

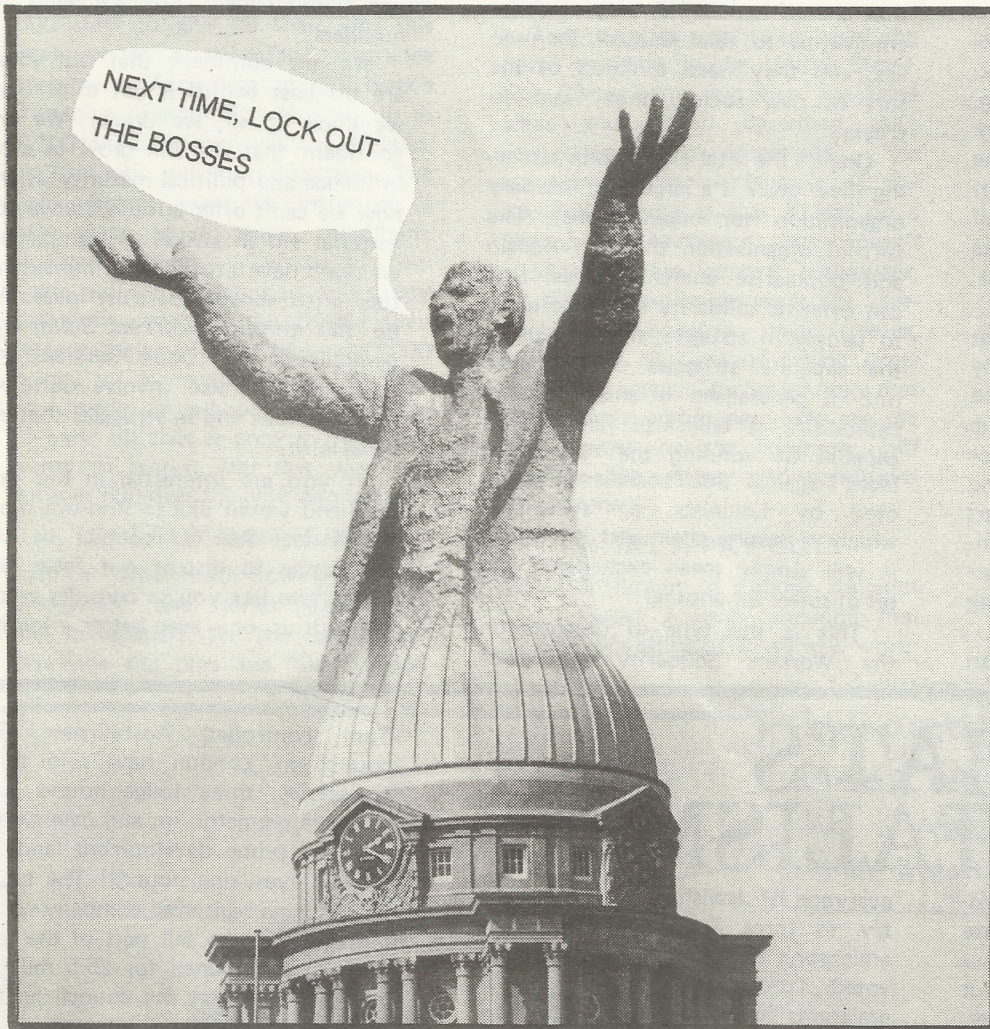
WORKERS SOLIDARITY

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1913

DUBLIN LOCK-OUT

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IRISH ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

X ASK MOST OF the left wing organisations how many members they have, how active they are, how much influence do they enjoy, how many readers does their newspaper have – and the chances are you will be told a pack of lies. That is if you get an answer.

A little of this can be put down to people exaggerating their own importance, and if we are honest we can all admit to this from time to time. A lot of it, however, comes from the desire of Leninist organisations to become THE vanguard party. To do this they will have to be big, or at least appear big, bigger and more influential than their rivals in the competition to become THE leadership of the working class. After all if you want lots of passive followers you have to have, or appear to have, something worth following.

By their very nature anarchist ideas need to be understood by large numbers of people for them to have any real meaning. Not for us the calling on leaders to do things for us; not for us the substituting of one set of leaders/bosses for another; not for us the building of THE vanguard party that aims to take power itself "in the name of the working class".

For us, only the collective action

For Starters

of huge numbers of people – the working class – will create the sort of free socialist society we want to see.

Such massive changes, social revolution, don't happen by chance. It is not enough for a lot of people to feel that capitalism is useless to them. They need to be convinced that change is possible, they need the confidence to take control themselves, and they need a vision of the sort of new society they want to create.

One of the vital elements in achieving these goals is a large revolutionary organisation (or organisations). The sort of organisation that can explain and popularise anarchist ideas, that can offer its solidarity and experience to people in struggle, that can unify the separate struggles of our class into a generalised offensive against capitalism. It will also have to be capable of winning the "battle of ideas" against the "socialism" promoted by Leninists, a "socialism" which – despite their best intentions – will simply mean exchanging one set of rulers for another.

This is the type of organisation the Workers Solidarity Movement

aspires to become. At present we are far away from that goal. Anarchism is little known or understood in Ireland. Our organisation is only in its fourth year, our numbers are very few. We want to grow into a national organisation. But the reality today is that if we are strong in ideas and commitment, we are weak in numbers.

We are confident that our ideas are the best (which is not to pretend we know it all, we don't). We are confident that we will grow in size, influence and political maturity. Right now we can't offer a lot in the way of material aid in strikes or campaigns. We don't have it to give. Our immediate task is to spread anarchist ideas. We do this through *Workers Solidarity*, pamphlets, our book service and meetings. We also involve ourselves in our unions and in struggles that we agree with.

If you are interested in our politics and would like to find out more please feel free to contact us. We are happy to discuss our ideas. We would also like you to consider working with us, or – even better – joining us.

THAT'S CAPITALISM

Some schools in China have introduced fines for students who have love affairs. At one of these schools the fine is 40 yuan (£90) – about two weeks pay for the average worker. Couples who stay out too long after dark can be fined 13 yuan. The reported record is 100 yuan in six months.

* * * * *

What a waste. 1 in 10 US workers and 7 in 10 scientists are employed by the American arms industry or in service industries connected with it.

* * * * *

In the first six months of this year 4,700 Jews left the Soviet Union carrying Israeli visas. But only 18.7% of them actually ended up in Israel. Most chose to go to other countries. The response of the Israeli cabinet, who seem to believe that they "own"

everyone of Jewish birth, has been to try to force Soviet Jews who are emigrating to go only to Israel. They voted 16 to 2 to compel Jewish emigrants to exit via Bucharest where officials have agreed to put them on planes to Israel and to nowhere else. At present they go by way of Vienna where they can decide for themselves what their final destination will be.

* * * * *

Not only in London have house prices reached insane levels. The average one-bedroom flat in central Tokyo costs 34.4 million yen (IR£ 167,000). According to the Japanese government, a typical family of four buying a 25 million yen flat with a 30 year mortgage "could only make ends meet after teetering on the brink of bankruptcy for three or four years".

Tory controlled Westminster city council in London have sold three cemeteries, three lodge houses, one flat, one crematorium and over twelve acres of prime development land for just £1 (yes, one pound)! The buyer is a Panama registered company which is now trying to sell part of the land back to the council for £5.5 million. It is believed that the council leader, Lady Porter, has an interest in the company, Wisland Investments Group Incorporated.

* * * * *

Peter Makau was jailed in Kenya for three months. He had been convicted of a most odious crime ... refusing to give a senior government official a lift in his car!

* * * * *



Big Profits & Small Wages at the Bank

IMAGINE DOING THE same work as the person beside you but only getting half the pay. It's called the "two tier" wage system and it has arrived in Ireland.

The Bank of Ireland hopes to get 800 staff to give up their jobs this year under a voluntary severance agreement. According to the bank's managing director, Pat Molloy, up to 2,000 jobs could eventually be affected.

The jobs will not disappear. The bank bosses want to introduce a new grade to do them, the "bank assistant". While workers in this new grade will be expected to do exactly the same work as the people they replace they will only be paid £6000 rising to a maximum of £9,500. The maximum is about half that paid to bank officials at present. The bank wants to recruit 700 this year and another 500 over the next two years.

GREEDY BANKERS

Just to demonstrate how greedy the bosses are, two stories appeared in the newspapers on the same day. One was the plan for "bank assist-

ants" which we were told was necessary because wage cost make up two thirds of the bank's operating expenses. The other story was tucked away on the business page, an announcement that the after-tax profits of the Bank of Ireland had jumped 23% to £62.7 million!

Two-tier wage systems are becoming fairly common in the United States. The American anarchist magazine *ideas and action* described their attractiveness to employers... "to management the advantage of the two-tier scheme is that it sets up a lower-paid workforce but doesn't overtly penalise current employees, as did the earlier demands for 'give-backs' on benefits, wage freezes, elimination of Cost of Living provisions and so on. The bosses hope that the current employees, who are the ones voting on the contracts, will sacrifice the wages and conditions of new hirers."

WHAT A PAY CUT!

The US Bureau of Labour statistics has released a study showing that roughly one-third of all all new work-

place contracts now contain some sort of two-tier pay scheme. In the US Postal Service management has proposed a system that would cut the starting pay of new employees by nearly 4,000 dollars. NASA is insisting on such schemes in the aerospace industry. Last year the biggest union in the US, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, signed its first contract with the haulage industry that officially establishes a two-tier scheme.

American workers have not been taking this lying down. Among workers who have struck against these schemes are United Airlines pilots, San Francisco restaurant and department store staffs, and workers at the Merck Chemical Company in New Jersey. (Merck is the same company that has been poisoning land in Tipperary).

"SECOND CLASS" WORKERS

It is in all our interests to attack any manifestation of two-tier. In creating a group of "second class citizens" in the workplace, resentments and divisions are generated. Fighting for equal pay and conditions is basic to developing solidarity. Without solidarity we have no strength. Unions that agree to these schemes will be rightly accused by new members of having sold them out.

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Bank...

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Moreover, management will have an incentive to get rid of the more senior workers who will still be getting higher pay. If the boss can hassle older workers into resigning or can find some excuse for getting rid of them, they can be replaced by cheaper new staff.

