

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (Australia)

Direct Action Movement (Britain)

Workers Solidarity Alliance (USA)

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION

NUMBER: 1

JANUARY 1988

Dear Comrades,

Welcome to the first issue of the I.W.A. international English Language Discussion Bulletin.

The initial proposal under which it has come about is as follows:

- (1) Purpose: (a) To facilitate greater communication between english-speaking sections through their common language. (b) To give expression of ideas relevant to the problems facing comrades in english-speaking countries (eg. the question of dual unionism), To develop greater internationalism and solidarity.
- (2) Format: similar to the present ASF I.B., the DAM I.B. and WSA Discussion Bulletin (ie: typewritten, photocopied A4 pages).
- (3) Issue schedule: Quarterly, starting March 1987.
- (4) Distribution: To all members in good standing of the ASF, the DAM and WSA, through respective International/National Secretaries; and to english-speaking sections of the IWA upon receipt of verification of membership from their local group secretaries or equivalent, or their International/National Secretaries.
- (5) Funding: By donation from ASF, DAM, WSA.

- (7) Contributions: To be type-written (wherever possible) or to be hand-printed.
- (6) Production: Initially by ASF-Melbourne and to be rotated amongst local groups of english-speaking IWA sections capable of production at least once a year.

At the DAM National Conference on Menston in April 1987 the above was approved with the following ammendments:

- (A) Layout and typing be done by the production group and dispatched to the various sections for printing and distrubition.
- (B) To be available to sympathetic groups and individuals outside the IWA
- (C) To replace (4) with: To be sold to members for as much as each organisation chooses.

The ammendments were accepted by ASF-Melbourne, but have yet to be decided upon by the ASF as a whole. The ASF as a whole, however, and the WSA, at their respective Congresses, did approve the original proposal.

There is some confusion, it seems, about the meaning of (6)- whether it means that one groups produces 3 to 4 issues, and then the production is rotated to another section, or whether each section takes it in turn to undertake production at least once a year. ASF-Melbourne has subsequently proposed that production be 3 times a year, which would fit easily with the latter interpretation. As we have no established way for the 3 sections to make agreements, we suggest that our delegates to the IWA Congress meet for a few minutes to clear up these technicailities, with final proposals coming back to the 3 sections for ratification.

In the mean time, we suggest we take up the offer of our Comrade the International Secretary of the DAM to produce the next issue, and suggest the end of April 1988 as the deadline. Send submissions to:

International Secretary,
DAM-IWA,
P.O. Box 96,
DONCASTER,
BRITAIN.

We wish the Discussion Bulletin all the best, and look foward to your contribution, some lively debate and information.

Yours in Struggle,

Laurel
Paul

ASF-Melbourne.

WHICH WAY FORWARD, COMRADE?

In the past six months news has reached Australia of a mooted plan for the transition of the DAM from propaganda group to union over a period of five years. It is understood here that such a plan is not universally supported within the DAM.

It seems that within the DAM there are two attitudes to this plan. On one hand, it is seen as a logical progression given the DAM's increased activity and membership and the success of the much-improved Direct Action. One of the goals of propaganda groups is to eventually form anarcho-syndicalist industrial union federations.

On the other hand, such a move is seen as premature, that not enough groundwork has been laid and that activity of the rank and file within (or without) present union structures be given first priority on the agenda.

It is also understood that the first position finds favour amongst DAM members whose experience is in mainly un-organized workplaces and/or industries and the second position is favoured by those in workplaces and/or industries where there are established trade unions which most of us are familiar with as tools of Capital.

By way of contribution to this debate I shall outline the experience of the Public Transport Workers Association (at present, the only industrial group federated with the ASF) and comment on the role of anarcho-syndicalist propaganda groups (like DAM, WSA, ASF) in workplaces and industries organized and unorganized.

The PTWA was formed in January 1987 from public transport workers active in ASF Melbourne Local who felt the time had come to start an industrial based ASF group. The PTWA took over the responsibility of producing Sparks from ASF-M and set itself the task of improving its quality and distribution.

