everyone can edit and update. The materials are normally the product of many authors and there are many contributions from people other than authors. This does look like an interesting development and there is further discussion on the OER on the University of Utopia website **{Julian Prior, World in Common forum June 2010}**. Our written publications can play an educational role as can conferences, day or weekend schools, radical film groups and so on. There are probably a host of other possibilities so please feel free to write in with your views and suggestions.

Another issue is what teaching and learning methods would be applicable to an IWCE movement in today's environment. The work and ideas of Paulo Freire's are mentioned in an article by Colin Waugh **{Waugh, article on talk at Ruskin 27/3/10}** A piece on Freire was also posted on the WiC forum in June this year, the original source was miaumiatonomyandsolidarity@wordpress.com. Freire argues that what he terms as the **'banking'** concept of education which seeks to impose or simply transfer information as infallible or self evident doctrine and views students as merely passive objects should be rejected in favour of **'Problem Posing'** education or what Freire terms as **'Critical Pedagogy'**. This is where the person responsible for communicating something to others offers their ideas

not as something that must be accepted but as something to be considered. Whilst the '**banking**' system favours the continuation of hierarchical relations and institutions '**problem posing**' or '**critical pedagogy**' favours a libertarian form of education and seeks to develop critical thinking as opposed to just accepting what we are told or have read. This would seem more in line for IWCE and more suitable for a movement seeking to create the conditions for a self organised movement aiming at a conscious revolution.

Today there is a mass of further education courses open to working class people of all ages but even the most radical and free thinking of courses, and very few of these exist in mainstream education anywhere, are going to offer the chance to consider a genuine critique of capitalist society and construct a self organised movement for a free society. When we speak of IWCE we are not focusing on the needs of the trade union movement as that operates within a capitalist mentality and would not be a genuine independent educational movement. There are of course people within that movement who share our ideas who can help with the work of developing a genuine movement as there are those working in the education sector who can also perform a vital role. What is clear is that groups within the ASNM sector, whether in their own organisations or working together need to give IWCE a place near the top of their agenda.

The Libertarian Communist is sent out by post or email, free of charge. A big thank you to those readers who have made donations either by money or postage stamps. Such donations help keep this discussion bulletin going and hopefully will achieve, in time, a bigger and better publication. If you wish to make a financial contribution please make cheques payable to **(World of Free Access)** and send them or stamps to, c/o Ray Carr, Flat 1, 99 Princess Road,

Branksome, Poole, Dorset, BH12 1BQ.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

News from the ASNM Sector.

(1) Proposal to rebuild Industrial Syndicalism in the UK

At the present time the aims of the project are: 1) To get a one off issue of The Industrial Syndicalist finished and printed in time for TUC (September 13th) and get a distribution team organised for Manchester. 2) Organise a meeting for the Anarchist Bookfair in London on October 23rd. This is subject to getting it organised in time and there seems to be a difference of opinion about the necessity of it. 3) Organise something for the start of November in Tonypany. This is something to pass on to people in the Wales and Bristol region. Organise a national syndicalist conference, (probably in November). Ideally this would be organised in time to advertise it in the Industrial Syndicalist. The following two articles form the basis of the project

List informations

Where does the trade union movement go from here? After 13 years of a Labour government that refused to remove the repressive anti-trade union laws, we now have a coalition in power that's unlikely to make any positive changes. On the contrary, despite their talk of greater freedom, no mention has been made of trade union freedom – before the election, the Tories had discussed making the nightmare balloting procedure more onerous.

As we've seen recently, the courts have become the frontline of the bosses fight against the unions. Despite Unite winning a last minute appeal against one ridiculous ruling, other rulings stand. One is the Johnston Press injunction against the National Union of Journalists where they "proved" that they don't employ any journalists. They just decide all the things that bosses usually do – all of the power,

but none of the responsibility.

Unions need to concentrate on building their own strength to fight back and they need to do it now. Talk about rebuilding the Labour Party Left or building alternative parties is a diversion – it won't happen quickly, if at all, and it ignores the fact that militant trade union activity is a political power in and of itself.

Most people who are not in unions have never been asked, recruitment needs to be a priority for every union. More members mean more resources and more capacity to fight back. And unions need to grow, particularly in the private sector, if they're going to build a serious fight-back against the cuts and any other attacks on union rights.

And, if the courts continue trying to make strikes illegal, then there will be a lot more "illegal" strikes, occupations and maybe more. One hundred years later, time for another "Great Unrest".

This list is for people involved in the project to bring the syndicalist ideas of 100 years ago back into the mainstream.

Campaign to bring syndicalism back into the mainstream of the trade union movement

Context

2009 saw a massive rise in what could be described as proto-syndicalist industrial actions in the UK and Ireland. The year began with the Lindsey Oil Refinery dispute, which saw mass walk-outs and widespread solidarity action, while Irish workers at Waterford Crystal engaged in a two-month sit-in.

As the year progressed, major sit-ins occurred at the Visteon factories in Belfast, Basildon and Enfield, at Vestas on the Isle of Wight, at the Dublin branch of Thomas Cook, and at the 4Home store in Mitchelstown, Cork.