AER LINGUS

Aer Lingus has already got away with a scheme. In an agreement for ground staff who are members of the FWUI new employees will get a raw deal. Not only will their basic pay go down from £6,600 to £5,250 but the shift allowance will be reduced from between £7 and £12 to a pathetic £3 a shift. Added to this new staff will only be guaranteed work for six months a year for their first five years.... it used to be nine months.

However the first fight may be in the Bank of Ireland. This is the one that all eyes will be on and could set a precedent. If the bank pushes ahead with its plan the Irish Bank Officials Association (IBOA) has a mandate from its members, who were balloted in May, to strike. Their general secretary, Job Stott, said in June that the IBOA rejected the plan, didn't want to discuss it with management and... "as far as we are concerned that is the end of it".

LET'S STICK TOGETHER

Unfortunately union leaders don't always mean what they say and we should not be too surprised if Stott enters into negotiations with the bank. But if the IBOA do stick to their decision it will be very important to argue that they get the full support of the rest of the trade union movement.

Because they are outside the ICTU and have no formal links with other unions there may be a degree of foot-dragging when support is needed. Trade union activists will have to push hard for solidarity and make the point that if the Bank of Ireland get away with introducing two-tier then many other employers will try the same. On the other hand, if such a large and rich company is defeated smaller bosses will take fright and think twice about attempting to create a new layer of cheap labour.

Joe King

X

Shorts & Shipyard to be sold

IT'S VERY TRENDY, it's called privatisation and it's coming to Belfast with a vengeance. The British government has announced plans to sell off the Harland & Wolfe shipyard and Shorts aircraft factory. 3,900 work in the shipyard and 7,500 at Shorts.

The plan came as a shock to the mainly loyalist workforces. They had been brought up to believe that the Westminster government would look after them as a reward for their 'loyalty'. Now their eyes are being opened to the fact that a bosses first loyalty is to his or her bank account. As far as they are concerned workers are there to be used while it is profitable and thrown away like so much rubbish when it isn't.

The shipyard may get to build Ravi Tikkoo's *Ultimate Dream* cruiseliner before it is mothballed. At Shorts the missile division may be saved (though possibly moved abroad) as there seems to be no end of demand for weapons of destruction. The aircraft division will probably go down the drain.

ORANGE PRIVILEGE

Among some trade unionists there is a feeling that these jobs are not a high priority for defending. H&W and Shorts are bywords for religious discrimination. Doesn't supporting these workers add up to supporting Orange privilege?

Some people see the main division in society as between religions, others see it as between national identities. We, as anarchists, say it is between workers and bosses. Sectarian workplaces being closed down will do absolutely nothing to end discrimination. It will, however, reduce the already pitiful small number of jobs, further drive down wages and intensify the competition between unemployed workers. We don't want to see any worker forced onto the dole.



"So long, partner!"

Loyalist workers are not the real enemy, the bosses with their "divide and conquer" strategy are. Support from socialists and anti-imperialists for their jobs fight could even get some of them to re-think who is their real enemy and who could be their friends. Not many will engage in such a re-think immediately but that does not take anything away from what should be a basic trade union demand — no job losses.

The jobs there is a problem about defending are in Shorts missile division. We still say no to any redundancies but also raise the question of why the skills and technology aren't being used for something useful to humanity? That question could get people thinking about the sort of society we live in.



"Poverty in an age of affluence means holidays in the maternity ward while others think of Florida."

Union defends AIDS sufferers

A BLOW HAS been struck against the hysteria surrounding AIDS. Following a good discussion and a resolution agreed at their conference the Union of Professional and Technical Civil Servants have negotiated an

agreement prohibiting discrimination.

Circular 12/88, issued by the government to all Civil Servants, says that all civil servants "who are HIV positive or who suffer from AIDS will be retained in their job for as long as they can perform their duties to an acceptable standard".

A Department of Finance spokesperson, quoted in the July issue of the *Public Sector Times*, said "AIDS will be treated just like any other illness — like pneumonia or a broken leg for instance".

The circular also says that "discrimination on the basis of sexual

orientation or medical condition (e.g. haemophilia) will not be tolerated in the Civil Service".

It remains to be seen if the circular will be fully implemented. Union activists and branch committees will have to monitor progress to make sure that it is not being flouted. This is normal practice in relation to any agreement.

A great step forward has been taken in combatting prejudice and UPTCS is already trying to get similar agreements with Telecom and An Post. A precedent has been set for other unions to do the same.



Death of a Thug

GIORGIO ALMIRANTE, for over 40 years the leader of the Italian fascist party, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), died on May 22nd. Among the first messages of condolence received by the MSI was one from the leader of the Italian Communist Party, Alessandro Natta.

This obscene gesture was an insult to the memory of the hundreds of militant workers murdered by fascists in post-war Italy and to the thousands killed under Mussolini.

Almirante was a fascist and anti-Jewish bigot from his youth. He was decorated for his part in Mussolini's North African expeditions. In the wartime Salo Republic in Italy he served as an aide to the Minister of Culture and Population. In May 1944 he ordered all Italians to rally to the Salo statelet within 24 hours and decreed that "those who do not present themselves will be considered outlaws and executed by shooting in the back".

After the war he was allowed to remain politically active and was elected to parliament in 1946, when he formed the MSI with Mussolini's son Pino Romualdi. He served as its general secretary until 1950 and again from 1969 until he stepped down last December. On returning to the leadership in the late '60s he criticised his "soft" fascist predecessors and stated his policy was "less stuffed shirt and more stick".

Under Almirante the MSI acted as a legal cover for a wave of fascist

terror bombings and assassinations — the 'strategy of tension'. Among the atrocities committed was the bombing of the railway station in Bologna which killed 80 passengers.

In last year's Italian general election the MSI got 5.6% of the vote, making it the fourth largest party. The response of the "Communists" is to send a message regretting the passing of an evil old thug.

Public Health and Private Profit

Babies in need of urgent attention are being turned away from a big Dublin maternity hospital. This is the result of cuts at the Coombe Hospital. Dr. Liz Griffen, Consultant Paediatrician, says babies not born at the hospital have been refused admission. Other babies are being discharged early. Wouldn't you know that politicians don't have their babies at the Coombe. Meanwhile cuts at the National Maternity Hospital saw home visits by nursing staff axed at the end of June.

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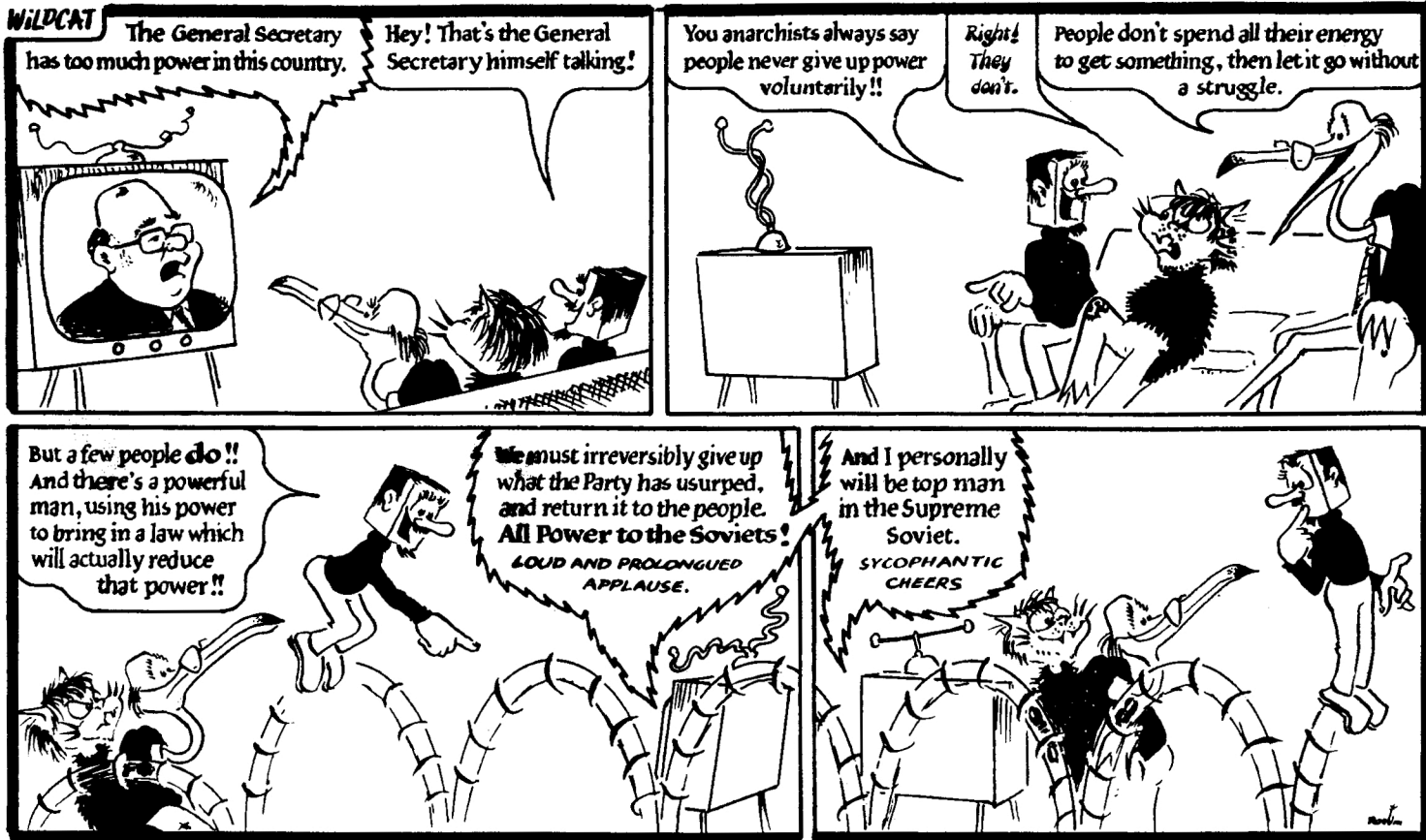
Tablets that cost 80p without a prescription in Britain cost £10 with a prescription in the 26 counties. The tablets, glyceryl trinitrate, are for angina sufferers. A 1150% mark-up at the expense of the ill. Hurrah for free enterprise.