'Sparks' first appeared in May 1986 as an 8-page A5 size paper with a print run of about 800. It reported on events happening in the industry from an anarcho-syndicalist point of view and put forward anarcho-syndicalist alternatives.

Since then, 'Sparks' has improved in almost every aspect. It is now (Sept. 87) larger (32-pages) of better quality (better lay-out, graphics, photos) it regularly receives submissions from workers in the industry not in the PTWA. Because of cost, the demand for 'Sparks' cannot be met despite donations from various workplaces. Distribution has improved to the point where almost every Station, yard, depot, workshop, etc. in the Melbourne Metropolitan area receives copies. Various

union bureaucrats have tried to suppress 'Sparks' by, in some cases, confiscation and destruction of copies and, in other cases, by threatening PTWA members with legal action and even physical violence! The tabloid media have attacked it for "advocating terrorism" and a state MP demanded in parliament that the Attorney-General investigate it!

But the success and popularity of 'Sparks' has not yet been translated into a significant increase in the membership of the PTWA.

'Sparks' is not the only activity of the PTWA. PTWA members platform anarcho-syndicalist in union meetings in their workplaces and at the odd mass meeting. It is here that PTWA members have become ensnared in the quagmire of abominable meeting procedure, rule-book lawyers, motions from the shopfloor overturned by union executives, etc. PTWA members have been active in opposing the govts. plan to restructure public transport in Melbourne, distributing leaflets, holding public meetings, standing on pickets lines, and working with community groups during the Light Rail dispute (which ended in victory for the Govt.) and working to rule during the Preston Tram Maintenance Workshops strike (victory for the workers).

Whilst some of our workmates are keen to become involved in 'Sparks' (submissions, donations) they are less keen to join the PTWA. The PTWA is perceived sometimes as a "political group". Our jaws are sore from constantly repeating "No, we are not communists, we are anarchists".

Some of our workmates have encouraged one PTWA member to run for a position in the union bureaucracy. We are still explaining that we do not seek power, but seek its distribution equally amongst all. This attitude is quite common because this is what previous militant (trot) groups have sought.

The PTWA is a small (but effective) propaganda/activist group. But is the role of such groups based in industries where workers are organized into reformist trade unions? And what of groups who are based in industries that are largely unorganized? (I will leave the question of community groups to another time).

Education, organization, agitation. To communicate the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism within the context of that industry and to link those ideas to daily life and the community. (Industrial papers, leaflets, video/discussion nights, etc.) To practice anarcho-syndicalist organization (meeting procedure, delegation, federation, decision making at assembly, etc.) To encourage the self-activity of fellow workmates. (Rank and file initiatives, wildcat action, etc.) It is through this that propaganda groups will lay the groundwork for an environment where anarcho-syndicalist industrial unions could evolve in the shell of bureaucratic, reformist, trade unions.

The principles of education, organization, and agitation can be applied in industries that are largely unorganized, but here, the scope for forming unions from scratch is wider.

I suggest that the two positions outlined at the beginning of this submission may not necessarily be mutually exclusive. But one thing is for sure, this question requires careful thought and discussion. I'm certain many comrades will take a keen interest in this discussion and I look forward to further contributions on this question.

L.K.
member PTWA
(ASF-IWA)

THE LOCAL GROUP?

The local Melbourne group of the ASF has had a few problems for a while around the questions of: What is the role of the local group? and which activities should they be involved in? We've had a few discussions about these questions, while I found them inspiring and thought provocative, I was also unsatisfied with them, because we never discussed the matter thoroughly enough to reach an answer. I've included this article in the English language bulletin to internationalise the discussion that was started in Melbourne and that in a way was never finished.

Well, I see the role ~~(and)~~ of a local group as several. Firstly as everyone will agree is to support workers on strike (in struggle) through fund raising, going to picket lines, etc. But if this is to be the only activity of a local group, what do they do in time of no strikes?