What all these disputes had in common was their unofficial nature, their spontaneous occurrence without the involvement of union bureaucracy and, in the case of the Lindsey

dispute, the fact that many of the workers were not unionised. However, none of the disputes had particular radical aims, most were, in fact, protests against closures of businesses that were at least partially resolved by improved payments to disgruntled workers.

These disputes coincided with the global collapse of the neoliberal economic system amidst the general failure of the traditional left to take advantage of the situation. They also coincided with the declining fortunes of the Labour government that has failed to remove most of the anti-trade union laws put in place by Thatcher's government in the 80s. The prospect of a new Tory government and new attacks on trade unions (such as ballot quotas) is very real in 2010.

The historical perspective

The period between 1910 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 saw an explosion in syndicalist activity in the UK and Ireland. Syndicalism, for that short time, became the dominant political idea for radical trade union activists and union membership exploded as militant action drew in more workers.

A range of factors led to the decline of the movement in 1914:

- the outbreak of war boosting patriotic feeling in the country;
- the move towards nationalism in Ireland (which led to the execution of James Connolly in 1916);
- splits within the movement (symbolised by the split between Tom Mann and Guy Bowman) the internment of Rudolf Rocker and collapse of Jewish syndicalism;
- the success of the Russian Revolution, which led to Marxist-Leninism dominating British left politics for decades afterwards.

Syndicalism as a political concept has suffered at the hands of historians, left and right. Dismissed as spontaneous, disorganised outbreaks of disgruntled workers or defined as the primitive forerunner of the more developed Marxist politics that followed, syndicalism in the UK and Ireland is rarely defined as the vibrant and democratic movement that it was. Elsewhere, particularly in Spain, syndicalism became a truly revolutionary force.

industrialistsyndicalist@lists.riseup.net

(2) News from Sol Fed in North London northlondonsf@riseup.net.

Dear Lib Com

Greetings from North London Solidarity Federation. We have recently undertaken the task of putting together regular sessions on workplace organising. Many leftists groups assume de facto positions loyalty to the trade union movement despite its retreat politically and organisationally from most peoples' lives. We think this is a mistake. There is a new generation of people who have no experience with trade unions and little class struggle experience. Simple matters of how to organise in the workplace should not be the reserve of TUC training courses. To that end we have started to run several workplace organising sessions and have had a very good response.

As well as carrying out general distribution of propaganda, we continue to support struggles where we can, along with other libertarians have started 'practical solidarity' – a joint strike support venture in London and work where possible with our comrades in the Anarchist Federation.

Radical History Network of North London.

For details contact Alan Woodward on 020 8292 8862 or RaHN at alan@petew.org.uk
Email: radicalhistorynetwork@googlemail.com

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worldsocialistmovement/SPGB:

worldsocialism.org/spgb: Postal address: 52 Clapham High Street London SW4 7UN. Email spgb@worldsocialim.org

Northern Anarchist Network (NAN)

If you want further information about this group contact: **Brian Bamford, 46 Kingsland Road, Rochdale, Lancs OI1 3HQ or email northernvoices@hotmail.com**

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World In Common: www.worldincommon.org Email worldincommon@yahoo.com

As stated previously very good for discovering groups that do, or have made up the Anti State, Non Market sector. It is well worth exploring as some of the posts give out information you might not have picked up elsewhere. Some of the news and articles featured in TLC are sourced from this website. So join the forum and help take it forward.

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Anarchist Federation:
www.afed.org.uk: Postal Address BM Arnafed, London WC1N 3XX. Email info@afed.org.uk

A new pamphlet has recently been published, **An Introduction to Anarchist Communism**. The Manchester website is well worth a visit for looking at texts from former organisations such as Solidarity, Subversion and Wildcat.

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The following three groups are industrial unions. They offer an anti bureaucratic alternative to trade unions. You can join either as an individual or if there is support for organising at your workplace.

Solidarity Federation.
www.solfed.org.uk or PO Box 29, South West P D.O Manchester M15 5HW Email: solfed@solfed.org.uk

Industrial Workers of the World: www.iww.org Or P/O Box 7593, Glasgow, G42 2EX Email: rocsec@iww.org.uk.

Workers International Industrial Union.
www.wiiu.org or www.deleonism.org/wiiu.htm or see the article on Industrial Unionism in issue 9

www.Libcom.org:

Another place to keep up with news from around the world from a Libertarian Communist view point. Also has Library, History and Gallery sections as well as active online forums.

Wrekin Stop War

This can be found at www.wrekinstopwar.org or contact

Duncan Ball, 23 Sunderland Drive, Leegomery Salop, TF1 6XX email: admin@wrekinstopwar.org.uk

Red and Black Notes

The geo cities site that used to host RBN has been out of action for some time. You can obtain some RBN items from libcom.org as listed above. If you want to know more than read issue 6 Of The Libertarian Communist and the article by Neil Fettes pp.4-7. Recommended site if you can still obtain the full listings.