Flying Leathernecks

RYANAIR DON'T WANT to be a union job. During the 9 o'clock news on RTE 1 on July 6th Mr. Arthur Walls of Ryanair referred to trade union members as "every dog and devil".

This remark has sparked the Meath branch of the Local Government and Public Services Union to cross swords with the flying leathernecks. They have written to every LGPSU branch (18,000 members) asking that they and their families avoid flying with Ryanair until their attitude towards unions improves. They have also written to the executives of all the other ICTU unions (672,000 persons) asking them to request their branches to do the same.

Can you ask your branch committee or trades council to notify its members? Can you get them to write a letter of protest to Mr. Eugene O'Neill, Ryanair, College Park House, Nassau Street, Dublin 2. If you can, please send a copy to Sean Breslin, Hon. Secretary, Meath LGPSU, County Hall, Navan, Co. Meath.



GOODBYE DANIEL

DANIEL GUERIN DIED on the night of April 13th last. He was 84 years of age. The news reached us when the summer issue of *Workers Solidarity* was already in preparation, hence this belated obituary.

One of France's best revolutionary activists and thinkers, he was best known in Ireland as the author of books such as *Fascism and Big Business*, *100 Years of Labour in the USA* and *Anarchism*.

Within France he was well known, not only for his prolific writings, but also as a long standing trade union militant of the CGT; as a veteran anti-imperialist who supported the victims of French aggression in Indo-China, Algeria and today the Kanaks of New Caledonia; as a fighter for gay rights (he was bisexual) in the 'Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action'.

ANTI-COLONIALIST

Entering socialist politics as a con-

vinced anti-colonialist, he joined the Socialist Party and got involved with an internal opposition group of non-Trotskyist revolutionaries – the "Revolutionary Left". This current was expelled from the party just before the outbreak of World War II. They attempted to form their own party – the Workers and Peasants Socialist Party – but their newborn organisation fell apart when the Nazis invaded. During the war years Daniel took part in underground activity.

After the war he began working out where he stood politically. He had no time for Stalinism, social democracy or the numerous would-be Bolshevik parties of Trotskyism. He gradually moved towards anarchism, though was always clear about not taking on board useless parts of the anarchist tradition or rejecting useful ones in Marxism. At the time of his death he was a member of the French anarchist organisation, the Union of Libertarian Communist Workers. His book *Anarchism* remains

one of the best available introductions to our tradition and its politics.

HELD IN RESPECT

Shortly after his burial the UTCL organised a commemoration ceremony. The attendance indicated the high regard Daniel was held in. Speeches were made by many including representatives of the liberation front of New Caledonia, the gay movement, the proofreaders branch of



Daniel Guerin.

the CGT and a veteran of the Algerian War of Independence — Mohamad Harbi. Messages were received from a multitude of organisations, a few of which were the French Anarchist Federation, branches of the CFDT union, the anarchist radio station in Paris (Radio Libertaire), the Spanish CNT, the Italian Federation of Communist Anarchists,

the Swiss Libertarian Socialist Organisation and the Workers Solidarity Movement. There were also messages from other left wing movements such as the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the main French Trotskyist groups and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Sadly some Trotskyist organisations, notably the British SWP, have

tried to downplay Daniel's anarchist politics. (See their obituary in *Socialist Worker Review*, June 1988). As a tribute and to set the record straight we have translated the text below. It was written as a Preface to his 1984 book *Towards a Libertarian Communism*.



'TOWARDS A LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM'

Of all the reading which I did, in 1930, on the boat which took me to Indochina and back, of books which ranged from Marx to Proudhon, to Georges Sorel, to Hubert Lagardelle, to Fernand Pelloutier, to Lenin and Trotsky, those of Marx had without any doubt the greatest impact. These (books) opened my eyes, uncovered the mysteries of capitalist surplus-value, taught me about historical materialism and the dialectic. Entering, from then on, into the revolutionary movement, throwing overboard my bourgeois gown, I was initially, instinctually anti-stalinist; at that time I was a left socialist around Marceau Pivert and a revolutionary syndicalist under the influence of Pierre Monatte. Later, the writings of Bakunin, in the six-volume edition of Max Nettlau/James Guillaume, were like a second operation for cataract. They left me for ever allergic to any version of authoritarian socialism — whether it calls itself Jacobin, Marxist or Trotskyist.

It was under the commotion provoked in me by these writings (of Bakunin) that I was led to fundamentally revise the admiration I had held for the revolutionary strategy of Lenin, to re-work (my view) of this idol and proceed to an in-depth critique of certain authoritarian conceptions of the bolshevik leader. I concluded, from this internal debate, that socialism would have to rid itself of the worn-out notion of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, in order to recover its authentic libertarianism.

LUXEMBURG v LENIN

This was what led me, in my historical work on the French Revolution, to substitute everywhere for the

words *dictatorship of the proletariat* those of *revolutionary constraint*. Following this, I paid more attention to that lightning-quick process which Rosa Luxembourg had counterposed to the ultra-centralism of Lenin and the sterile character of his *bureaucratic substitutionism*. Much later, in 1971, I deepened my analysis of Luxembourism and attempted to emphasise her relative kinship with libertarian spontaneity.

The epoch when I was discovering Bakunin and re-reading Rosa was, in terms of the class struggle, the time of the Hungarian revolution and its savage suppression by Russian tanks. I felt, for my part, less interested in the political about-turns of that attempt at liberation from the yoke of Moscow, because it was charged through with disquieting ambiguities, than by the ephemeral flourishing of the Hungarian workers' councils.

ANARCHISM

My libertarianism passed through successive phases: in the beginning what I would call a classical anarchism, which found expression in *Youth of Libertarian Socialism* (1959), then *Anarchism, from Theory to Practice* (1965) and, simultaneously, *Neither God nor Master — Anthology of Anarchism*, where besides Bakunin, there was space for Stirner, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Malatesta and many others.

Then moving on a good bit from classical anarchism, and not turning my back for an instant on my marxian studies, I published *For a Libertarian Marxism* (1969), which title, I'm sure, confused and shocked some of my new libertarian friends. Then, just before the revolutionary tumult of May '68, into which I plunged up to the neck, I rejoined the Libert-

arian Communist Movement (MCL) around Georges Fontenis (returned from his authoritarian gaps!). Later I was with the Libertarian Communist Organisation (OCL), in its first and second forms, and then, right up until today, the Union of Libertarian Communist Workers (UTCL).

LIBERTARIAN SOCIALISM

During a quarter century, therefore I aligned myself, and still do, with libertarian socialism or communism

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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



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(the word anarchist seems to me too restrictive and I don't use it unless it is joined by the word *communist*). This libertarian communism is different, though it can be combined with, the utopia propagated by the school of Kropotkin, anticipating the era of abundance. Specifically, Libertarian Communism, as I understand it, is a combination of the best of both anarchism and the thought of Marx. I tried to disentangle these disparate elements in a pamphlet called *Anarchism and Marxism* which was added on to the second edition of my little book *Anarchism* (1981).

In the evening of my life, I certainly do not claim to have foreseen, except in very broad outlines, the definitive crystallisation of an uneasy and informal synthesis. H.E. Kaminski, in his biography of Bakunin, thought it was necessary and inevitable, but that it was more for the



future than for the present to formulate. It must come from the new social storms which will emerge, and which no-one today can pride themselves on bringing about.

NOT A DOGMA

I hope I have been, throughout my militant engagement, a historian and theoretician to advantage. It seems to me highly presumptuous to announce, among other things, what aspects of anarchism and the floating thoughts of Marx are, or are not reconcilable. Libertarian Communism

is as yet only an approximation, and not a dogma of absolute truth.

It cannot, it seems to me, define itself on paper absolutely. It will not be a rationalisation of the past, but a rallying point for the future. The main conviction which animates me is that the future social revolution will not be Muscovite despotism nor anaemic social-democracy, that it will not be authoritarian but libertarian and self-managing, or, if you like, councillorist.

Daniel Guerin

A FIGHT FOR USEFUL WORK

JOBS ARE UNDER threat all over the place. It is not just ones that are useful to us; like nursing, teaching, bus drivers; that are chopped. There are also workers in plants producing weapons, nuclear power, and so on whose futures are far from secure. Workers like those making missiles in Shorts in Belfast whose jobs could well vanish if privatisation plans are put into operation.

While we don't want to see anyone tossed onto the dole we also need to question what is being produced and in whose interests. As well as fighting to save the jobs we should be bringing up this issue. In the 1970s workers at the Lucas Aerospace Company in Britain set out to defeat the bosses plans to axe jobs. They produced their own alternative

"Corporate Plan" for the company's future. In doing so they attacked some of the underlying priorities of capitalism. Their proposals were radical, arguing for an end to the wasteful production of military goods and for peoples' needs to be put before the owner's profits.

MILITARY MATTERS

Lucas Aerospace in the early 70's was one of Europe's largest designers and manufacturers of aircraft systems and equipment. It had over 18,000 workers on its payroll, spread over 15 factories, throughout Britain. Nearly half of its business was related to military matters – in production of combat aircraft and the Sting Ray missile system for NATO. But it also had small interests in medical technologies.

The Company had been formed into the size it was through the takeovers and amalgamations of smaller

size companies. It had been backed by the Government of the day who wanted a strong and efficient aerospace company to compete with the other European manufacturers. As part of achieving this Management planned to rationalise the whole 15 factory operation into a more integrated and streamlined company. This would mean lay-offs for at least 20% of the workforce and the closure of some areas. The prize for the owners of Lucas in doing this, would be a much greater involvement in the military markets where profit rates were very high compared with other industries.

POOR WAGES

The intentions of the Company's owners and management did not go unnoticed by the Lucas workers or their Shop Stewards Combine Committee (SSCC). The origins of the SSCC was in the strong trade union tradition at the time in Britain though particularly in the aerospace industry. Over a period of years the workers in the different unions had seen the need to coordinate their negotiations against a single management so as to avoid poor wage increases as one section was paid off at the expense of the others. So they formed shop-stewards committees that bridged their different union memberships. As the company had grown bigger, these shop steward committees from different areas also linked up, to carry on the same idea of meeting the

management with a single voice for all workers in any negotiations.