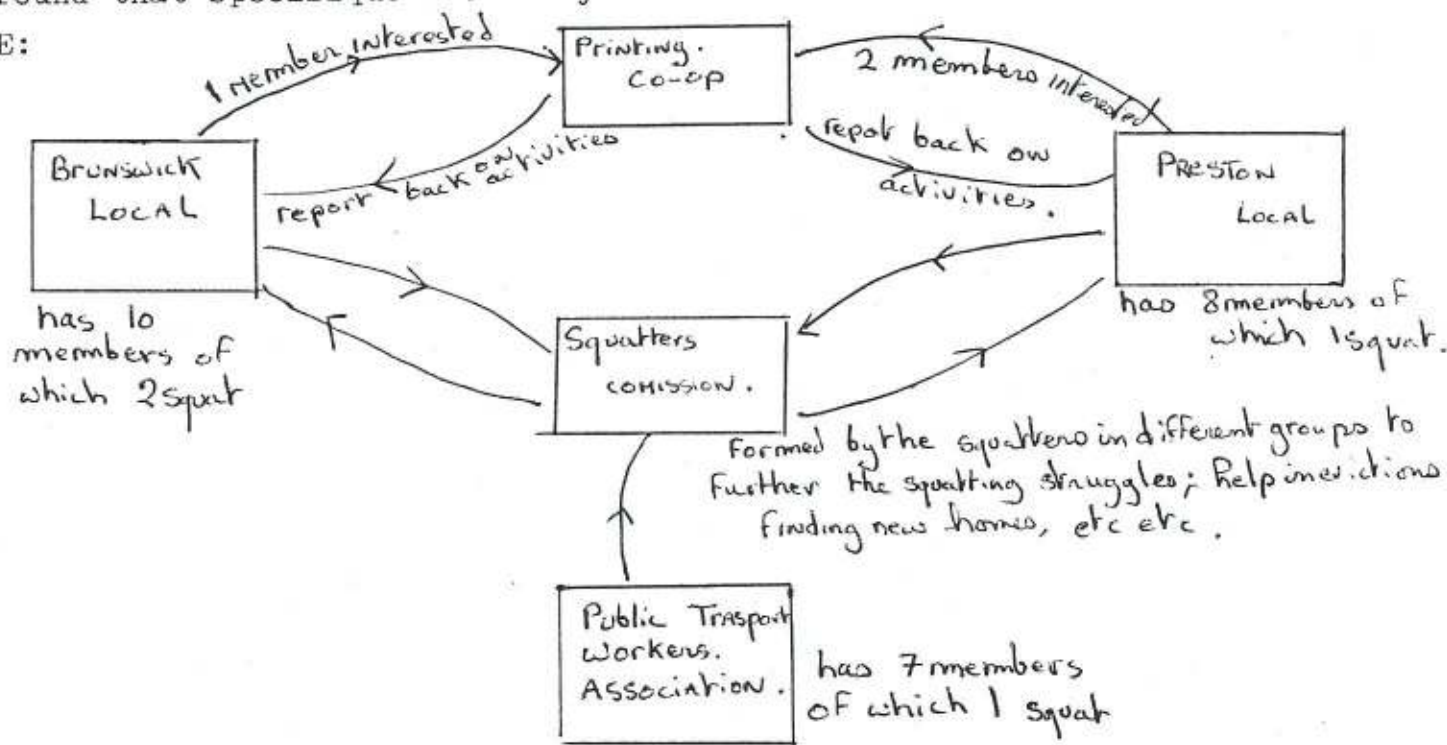
Secondly, I think local groups should be involved in setting up co-ops where they're needed, be it printing presses, bookshops, child-care, badge making, agriculture, etc. The co-ops I'm talking about are workers (only co-ops). Such as the ones that the unemployed members of COSATU have recently set up and not the ones that the capitalists set up, where workers co-operate in their exploitation. The use of co-ops are beneficial for several reasons; to practically help us in the struggle (imagine the costs of our printed propaganda) if we had to get it commercially printed) and to propagate the idea through deed that bosses aren't needed.

Thirdly I also see local groups involve in community 'unionism', such as tenants union, unemployed unions, squatters union, prisoners unions, public transport groups etc. Through what I've called community 'unionism' we get to confront capitalism within our communities, for capitalism doesn't only exist in the work places, and we can communicate and educate unwaged workers of our ideas. The slogan (Or saying) that the workers are the community are the workers is true . BUT not all the community are (waged) workers. In fact the majority of people are unwaged workers; ie housewives, unemployed, students, pensioners etc.