See also: Institute for Anarchist Studies, the similar but separate, Anarchist Studies Journal and the Socialist Labour Party of America (www.slp.org). Not to be confused with the Scargill mob.

Red Anarchist Action Network (RAAN)

www.redanarchist.org

This site has been listed previously but as it echoes our own position we are reproducing some of the text from their website.

The (anti-state) communist and anarchist movements, often as a result of ignorance, confusion, or historical conditions, have for too long remained separate. Often allied but not united; and at times even distrustful of each other. And yet history has shown us that when they *are* united, they form the most penetrating and complete analysis of the world we live in, as well as the most promising and realistic vision for changing it.

In most of the world we face a serious problem in using the word 'communist.' Due in part to the propaganda of the ruling-class, based on Leninist deviations, this word has become synonymous

with state-controlled capitalism, and the totalitarian tendencies and structures therein. Thus, people have thought of several adjectives to use to modify the term, so that it takes on its true character: "anti-state", "libertarian", "anarchist", "free", "autonomist", etc. This hyphenation is good for shorthand when there isn't the time to explain that one is "not that kind of communist", or that "what people **normally call communism isn't really communism in any way, shape or form.**"

There is *no such thing* as 'authoritarian communism', nor an 'authoritarian communist.' As the root of the word communism suggests, communism must have at its heart communal activity. In other words activity, free from the constraints of authoritarianism, in which each person is involved directly and equally. Thus, 'authoritarian communists' (Leninists, Trotskyists, Stalinists, Maoists, Bolsheviks, etc.) *are not communists at all*. Their ideas, based as they are in the capitalist social relation of hierarchies, which culminate in the state, have only reproduced in the former Soviet Union, China, etc., capitalism in a state-controlled form.

Communism, due to its anti-authoritarian nature, means the destruction of the state. Even Marx, from whom Leninists and others claim to take their cue, knew this fact. Thus it is unnecessary to modify the word communism with such adjectives as anarchist, libertarian, anti-state, free, autonomist, etc. Communism includes all of these when understood in its true meaning. Unfortunately, we face a situation in which the deliberate obscuring of the term by the ruling-classes and their various states, based in the deviations perpetuated by Leninists and others, forces us to use these redundant words to emphasize what we stand for. Thus it is really important as part of theoretical and propaganda work to undermine the ruling-class/Leninist misuse of the word and re-appropriate 'communism' for its proper use. However, among us are people who identify as anarchist, libertarian Marxist, council communist, just communist, or none of these terms. But we are, and must be, united by (as far as we understand it at this point) truly communist (anti-)politics.

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The opportunities for modern syndicalism

There are some interesting parallels with the situation in 1909, where workers became increasingly unsatisfied with left parties' unwillingness to improve workers rights. As in 2009, many of the disputes in the first decade of the 20th Century were "spontaneous", workers expressing their dissatisfaction without the endorsement of trade union bureaucrats or the leadership of political parties.

What is currently lacking are the strong voices arguing in favour of greater and more political syndicalist action – the modern Mann, Rucker, Connolly or Larkin. This can be changed.

Below are some suggestions as to how syndicalism can once again become a dominant force in trade unionism in the UK and Ireland:

1. Publishing a one-off edition of the *Industrial Syndicalist* newspaper to coincide with its centenary in July 2010, which could be followed by other publications if it sparks an interest.
2. Re-establishing the Industrial Syndicalist Education League (ISEL) in advance of the centenary of its original establishment in December 2010. A new ISEL could bring together all varieties of syndicalists – including the anarcho-syndicalist Solidarity Federation and the International Workers of the World in the UK, Organise! in Northern Ireland, as well as unaligned syndicalist trade unionists.

The timing offers the opportunity for a dual launch – at the TUC Congress in September and the Anarchist Bookfair in October. Organising a fringe event at the former would require linking up with senior people in TUC affiliated trade unions, perhaps through the unions unaffiliated to Labour in the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (TUCG).

Once re-established, the ISEL should organise slates of speakers and organise talks in the UK and Ireland discussing major issues of relevance to modern trade unionists from a syndicalist point of view – grassroots control of unions, radical action, amalgamations, workers control of the workplace.

The strong possibility of Tory government attacks on the public sector, or, even if Labour wins the election, cuts from them will see an increase in strike action across the country (as are already starting in Ireland) will provide a perfect opportunity to engage constructively with trade unionists taking action. Re-establishing the ISEL as a unifying organisation will help facilitate this action.

3. Marking major dates from the 1910-14 period with public events. The Anarchist Movement Conference agreed to organise an event in the East End of London to mark the centenary of the 1912 strikes (Jewish workers in the East End, the London transport workers' strike). This could be followed by events to mark the Dublin lock-out in 1913. Regional events could also be organised, in Welsh mining areas, Liverpool docks, etc, to coincide with the centenary of major disputes.

These events should be inclusive and designed to celebrate the history of workers in the location, commemorating the historical events, but also seeking to build a new mass syndicalist movement. They should seek to include entertainment as well as talks and debates – the bigger, the better.