STRUGGLE PAYS

The SSCC at Lucas which linked all the company sites had not, however, come about without much effort or struggle. It had grown to the importance it had because of its involvement with the direct rank and file struggles of workers there and was looked to by many far more than their individual unions or full time union officials. One of the most spectacular successes of the SSCC was in the Burnley strike in 1972 when by means of mobilising the support of all Lucas workers, a 13 week strike by Burnley workers was carried to a successful conclusion leading to a wage increase 167% larger than that nationally negotiated by the Union officials! The SSCC in the course of the strike had organised widespread collections and support meetings for the striking workers and had backed this up with strategic work stoppages at different plants that had maximised the losses to the Company with the minimum loss in pay. The support action coordinated by the SSCC was extremely effective and eventually saw management capitulating despite their previous claim that they wouldn't give the workers a penny extra.

After the Burnley strike, the SSCC was able to achieve much better pay and conditions for all union workers at Lucas. Local disputes in the Company were often settled through sympathy action coordinated by the SSCC. Management was unable to break the new found unity and was fearful of any large strike, like that at Burnley, breaking out again.

USEFUL JOBS

It was against this background that the SSCC in 1976 proposed the alternative Corporate Plan to Lucas's management (see adjoining article).

It was the product of two years planning and debate among Lucas workers. Everyone from unionised engineers, to technicians to production workers and secretaries was involved in drawing it up. It was based on detailed information on the machinery and equipment that all Lucas sites had, as well as the type of skills that were in the company. Its central aim was to head off Lucas's planned job cuts by arguing that the concentration on military goods and markets was neither the best use of resources nor *in itself* desirable. It argued that if Lucas was to look away from military production it could expand into markets for "socially useful" goods where it already had some expertise and sales.



If this was done no job losses would be needed. The Plan itself did considerable market research for what was needed to replace the military goods and what Lucas could actually make. According to it Lucas could eventually wind down its military production, keeping all its present workforce. In other words no job losses at all were envisaged. Moreover the production of high technology equipment like kidney machines would be of far more benefit than Sting-Ray missiles to society. The workforce would be much more happy with this from the point of view of jobs and the quality of work.

SHUNNED BY BOSSES

Lucas's owners and management did not however place a very high value on either the provision of work or its quality. When the Plan was presented to them they shunned it. They resented "their workers telling them what to do" and insisted on the

Company's commitment to defence production. The job cuts and rationalisations were to continue.

...AND UNION LEADERS

The full time union officials half-heartedly pledged their support for the Plan, but did nothing to widen the support among other trade unionists for it. This partly reflected their antagonism to the radical proposals of the Plan which went outside, by a long stretch, the cosy wage negotiations they were used to. But also they were antagonistic to the SSCC which they saw as getting above its station. They were worried that that the influence of the SSCC and the hornets nest it was sitting about job cuts and "socially useful" production might spread beyond their control even more than it already had. Maintaining the status quo was particularly important to them also at this time because of the pact signed between the Union leaders and the Labour Party Government which was aimed at taming the demands of union members in return for more say for the Union bosses in "national policy".

SELL OUT

The Labour Party similarly, now forming the Government, applauded the Plan but spent their time avoiding it like the plague. It reflected some of the weak politics, however, of the SSCC that they had turned to them at all. It was the British Government (with active Labour Party involvement) which in the first instance had supported Lucas's move to a competitive military manufacturer for NATO. Like all "socialists" in Government they had promptly forgotten their commitment to help the workers movement.

DIRECT ACTION

If it was direct industrial action that

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had built the SSCC into what it was and gave it the confidence to produce the likes of the alternative Corporate Plan, then it would have been the same industrial action that would have carried it forward further. That such direct action by the workers was not looked to by the SSCC in the aftermath of its rejection by the Lucas bosses reflected major weaknesses. Looking to the Labour Party was a huge weakness since it presupposed that Labour really had the interests of the workers at heart, which it didn't. The Labour Party in Government was looking after the interests of the British state. It was not going to challenge capitalism or its values which the Lucas Plan did at root. Workers, as became clear, only had themselves to look to for help. If the SSCC looked to this they may have got somewhere.

To some this response of managements was not very surprising. But these people were in the minority. The bulk of the SSCC while expecting an argument and some tough negotiations were totally taken aback at the response. As one AUEW shop-steward put it: "Quite honestly, I thought the Company would have welcomed it... that they would see it as constructive trade unionism..."

PROFITS FIRST

Constructive it may have been if the world was being run along different lines — ones that valued peoples'

need for meaningful work and put social needs above military production. The Company's owners were adamant that this wasn't the way things were going to be. For them Capitalism was the order of the day and this meant profits first and foremost. Moreover it was their right to "manage" Lucas and to decide where its resources would be used. To them the 18,000 people working at Lucas had no say in these fundamental matters and they resented the intrusion. In the aftermath of the Lucas Plan they determined to break the SSCC and its influence, which as we will see they did.

LABOUR PARTY

If the rejection of the Plan came as a surprise to the SSCC, the aftermath put them in a spot — what to do next. Previous to this when management had stalled or rejected their demands they had returned the matter to the rank and file workers where industrial action of some sort had been used to shift the Company. But this time, this did not happen. Instead the SSCC turned their attention to winning the Labour Party and the full-time Union officials to their cause. In doing this, they spent less and less time in consultation with the workforce at Lucas. The workers there who would have had the most to fight for and to gain from the Plan became less informed. Even the regular news-sheet previously produced by SSCC became more and more irregular, eventually disappearing

altogether. Slowly the unity built up in previous times was whittled away as SSCC members were now spending a huge degree of time meeting Labour MPs and Ministers — neglecting the real job of maintaining their workplace organisation.

JOB CUTS

As the lobbying of Labour Party MPs and Union bosses continued, Lucas's management proceeded with the job cuts and rationalisations where they could. With the SSCC busy lobbying but not coordinating any action, unity weakened among the workforce. Different areas were left to fend for themselves. With this situation Management did have the upper hand and used it. Some local victories were won by workers and jobs saved. Mainly this was through industrial action of some sort to force implementation of parts of the Plan. But this situation was a poor replacement for the unity and strength of previous times. Inevitably when jobs went, activists and in particular some of the main workers behind the SSCC were victimised. Once again, as has too often happened in Britain, faith in the Labour Party was a slippery slope to being sold out and losing the fight. Lucas workers had got to where they had through their own actions and organising capacity — it was this that would have been the way forward.

Kevin Doyle

The Alternative Plan

WHAT THE LUCAS PLAN PROPOSED

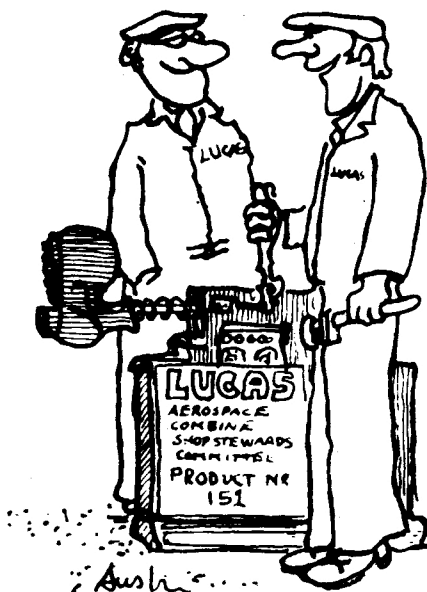
What was the alternative Lucas Corporate Plan? Over a period of two years a series of proposals that later became known as the Lucas Plan were drawn together through the active involvement of most of the workers in the 15 different Lucas factories. Its aim was to shift Lucas Aerospace as a company away from the production of military goods, mainly for NATO (an emphasis that was capital intensive and had high profit margins for Lucas's owners) and towards the production of socially useful goods (which was a labour intensive field, relying more on the skills already in the Lucas Company). Such a shift

would mean the preservation of jobs at Lucas and the fulfilment of some of the more pressing needs of society. Here is what was proposed:

Medical Equipment:

The proposals were:

- Increase production of kidney machines by 40% and look into the development of a portable model.
- Build up a 'design for the disabled' unit, with the Ministry of Health, to look into things like artificial limb control systems (which could use Lucas' control engineering expertise), sight aids for the blind, developing the 'Hobcart'. This vehicle was designed in the 1970s by an apprentice at Lucas to give mobility to children suffering from Spina Bifida.



"It's a socially useful device for use on the management"

Lucas management had refused to develop it on the grounds that it was incompatible with their product range.

- Manufacture an improved life-support system for ambulances. An ex-Lucas engineer turned doctor had offered to help design and build a prototype for this, using a simple heat exchanger and pumping system.

Alternative Energy Techniques:

Due to the finite availability of fuels like coal and petrol, they proposed that Lucas concentrate on renewable sources of energy generation and developing more efficient methods of energy conservation from fuel sources. Up to 60% of energy is lost with traditional forms of its use (car engines etc.). Moreover this would provide a real alternative to nuclear power generation which was unsafe and damaging to the environment.

- Development and production of heat pumps which were efficient in saving waste heat. Such heat pumps would be used in new housing schemes to provide a very cheap service.
- Development and production of solar cells and fuel cells.
- Development of windmills. Lucas' experience in aerodynamics would be invaluable.
- Development of a flexible power pack, which could easily adjust to people's situations allowing for small scale electricity generation using basic raw materials. Such instruments would be invaluable in under-developed countries where electricity provision is very poor.

Transportation:

- The development of a road-rail public transportation vehicle which would be light-weight using pneumatic tyres on rails. Such a system would be cheaper, safer for use and more integrated. It would allow rail services to be provided in areas where they were being closed down, etc. The road-rail vehicle would be able to travel on rails mainly but also convert to road use when needed.
- A combined internal combustion engine/battery powered car which could give up to 50% fuel savings while reducing toxic emission from cars.

The Plan proposed various other ideas in the areas of braking systems, undersea exploration technology and remote control devices.