In australia there is an abundance of community groups (or unions) but nearly all these groups tend to be reformist. This is due to several reasons, most of them have only a short term aim, they don't have a class analysis and because they don't work with each other they find themselves alone in the struggle. The anarcho-syndicalist groups would on the contrary have a long term aim(a free society), they would have a class analysis, and because of our structure (federation) the groups would be working with other groups.

Well, as a fellow worker pointed out to me how can one local group be involved in all these activities. I don't see one group taking on all these different activities. But where a need or interest is shown by individuals in one or two or three groups (or whatever no of groups) within the same geographical area to make it practical then those people should form what we call here in the ASF a comission, around that specifique area they want to work in.

IE:



Members of the Anarcho-syndicalist federation belonging to different groups but within the same region (for practical reasons) set up a squatters comission, ~~The squatters comission would focus in that area of organising and agitating to further their work in that~~ to facilitate and further their work in that particular area of struggle. Members of the comission would report back to their local groups about their activities, so the local groups are informed about the comissions work and activities. The setting up of a comission to focus on a particular area of struggle within the community would also be beneficial to members of work place groups. ~~for example~~ Such as is shown in the diagram, and has been a real situation here, when a member of the public transport ~~group~~ workers association squatted and got evicted, because workplace issues are the focus of the PTWA's organising it would have been ridiculous and impractical for that group to organise around the squatting struggle so there wasn't much organising done by the federation ~~around~~ in resisting the eviction. But if a comission would have existed it could have helped that person organise the fight to keep their home.

These three areas of organising are in my opinion the role of the local groups within the federation and is the way I see of furthering the activities of our organisation.

Herve Echard

DAM INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Below is a copy of the Direct Action Movement's Industrial Policy as presented to their Conference in Menston, near Leeds, April 1987.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

All existing forms of economic organisation are exploitative and hierarchical, affecting all spheres of social life in capitalist and state capitalist systems.

Therefore the DAM, as an anarcho-syndicalist federation, recognises the workplace as an area of struggle, not only for the defence of working class living and working conditions and immediate gains within them, but also as the basis for the future self-management and transformation of production, distribution and consumption by and for the working class as a whole.

To carry out these goals, all working class industrial and community organisations must be controlled by the rank and file, be organised federally and employ the strategy of direct action.

(S.London ammendment - replace "state capitalist" above with "state socialist/communist")

1. DAM and the Trade Unions

The existing Trade Unions in Britain are structured on a hierarchical basis with officials elected for fixed terms and permanent professional bureaucracies. They perpetuate trade and skill distinctions and differentials between workers in the same industries. They are often sexist or racist or in other ways discriminate against and divide workers. Their structures and links with reformist political parties and the state apparatus ensure that they function to both reduce the effectiveness of working class struggle and to incorporate it into existing economic, social and political systems. As such, Trade Unions are no longer organisations of working class unity or action.

- 1.1. DAM advocates Trade Union membership at Branch level only.
- 1.2. DAM recommends that militants operate through their Trade Union branches, workplace or shop stewards committees except in cases where legal or financial assistance is being sought.
- 1.3. DAM should organise active opposition within and beyond the unions to the vertical and reformist structures and officials within them.
- 1.4. Such opposition can be mounted where possible by using those sections of union rule-books that enforce rank and file control over shop stewards, full-time officials and union structures.
- 1.5. DAM should organise active opposition within unions to any rule or move which prevents:
 - a) autonomy of action or decision-making by workplace, branch or regional meetings under rank and file control.
 - b) contact, solidarity or mutual aid between branches or workplaces.
- 1.6. DAM is opposed to authoritarian, sexist, racist policies or any other attempts by unions to discriminate against or divide workers.
- 1.7. DAM is opposed to elections of non-recallable fixed-term representatives in unions, to union involvement in parliamentary (and local government - S.London DAM addition) elections and to state-sponsored ballots in workplaces or industries.
- 1.8. DAM extends support to all workers excluded from or disciplined by unions for militant activities.