The thrust of the Lucas Plan was radical from the beginning. It asked basic questions like what was the real use of Sting-Ray missiles and high technology fighter airplanes to society. Their production gobbled up money resources and technical inventiveness, making those who owned the Companies richer and richer but society got nothing from them.

WASTE

Basic needs in society are only filled inadequately, like for instance kidney machines, whose general shortage in society was then and still is a crying shame. Lucas, its workers argued, had the expertise to develop better, smaller and more mobile units which kidney sufferers were crying out for. Why shouldn't they do so?

Worse still, under a system that produces high quantities of weapons and armaments, not only is money wasted but also much human technology and innovation is wasted or mis-used as well. Take the proposal by the Lucas workers that the sophisticated radar systems used in modern fighter planes be used in the development of an "alternative sight" aid for blind people. Such a thing is easily within human capabilities, but is not made or even developed as a priority now.

Under Capitalism the world's resources and wealth is owned and used to make profit for the wealthy. Most money is invested where profit is highest. The fulfillment of human needs is always a secondary priority. The Lucas Plan challenged many of the basic assumptions of Capitalism: why should profits come before people? What value have military goods in a world with so many other pressing needs? As such it was important. But far more fundamentally it showed what capacity workers have to articulate their priorities and their values.

ANARCHISM

For the future it showed what enormous potential a society based on socialism could have. Such a society with real workplace democracy and the participation of all in the management of society would allow for the creative capacity of each individual to have its say while the real needs of society are met. But for this to be achieved as the Lucas workers learned, Capitalism and its priorities must be overthrown.

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Letters

Like what is in this magazine, hate it, want to tell us something? Write and let us know. Send to *Workers Solidarity*, P. O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.



IN THE SUMMER edition of your magazine Kevin Doyle wrote that it is a problem when socialists accept a division of society into order-givers and order-takers. Surely even a brief reading of world history demonstrates that this is not true.

The real problem centres on who is giving the orders. Is it to be the old rulers or is it to be a revolutionary party that has sunk deep roots in the working class. A party of this type, such as the pre-Stalin era Bolshevik party, will represent the true interests of the workers because of these roots.

This may not sound very nice to the romantic dreamers of the anarchist movement but it is the lesson of history, it is real. Politics is the art of the possible.

*Roisin Campbell,
Belfast.*

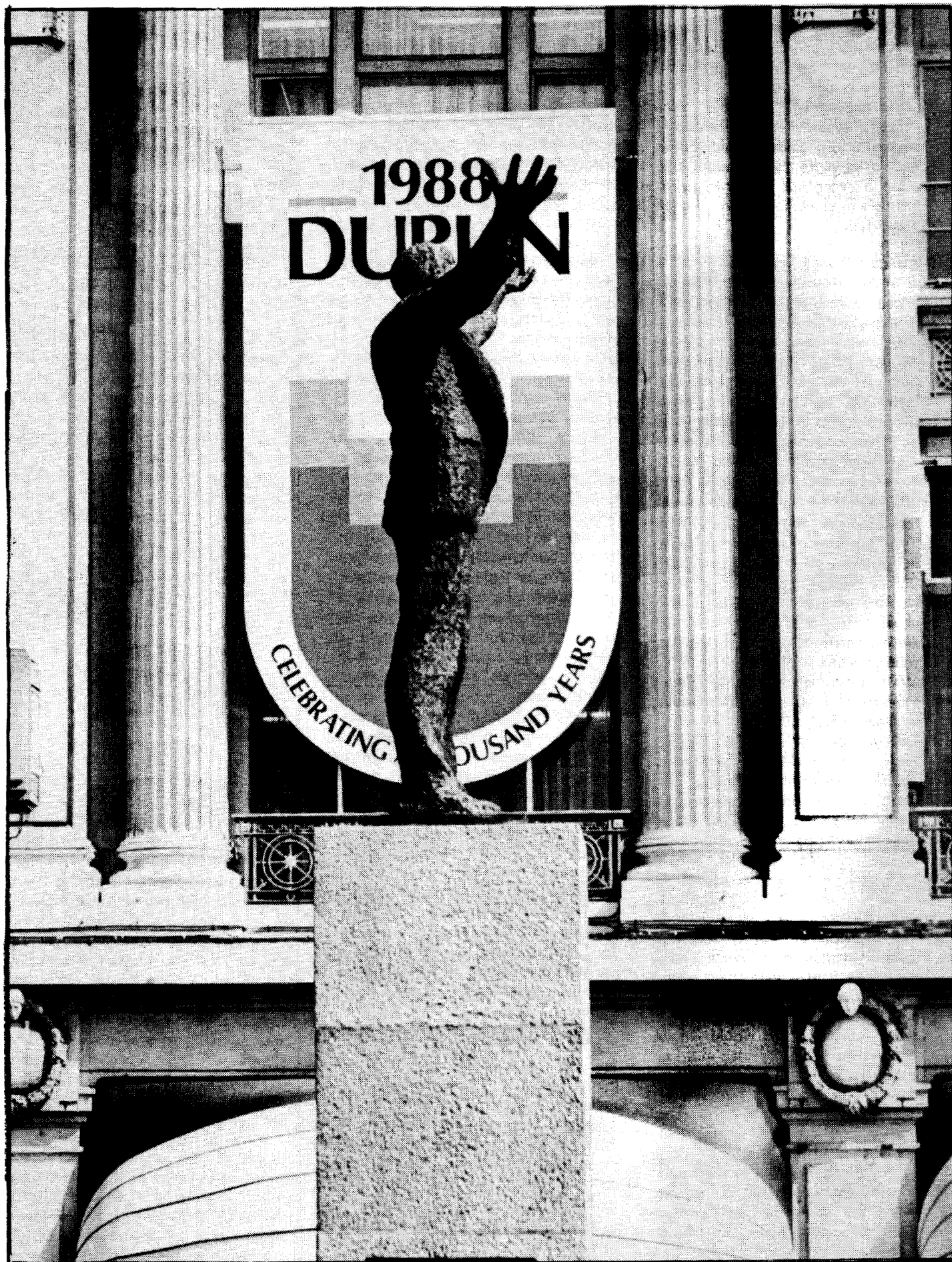


ANARCHISTS ARE rarely given more than a cursory and inaccurate mention in the history books. Who has heard about the Irishman who was regarded as "one of the most important figures of anarchism in Latin America" at the turn of the century? According to Ricardo Falcon, in his history of the labour movement in Argentina, such a person was John Creagh. An Irish doctor, he was editor of "The Oppressed" – an Argentinian anarchist paper that spearheaded a vigorous unionisation campaign and spoke for the militant current in the unions.

Why do we know so little about people like this, about Matt Kavanagh and Captain White of the Irish Citizen Army who became an anarchist in the 1930s? Would we get more information if they had held political beliefs regarded as more "orthodox" by professional historians?

*Martin Flynn,
Dublin 11.*





Jim Larkin's statue stands outside Clerys department store (the former Imperial Hotel where Larkin was arrested on Bloody Sunday 1913) in Dublin's O'Connell Street. On the 75th anniversary of the historic showdown between the unions and the 'gang of 400' employers mustered by William Martin Murphy *Workers Solidarity* looks back at the events as they unfolded.

1913 - 1988 75 YEARS SINCE THE DUBLIN LOCK-OUT

THIS YEAR MARKS the 75th anniversary of the 1913 Lock-Out in Dublin. It is part of the history of our class and such history is important to us. It gives us a sense of where we are coming from, it teaches us lessons that can be put to use in other struggles, and sometimes a knowledge of the courage displayed by ordinary men and women in the past gives us heart for the fights yet to come.

In 1913 militant trade unionism had a tremendous task ahead of it. The poverty of manual workers was appalling. The death rate in Dublin, 27.6 per 1000, was as high as Calcutta's. The slums were the worst of any city in either Ireland or Britain. 20,108 families were recorded as living in a single room. An *Irish Times* editorial commenting on a report about Dublin housing wrote that "28,000 of our fellow citizens live in dwellings which even the Corporation admits to be unfit for human habitation. Nearly a third of our population so live that from dawn to dark and from dark to dawn it is without cleanliness, privacy or self-respect. Sanitary conditions ruled out ordinary standards of savage morality".

If slum figures were higher than the rest of the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland", wage rates were lower. Thousands worked a 70 hour week for as little as 70p. Women's wages could be as low as 25p. Rents, however, were higher than in Britain.

Jim Larkin arrived from Liverpool in 1907 as an organiser for the British National Union of Dock Labourers. Immediately he threw himself into the work of organising the unskilled into the union. Strikes for recognition and higher wages broke out in Belfast, Newry and Cork.

Before long friction developed between the new Irish members and the British leadership of the NUDL. The union officers, and in particular the general secretary, James Sexton, became alarmed at the combative spirit of the Irish branches. Soon they were settling disputes over the heads of the members on strike, sending them back to work on the basis of weak and paltry deals arranged with employers behind the strikers' backs. Twenty years before the NUDL had done a good job of organising labourers in Britain but its leaders had become divorced from any real control by the membership. They were now more concerned with 'respectability', seeing their role as mediators who worked for 'fair play' and industrial peace.

BIRTH OF A UNION

Some of the most active members, grouped around Larkin, broke away and on January 4th 1909 founded the Irish Transport Workers Union. The union, whose name was to be enlarged to ITGWU, began in humble surroundings. Its first office was a bare room in a tenement in Townsend Street, Dublin. Its assets were "a couple of chairs, a table, two empty bottles and a candle".

Many of the founding members came from the infant socialist movement. Among their influences was syndicalism. This was the idea that all workers, regardless of trade, should be in 'one big union' which would use whatever methods were necessary to win in their battles with the bosses. The syndicalists held that the interests of workers and bosses were absolutely opposed and their end goal was a general strike to throw out the bosses and establish socialism. This was only one of the influences present and it was not clearly defined but it can claim much of the credit for popularising the notion of the 'sympathetic strike'.