2. DAM and organisation in the workplace

DAM supports the principle that workers have complete control over workplace organisations and struggles.

- 2.1. DAM allows its members to become shop stewards only on the basis that they are delegates, not representatives, and therefore subject to instant recall by those that mandate them.
- 2.2. DAM holds the workplace assembly as the primary source of workplace decision-making to

- which all workers should have access.
- 2.3. (i) DAM advocates the building of workplace committees directly accountable to and subject to recall by the assembly/section that mandates them.
(ii) Such workplace committees should be federated horizontally within industries with a view to replacing the local or workplace union branch as the main source of organisation.
 - 2.4. DAM believes that all industrial struggles should be self-managed and therefore calls for:
 - (i) regular mass meetings to become the decision-making bodies of all struggles.
 - (ii) These assemblies to elect strike committees subject to recall and fully answerable to such assemblies.
 - (iii) No postal ballots.
 - (iv) No secret negotiations.
 - 2.5. DAM advocates direct action independent of officials in all situations through:
 - (i) industrial action for moral, economic, social and political ends.
 - (ii) the Social General Strike for the complete transformation of society.
 - 2.6. DAM advocates the widening of any industrial struggle through building links of solidarity and mutual aid between workplace committees and the community at large, i.e. other people in and out of work, strike support groups, groups of tenants, one parent families, etc.
 - 2.7. DAM advocates the formation of community councils initially as defensive organisations of the working class but eventually as the fore-runner of a future anarchist society.
(S.London DAM amendment - Delete 2.7. as it is already covered in 4.1.)
 - 2.8. DAM advocates the formation of independent unions based upon the principles of anarcho-syndicalism as a vehicle for such transformation.

3. DAM and Rank and File Groups

DAM supports the immediate creation of genuine Rank and File groups in workplaces and industries as a step towards building revolutionary workers' organisations.

3.1. Criteria for Rank and File Groups

DAM is prepared to work with any group that is not: (i) a front for a single political party, (ii) an electoral alliance that seeks to divide up positions of influence between themselves.

3.2. Rank and File Charter

- (i) Rank and File groups should not support candidates for full-time positions in union elections, but should collect and circulate information on the functions and track records of all union officials and full-time organisers.
(amendment - delete from "but should collect and circulate...")
- (ii) Rank and File groups should have complete control over the production of their own propaganda.
- (iii) Rank and File groups should be opposed to the narrow sectionalism of the Trade Unions and have regular local meetings open to every non-managerial worker within their own particular industry. While industry-wide organisation is our aim, groups based on crafts, trades and profession are acceptable in the short-term. Organisation of Rank and File groups within the same company is also to be encouraged.
(S.London amendment - delete "professional" above)
- (iv) Membership of Rank and File groups should be open to unemployed people normally employed within that particular industry.
- (v) In view of the difficulties in forming genuine links between Rank and File groups, we should encourage people to have dual membership where applicable, e.g. building workers and local council workers.
- (vi) We should encourage Rank and File groups to campaign for union reform as a means of raising our ideas within the group and the wider union movement. As a first step in this direction Rank and File groups should campaign for limited tenure of office for all union officials.
(amendment to (vi) - change to: We should encourage all rank and file groups to: a) reject union reform at all levels above the branch as an unachievable goal given the vertical and authoritarian structure of all unions. b) base themselves on rank and file sections of both the workplace and the community. c) federate on a geographical and industrial basis across union and employer barriers).
- (vii) We should encourage all Rank and File groups to campaign for:
 - a) the application of the principles of recallable delegates and limited tenure/mandate for all positions in existing and future working class organisations.
 - (b) the right to full information being made freely available to all workers by management and union officials regarding all employer/union matters.
 - (c) direct control by the rank and file and their delegates mandated from workplace assemblies over: (A) decision-making in all areas affecting them only, (B) negotiations with their employers, (C) disputes and union strike funds.

4. DAM, the Community and the Workplace

Anarcho-syndicalism does not concern itself only on an industrial level but with the community as a whole.