A man who was to play a significant role in the union was James Connolly. At the time the ITGWU was set up he was in America where, along with fellow-Irishman Patrick Quinlan, he formed a branch of the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World in Newark, New Jersey. Shortly after he became secretary of the IWW Building and Constructional Workers Industrial Union in the area. It is also worth noting that when Jim Larkin went to America in 1914 to raise funds for the impoverished ITGWU he also joined the IWW. (The IWW saw itself as a revolutionary union, a fair proportion of its founders and prominent activists were anarchists).

WEXFORD LOCK OUT

By 1910 the ITGWU was claiming 3,000 members and was admitted to the Irish Trade Union Congress. It quickly established a name for itself as an aggressive defender of its members and as a union that refused to make shoddy deals over the workers' heads. A forerunner of the 1913 lock-out took place in 1911 in Wexford when two foundries, Pierces and the Star Works, told their staffs "no workman is acceptable if a member of the ITGWU". The lock-out lasted six months, saw the importation of scabs from England and RIC (police) from Dublin, and the RIC killing of a worker called Michael Leary. The bosses caved in, though as a face-saving exercise they insisted that the strikers form a different union. This was the Irish Foundry Workers Union (which was affiliated with the ITGWU and two years later dropped the pretense and became a regular branch).

Between 1911 and 1913 the union, mainly by the use of sympathetic strikes, won victories in Dublin.

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These benefited not only its own growing membership, but other trades also. Through the union's control of the carting industry (transport), engine drivers, coachmakers, cabinet makers, sheet metal workers, carpenters and all the building trades got increases in pay. Among its own membership, dockers, labourers, coal and grain fillers, bottle factory workers, biscuit makers, mineral water bottlers and railway workers received pay rises. The increases varied between 15p to 50p weekly — no small sum for the times.

WILLIAM MARTIN MURPHY

If the workers were happy at this turn in events, the bosses certainly were not. They banded together in the Dublin Employers Federation. Their leader was William Martin Murphy, owner of the *Irish Independent*, *Evening Herald*, and *Irish Catholic* newspapers, the Dublin Tramways Company and holder of big interests in hotel and drapery businesses.

Murphy's plan was to use the weapon of starvation to break the union. On September 2nd 1913 he spelled out his policy to the Dublin Chamber of Commerce — *"The employer all the time managed to get his three meals a day, but the unfortunate workman and his family had no resources whatever except submission, and that was what occurred in 99 cases out of 100. The difficulty of teaching that lesson to the workmen was extraordinary."*

MURPHY GETS READY

During the months of July and August Murphy was preparing for a showdown, by swelling the ranks of his employees with new recruits who had to sign an undertaking that they would not join the ITGWU. He also arranged with the British authorities that in the event of a strike the tramway company "was assured of the most ample protection for their men by the forces of the Crown".

On August 12th 1913 a notice was posted in all tramway depots saying that there would be no recognition for "Mr. Larkin or his union". Meanwhile Larkin, in an attempt to consolidate the recent gains, had come up with a scheme for a Conciliation Board. By 18 votes to 3 the Committee of the Employers Federation agreed to his proposal. It can be argued that Larkin was naive to think that any long term arrangement could be maintained

that would be beneficial to the workers. Murphy didn't want even a short term one, vowing to "smash the Conciliation Board".

THE FIGHT BEGINS

On August 21st nearly 200 men and boys in the parcels office of the Tramway Company received the following notice:— *"As the directors understand that you are a member of the Irish Transport Union, whose methods are disorganising the trade and business of the city, they do not further require your services. The parcels traffic will be temporarily suspended. If you are not a member of the union when traffic is resumed your application for re-employment will be favourably considered"*.

On the morning of August 26th, the first day of Horse Show week, Murphy got a shock. At ten o'clock the tram drivers took out their union badges and pinned them in their buttockholes. They then walked off their trams, leaving them stranded in the middle of the road. The strike was on. The demands were reinstatement of and parcels staff, and equality of hours and wages with the tramway workers of Belfast.

THE GANG OF 400

Despite Murphy being only one of a minority of three on the question of the Conciliation Board, the Dublin bosses rallied around him. Each employer deposited, in the name of the Employers Federation, a sum of money in the bank. If a depositor came to terms with the union he lost all his money. The first boss to follow Murphy was Shackleton of Lucan, followed by Jacobs and the coal merchants. Then on September 3rd 400 employers met and pledged not to employ a single person who

remained loyal to the union.

They agreed to lock out all workers who refused to sign this pledge — *"I hereby undertake to carry out all instructions given to me by or on behalf of my employers and further I agree to immediately resign my membership of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (if a member) and I further undertake that I will not join or in any way support this union."* Ten days later Dublin's big farmers joined in and issued a similar ultimatum.

LIES AND SLANDERS

Murphy used his newspapers to claim that the tram strike was collapsing and to attempt to split the strikers by printing all manner of lies and slanders against Larkin. The *Irish Catholic* of September 6th: *"They are poor and have naught, but if they were rich tomorrow, debauchery would soon have them in poverty again... by folly or malice of their so-called leader, they have been placed in deplorable straits... all this to gratify the vengeful whims of an adventurer who has been battenning on their credulity"*. Murphy pretended that his objection was only to "Larkinism" and not to legitimate trade unionism. This lie was easily exposed by mention of the previous efforts of the tram workers to organise. In 1903 Murphy had smashed the "Dublin and District Tramways Trade Union" and victimised its leading members.

The workers of Dublin met the threat to destroy the Transport Union with a heroic resistance. All over the city thousands chose the lock-out rather than sign the notorious document. Each trade served by labourers walked out when the labourers were ordered to sign. Most tradesmen



Dublin 1913: note the childrens' bare feet.

showed solidarity. Even the United Builders Labourers Trade Union, who had been in conflict with Larkin, refused to sign and marched out "to help the ITGWU boys". The women and girls marched out from the factories once the document was produced. By September 27th there were 24,000 locked-out. Within another two weeks the number rose to about 30,000. 32 unions were involved, all sticking up for the rights of the Transport Union, and trade union principles.



The first attempt at conciliation was tried by the leaders of the British TUC, who sent a special delegation to Dublin. If they didn't realise this was a serious battle, the employers did and told them to get lost.

BLOODY SUNDAY

The close co-operation between the bosses and the state forces revealed itself early in the struggle when Larkin was arrested on charges of seditious libel and conspiracy, because he had advised workers to defend themselves against assaults by the police. Out on bail, he was announced as the main speaker for a mass meeting in O'Connell Street on August 31st. The meeting was banned by the authorities in Dublin Castle. Larkin addressed a huge crowd outside Liberty Hall, burned a copy of the banning order and declared that he would speak in O'Connell Street on Sunday. The RIC ended the meeting with a violent baton charge.

All Dublin waited to see if Larkin would keep his promise. The street was packed on the day. Hundreds of police lined up on both sides. Suddenly on the balcony of Murphy's own Imperial Hotel a bearded man appeared. The false beard was discarded, Larkin had kept his promise.

As he began to speak he was quickly arrested. Then, before the crowd had even recovered from their surprise, the RIC fell on them with a brutal baton charge. Men, women and children were felled and beaten as they lay in the street. Hundreds were admitted to hospitals that evening.

Throughout the struggle this brutality was repeated all over the city. One of the most scandalous incidents was a police attack on a block of tenements, Corporation Buildings, in the city centre. This was home to many strikers. At two o'clock on a Monday morning the police invaded. Tenants were beaten without regard to age or sex, homes were wrecked. Even a baby of a few months was left with an eye injury.

STRIKERS MURDERED

Police thuggery inevitably produced fatalities. James Nolan, a young union member, was beaten so badly that his skull was smashed in. John Byrne also lost his life at the hands of the RIC. A young striker Alice Brady was travelling home with her food parcel from the union office when an armed scab shot her dead. Michael Byrne, secretary of the ITGWU in Dun Laoghaire was tortured in a police cell and died shortly after release.

Pickets were attacked by police, meetings were broken up. Strikers responded with stoning of trams driven by scabs. Larkin said the workers should arm and defend themselves. This cry was translated into the formation of the Irish Citizen



Larkin in disguise after his arrest at the Imperial Hotel.

Army which was trained by Captain Jack White DSO, an ex-British Army officer who now fully supported the workers' cause and later joined the ranks of the anarchist movement during the Spanish Civil War. The ICA was a workers' militia armed with sticks and hurleys, for protection against police and blacklegs. (Later the hurleys gave way to rifles when the ICA took part in the 1916 rising).

SUFFER THE CHILDREN...

Then, as now, the Catholic church enjoyed a lot of influence. From the beginning it had opposed trade unionism, and had then tried to back 'moderate' unions against ones that fought hard for their members. In 1911 in Sligo, Dr. Clancy, the bishop, denounced Larkin as a socialist and forbade the people to attend the public meeting of the union. (Showing that clerical power is not always as strong as bishops would wish, the public meeting was one of the largest ever seen in Sligo.)

In spite of great efforts, including a food kitchen in Liberty Hall, it was obvious that the strikers' children were suffering from Murphy's "starvation policy". Some good people in Britain offered to take children into their homes until the situation improved. The union, while fearing public hostility would be whipped up by religious bigots, agreed to co-operate because of the children's desperate plight.

The union's fears were real. Dr. Walsh, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, despite assurances that the children's religion would be safeguarded, attacked the plan. He also stated that it was unacceptable because sending children to comfortable homes with three appetising meals a day would make them discontented with their slum homes when they returned. As children were taken to the boats and trains, gangs of thugs were organised to try and prevent their departure. These were marshalled by priests and officers of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. A campaign of slander claimed that the children were being taken away so that they could be made into Protestants. All this had its effect. However, many children did manage to get to Britain and Belfast.

A LOVE OF IRELAND... BUT NOT ITS WORKERS

Three years before the 1916 rising, the 'national movement' was growing fast. We know the attitude of the socialists, they were to be found in



● JIM LARKIN

the thick of the struggle. What then was the attitude of the nationalists? Some, such as Tom Clarke, Sean Connolly and the Countess Markeivicz, took the side of the workers. But the majority refused. Arthur Griffith, the leader of Sinn Fein, refused to help because his movement was "national not sectional". He went on to describe the food ships sent by British trade unionists as an "insult". Even the more radical Irish Republican Brotherhood refused to involve itself in a "sectional" dispute. When, at a meeting of the Irish Volunteers in the Rotunda on November 25th, ITGWU members challenged this they were attacked with hurley sticks and thrown out. No matter how much they talked of 'justice', and no matter how strongly some individuals sympathised with the union, the objective of all nationalists — from Home Rulers like Murphy to radicals like the IRB — was an independent *capitalist* Ireland. That is why they could not support the workers in such a major battle, one that could have destroyed the unity of the nationalist movement along class lines.

Once the lock-out was general in Dublin the two sides' strength could be clearly seen. On one side was the vast majority of the Dublin working class, on the other not only the employers of the city but the whole of the British ruling class and its state machinery. If the union was not to be ground down in a protracted war of attrition the struggle would have to be spread across the Irish sea. The ITGWU had always responded to calls for solidarity action from British unions, now when it was fighting for its very life it demanded that this action be reciprocated.

Who should be appealed to? The bureaucracy of the unions or the

rank and file? The ITGWU founders' experience of the NUDL let them know what could be expected from the bureaucrats. Would officials who had betrayed their own members behave any better towards members of another union, an Irish one at that? From the first they appealed directly to the rank and file, and met with a great response.

On September 16th railway workers in Liverpool began to block all traffic to Dublin, soon some 13,000 were locked out or on strike as far afield as Birmingham, Sheffield, Crewe and Derby. This action was totally unofficial, organised by rank and file committees who aimed towards a national stoppage in support of Dublin. Sadly the railway union leaders, in particular J.H. Thomas, managed to prevent the strike spreading, isolate the militants and secure a return to work. There was a great fighting spirit and a real willingness to take solidarity action, but the militants were too unorganised and uncoordinated to overcome the manoeuvres of Thomas and his cronies.

"FIERY CROSS"

The ITGWU launched a second appeal for solidarity action. Larkin spoke at meetings all over Britain, his "fiery cross" crusade. In response a second wave of unofficial action spread across Britain. In South Wales two train drivers were sacked for refusing to carry Dublin traffic. 30,000 of their fellow workers on the railways struck in support of them. Once again Thomas used all his schemes and pleadings to get the strikers back to work. He ended up describing the

two sacked train drivers as "a disgrace" to trade unionism!

Union officials reported great difficulty in keeping their members on the Liverpool and London docks from coming out in sympathy. There was no lack of support for the ITGWU's struggle but the militants just did not have enough co-ordination to take on the bureaucrats, and break their hold.

The pressure from below was such, however, that the TUC called its first ever special conference. They hoped to kill off unofficial action by seeming to be doing something themselves. All eyes turned on the TUC. Delegates to the special conference were not elected from within their unions but simply selected from the ranks of the more cautious executive committee members. The vote for sympathy action was lost by 2,280,000 to 203,000. A shameful betrayal orchestrated by timid officials afraid to step outside the bounds of 'conciliation and arbitration'.

FOOD SHIPS

Nevertheless £150,000 was collected for Dublin, which was a massive amount in those times. (A debt we repaid during the 1984/85 miners strike when Ireland contributed more per head of population than any other country). The food ships sent by the British TUC helped to maintain morale and keep the wolf from the door. But they were no substitute for the strike action that would have brought the bosses to their knees.

By the end of the year there had been two meetings between the union and the employers but negotiations



"The Hare", a food ship sent by British trade unions arrives in Dublin.

were broken off when the employers refused to give any guarantee against victimisation in the re-employment of workers. There were still almost daily picketline battles between strikers and armed scabs and RIC. Many union members were still being injured and arrested. After 16 year-old Alice Brady was murdered in December angry strikers caught a revolver carrying scab and beat him to death. Another was thrown into the Liffey. But it was now plain that the union was fighting a losing battle.

BACK TO WORK

By mid-January 1914 a drift back to work had started. A month later there were still 5,000 brave men and women sticking it out in circumstances of the direst poverty. The last group to accept defeat and return to work were the magnificent women of Jacobs who held out till mid-March.

What was the significance of the defeat? Some, such as the historian Desmond Greaves, say it was not a defeat. In reality it was a crushing defeat. Victimisation happened all over the city, the union was financially broken and its membership decimated. A climate of demoralisation and despondancy prevailed.

DOWN... BUT NOT OUT

However such defeats are not always terminal. A hard core of determined members kept the union together. It was an uphill task. They were thought unrealistic and had to put up with much shrugging of shoulders and cynicism. Yet by October 1915 they were strong enough to win a dispute with the Dublin Steam Packet Company. Murphy had once again called for a lock-out but this time his employer friends refused to follow



A drawing of the food kitchen in Liberty Hall by Sir William Orpen, who was sympathetic to the union.

him. They had won two years earlier but at a great financial cost. They were in no hurry to spend such large amounts of money again.

By 1921 the union was truly back on its feet. 120,000 workers all over the country were carrying ITGWU cards. The seemingly unstoppable tide of militant trade unionism, often called Larkinism, had been stopped and tamed but the union had survived. The potential was still there for further and greater outbreaks of class warfare.

Today we can get demoralised when we look at the wave of emmigration sweeping the 32 counties,

the job losses, the very low level of struggle, the feeling of almost total powerlessness and lack of confidence among our friends and workmates. It is a little like the period after 1913. Just as then, it has fallen to small numbers to keep the ideas of class struggle and solidarity alive. It is usually unexciting and undramatic — but it is vital. We are laying the foundations for the struggles of tomorrow, the struggles we hope will take us into a world that can offer a real future to us all.

Alan MacSimóin.

.. another Dublin lock-out

AUGUST 2nd saw the opening night for the ITGWU's pageant commemorating the 75th anniversary of the lock-out. The red carpet was rolled out (literally) and in trooped such friends of trade unionism as Charlie Haughey, President Hillary and government ministers. Outside, behind lines of

gardai, were workers from Irish Printed Circuits who had been locked out since March because they had joined a union — the MSF. They were objecting to the government giving IDA grants of £750,000 to their union-busting boss, and promising him a further £500,000. Surely they should have been inside and Haughey's cronies kept outside? Over to you John Carroll.

STRIKE

Information on abortion

DUBLIN: 01-794700

BELFAST: 084-324914.

LONDON: Irish Women's Abortion Support Group,
031-251 6332/3 (Tuesdays,
6-9 p.m.)

For literature and news about the Abortion Information Campaign write c/o 6 Crow Street, Dublin 2.

ANARCHISM FOR BEGINNERS

REVIEW

Anarchy: A Graphic Guide by Clifford Harper (Camden Press IR£7.20)

THE GRAPHIC GUIDES are a new series of books, easy explanations and lots of drawings. Not totally different from the Marx/Cuba/Ireland/etc "for beginners" books.

Harper begins his new book with the following: "Like all really good ideas, *Anarchy* is a pretty simple one when you get down to it — human beings are at their best when they are living free of authority, deciding things among themselves rather than being ordered about".

In a nutshell this is the essential feature of the tradition of ideas — anarchism — described in this book. Also known as libertarian socialism, anarchism sees the fundamental struggle in society as the struggle to be free. By this is meant the absolute right of all to have full

control over their lives and how they wish to live them: to be free from exploitation and repression of any form. Anarchism then is that idea that seeks to abolish coercive authority in society and replace it with a society based on free association and participatory democracy for all.

FREEDOM

The obstacle to creating such a free socialist society is the class nature of society now, where there are huge privileges and wealth for some, at the expense of most others. It is to preserve this status quo of inequality for the rich that authoritarianism and force are used and needed in society. Anarchists argue that if the producers of wealth in society — the working class — were sufficiently conscious and organised they could abolish this inequality and create a new world, without material inequality, in which authoritarianism and force would have no place.

Contradicting the prevailing view that such radical change isn't possible or that workers wouldn't be able to run society any differently, Harper makes clear that resistance to authoritarianism and inequality has gone

on time and time again in human history. Often it hasn't been an articulated challenge nor have the prospects of success been good but essentially ordinary people have believed and fought for a better world against great odds. And always, firing these struggles has been the belief and desire for a free world without oppression of any sort. Anarchists see this as a crucial part of their ideas — that there is a desire and innate belief in people to be free and this will one day win over the repression and exploitation that there is now in society.

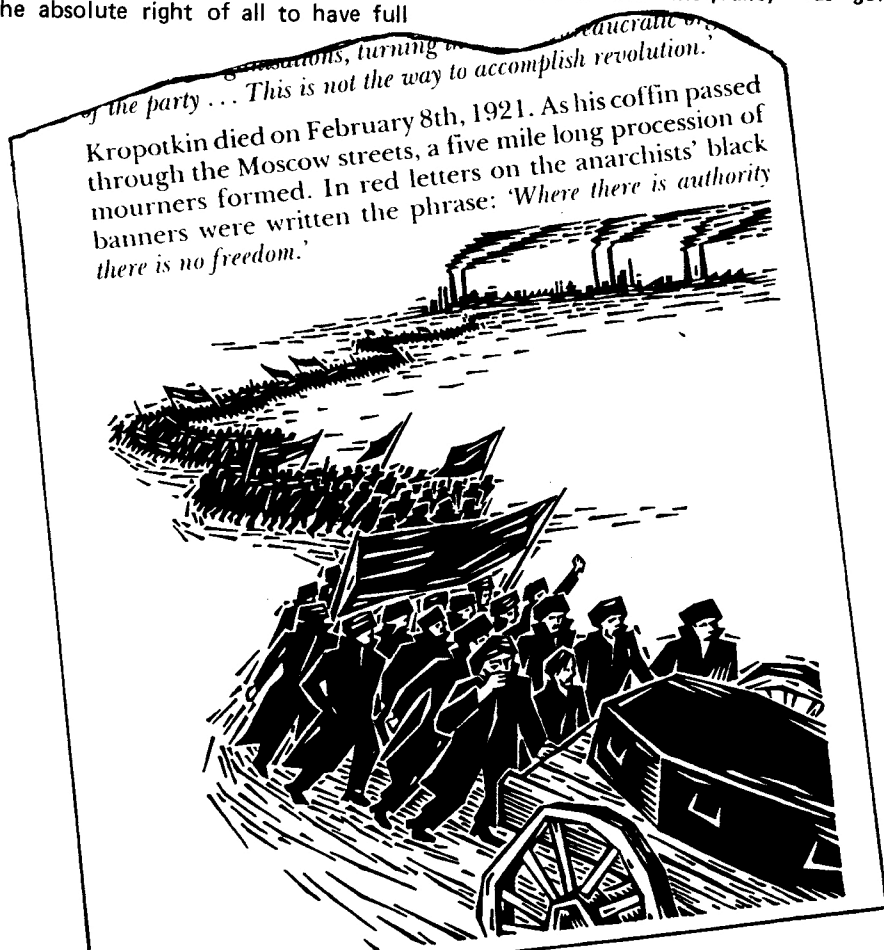
BLOODY RESPONSE

Moreover, on occasions workers have come very close to establishing this new world. For the rich it has been too close for comfort. Harper brings together an enormous number of events and people over many centuries that are linked to anarchism. The early libertarian movements such as the Diggers in Britain and the Taborites in Czechoslovakia are mentioned. The latter proclaimed in 1430: "All shall live together as brothers, none shall be subject to another. The kingdom shall be handed over to the people of the Earth, who shall know nothing of 'mine and thine' ". In pursuit of this grand goal they slew many lords and noblemen. Eventually they came to a bloody end at the hands of an army led by German princes.

The book leads on to the founders of modern anarchism: Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin — and the ideas they articulated. In particular Bakunin's arguments with Karl Marx and his prediction that the authoritarian features of Marx's ideas could lead to a 'Red Bureaucracy' eventually suppressing the workers are outlined. As becomes clear in a later chapter of the book dealing with the Russian Revolution this was precisely what did happen when Lenin and the Bolsheviks took control. Believing that the workers of Russia were incapable of creating socialism without their "leadership", the Bolsheviks took over and tried to use the Tsarist state to build socialism.

KRONSTADT REVOLT

A new era of repression and exploitation was visited on the Russian workers by the Bolsheviks eventually giving way to the savagery of Stalinism. Moreover the experience of



continued from previous page

Russia and the bad name (as an authoritarian ideology) it has given to the idea of socialism is something that many socialists have been trying to put behind them ever since. There were strong forces in the workers' movement in Russia back in the early days of the revolution that were fighting for a "free socialist society". Tragically they were defeated. Harper mentions these, and gives details of the Kronstadt sailors and the Ukrainian anarchists under Makhno.

The book moves on to deal with the spread of anarchism internationally especially to the Americas. The huge movement of anarchism in Spain is outlined but on the whole not dealt with well given the size, force and example it became. Embracing about 3 million workers and peasants during the height of the Spanish Revolution, it was perhaps the first time in history that libertarian social-

ism was put into practice for a considerable length of time (1-2 years).

EDUCATION & FEMINISM

Coming up to modern times, the events in Paris in 1968 are mentioned as well as some of the influences that anarchism has had in education and feminism. There are however some strange inclusions such as Che Guevara, who most anarchists would strive to disassociate from given the authoritarian approach he had to changing society.

On the whole then this book is an easily read introduction to anarchism. Because of the time span as well as the many ideas involved there is over-simplification to get everything in but a broad view can be got of the many sides to anarchism, as well as the essential validity in these times of a socialist tradition that sees individual freedom and liberty for all as *the* prime goals to be fought for.

Peter Sullivan

x REVIEW

Basic Bakunin (Anarchist Communist Federation, Britain IR£0.60).

MICHAEL BAKUNIN, a native of Tsarist Russia, quickly developed a burning hatred for injustice. His early attempts to find a way to change society led him to nationalism and he won the attention of the police forces of several European countries for his participation in the revolts of the mid-1800s.

Over the years he matured politically, coming to the conclusion that the division of society into workers and bosses, ruled and rulers was the root cause of all the injustice and exploitation he saw around him. He rejected nationalism and instead looked to the infant labour movement as the vehicle that could spearhead the struggle for change. With seemingly limitless energy he wrote, organised, agitated; it was around him and his co-thinkers that the anti-authoritarian socialists (anarchists) in the International Working Mens (sic) Association gathered. It is from here that we can trace the foundation of the modern anarchist movement.

The anonymous author of this pamphlet has set out to give a brief outline of Bakunin's main ideas. There are sections on classes, the state, parliamentary democracy, Karl Marx, trade unions, revolutionary organisation, and anarchy. There are of course concepts that could be explained more fully, but perhaps the pamphlet will stimulate readers to get hold of a good book about the man's ideas, like Sam Dolgoff's *Bakunin on Anarchy*.

It is a pity that the author does not give us some information about Bakunin's life and the times he lived through. Also, while not wanting hundreds of footnotes in tiny print, it is irritating that there are no sources given. How are we to know what article or book by Bakunin to read for more information about something we find particularly interesting? All we are told is "Bakunin thought" or "Bakunin firmly believed".

Still, the objective seems to have been to produce something short and cheap for the greatest possible circulation. The hope must be that it will interest readers to find out more. At 60p it is good value, check it out.

Books reviewed in this magazine are available from Workers Solidarity Bookservice, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8. *Anarchy: a Graphic Guide* costs IR£7.70 (inc. postage), and *Basic Bakunin* 80p (inc postage).

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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.

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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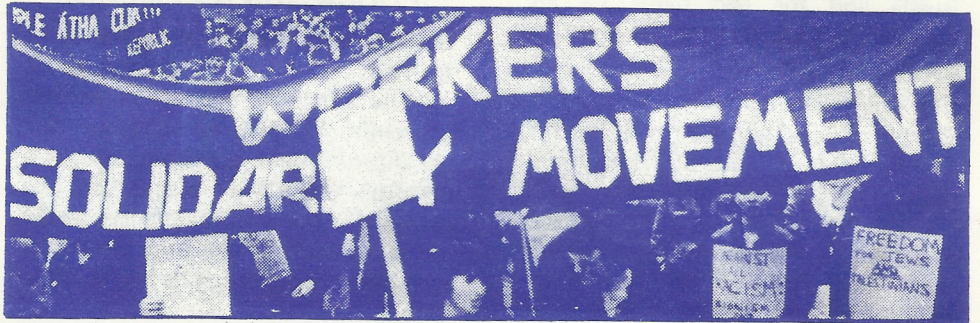
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Thinking about Anarchism



'Freedom'

Myles Kennedy

AS ANARCHISTS, we say first and foremost that we are socialists. But we do not just leave it at that. We flesh out the idea of socialism. We lay a huge, emphasis on freedom. Indeed, we assert that socialism without freedom is not socialism at all. For what is the point in doing away with a ruling class only to replace it with new rulers – even though now they “represent your objective interests”? For us, the central task for socialists is to do away with the rule of a minority over the majority, that is to say, to abolish the state which permits this rule to continue.

We say that the only permissible limit on the freedom of the individual is that they do not encroach on the freedom of another. This is the answer to those who say that anarchism would allow the trampling of the strong on the weak all over again. For only through the use of the above formula can the freedom of each be preserved. So, there will be no qualms about restraining the rapists and the muggers, or abolishing exploitative labour. Only through a deep respect for the freedom of every individual will society ever be organised in a just and humane way.

LEVELS OF FREEDOM

We can examine freedom in the concrete by dividing it into what we might call 'higher level' and 'basic' freedoms. Higher level freedoms might be such as marital, sexual and in the area of control over fertility. We see such freedoms as essential, and looking at Ireland we see what a mockery of a free society it is.



Homosexual sex is still criminalised. That is to say two adults engaging in activity which they both desire can be subjected to all the repressive forces of the state, can be locked away in jail for encroaching on no-one's freedom. Marriage for life is the chain the state clamps on people. Prior to the recent divorce referen-

dum, two-thirds of the people favoured the introduction of divorce (even in the highly restricted form that it was talked of), but that arch-opponent of freedom, the Church, mobilised all its forces and turned this two-thirds majority the other way around by polling day.

The extent of the state's attacks on freedom are easily seen in the area of control over one's own fertility. After a period of comparative advance in the seventies, when, through direct action and open flaunting of the law (largely by the women's movement), the state was forced to provide some degree of contraceptive services, the boot is now firmly on the other foot. Not merely is the demand for A Woman's Right To Choose far from being won, but the state (with the Hamilton Judgement and the banning of non-directive pregnancy counselling) is now stepping into the area of what people can say to one another.

FREEDOM TO LIVE

What we might call a basic freedom would be freedom from hunger and want. At a time when 14 days of current expenditure on arms would provide adequate food and shelter for everyone on the planet, people are starving to death every minute of every day. Food mountains pile up in warehouses in Europe, and crops are ploughed back into the land. This is endemic to capitalism. For capitalism is a system which distributes not on the basis of need but of profit. And if there is no real scarcity to justify a hike in prices then an artificial one can always be created. Only when this chaotic system is abolished will even such a low level freedom be achieved.

Another basic freedom would be freedom from exploitation. And here

we get a chance to see the need for a revolutionary perspective. Exploitation cannot be reformed away. This is not to say that we do not support limited struggles for better wages or conditions: we will always opt for workers over bosses. Rather it is to bring home to people that exploitation is and always will be *essential* to capitalism. No boss will ever give you a job unless he can realise a surplus from your labour, unless you can be exploited. We will support any wage etc. struggle in the here and now, but we realise that the exploitative conditions under which we all work, and which permeate every aspect of our lives, can only be abolished through revolutionary activity by the great mass of people.

Our concern with freedom animates every aspect of our politics, and we could go on and on about how the rhetoric of the 'free world' proves the opposite at every step, but a final comment on freedom is in order, especially as it touches on a crucial anarchist insight – often expressed in the form “how you organise in the here and now will prefigure and structure what you achieve”. Freedom cannot be gained through a seizure of the state. That is to say, coercive authority cannot be abolished through the taking on of that power regardless of what you claim is your aim. It's a very obvious point really. Coercive authority can only be abolished by setting about the task from day one – that is to say by smashing the state and setting up the new directly democratic structures of community and workplace councils in its place. Anarchists are the only socialists who refuse to propagate the myth that the old oppressive structures can be used for anything other than what they were designed for: to impose the will of a minority on the majority.