- 4.1. We advocate the creation of working class community organisations, including community councils, initially as defensive organisations of the working class, but eventually as the forerunner of the future organisation of an anarchist society.
- 4.2. The DAM supports the organisation of workers from different industries and different community struggles in the communities where they live through the creation of local workers' centres.

- 4.3. DAM members in community struggles should seek to widen involvement by building support amongst workers.
- 4.4. The DAM supports the creation of links between rank and file workers' organisations and community groups in areas of mutual interest, e.g. tenants' councils, homeless people, squatters and building workers; health workers and patients, etc.
- 4.5. The DAM supports the creation of strike support groups amongst all members of working class communities that build links between workplace and community struggles.
- 4.6. The DAM lends support to Claimants Unions and other self-run organisations of the unemployed.
- 4.7. The DAM supports the creation of a national unwaged workers movement capable of linking up with other workers in employment.
- 4.8. The DAM encourages unwaged workers to join the respective Rank and File organisation in their usual area of work or training.

WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

339 Lafayette Street • Room 202 • NY, NY 10012
Tel. (212) 505-6590.

It is with great pleasure that the Workers Solidarity Alliance sends our greetings to all the readers of the first issue of the English Language I.W.A. Discussion Bulletin. This is certainly a project of great importance to the WSA, as we expect it is also for the DAM & ASF

This project should also be viewed as the culmination of our many years of collective activities and correspondence. And the WSA looks forward to many more years of such a relationship with not only the ASF & DAM, but with the rest of the IWA as well. We also hope that this ASF, DAM and WSA effort will also contribute to help strengthen and broaden the activities of the IWA.

For starters, since many ASF & DAM members have not seen the WSA's "Where We Stand Stand" statement of principles, we've attached said statement. We hope that our statement of principles helps to broaden the discussion of what anarcho-syndicalists goals and methods are. We agree with the Bulletin Call, that one of the issues which we should also be discussing is that of whether it is possible to build solely revolutionary unions at this time. In our statement of principles we hammer out what the WSA's views are.

In regards to what sort of industrial strategy anarcho-syndicalists should take, we are quite pleased to see that our comrades in the ASF are busily promoting anarcho-syndicalism thru their transport activities. Likewise for the DAM's strike support work, rank-&-file group activities and the initial discussions going on in the DAM over the future formation of revolutionary unions. We believe that all active militants should share their thoughts and experiences as to what works, and what doesn't. We are sure that WSA members are also quite willing to engage in these sort of discussions as well.

While it is true that our own experiences vary, the similarities are quite flagrant. What might work in Melbourne may not work in London or, say, Texas. But as workers we have a lot to learn from each other. Not only on a practical level, but on a theoretical level as well. And in that regard we hope that this Bulletin will also aid in that direction.

Given the fact that the IWA 18th Congress is rapidly approaching, the WSA has attached a copy of our proposed agenda items. We do so only to help DAM & ASF in their efforts to pull together positions. WSA hopes that some of our agenda items would be the same and we can develop mutual positions on various questions.

The WSA will be sending at least 3 Delegates and 1 Alternate to the 18th Congress. It's possible that we may have in attendance some observers. We all certainly look forward to meeting some of you face-to-face.

WSA continued

Finally, let us share with you all some recent WSA news and activities.

This past July 4th weekend, in San Fransisco, the WSA celebrated its 4th National Convention. Although no new and earthbreaking ground was broken, we recommitted ourselves to many existing projects and ideas. Some of those projects include this Bulletin, continued labor and international solidarity work, our magazine ideas & action, pamphlet & other propaganda production and a host of other items.

Of special interest we should mention what we call our "Common Program" initiative. What this is is basically a call upon all working class libertarian militants to meet and confer about various workers issues, the capitalist crisis and what we can all do together to promote the general libertarian class struggle position. Somewhat similiar to what the old Syndiclaist Workers Federation tried to do through the auspices of the National Rank And File Movement (early 1960's).

As some of you already know (given the extensive travel and correspondence between Sections), the situation here in the US is quite difficult for working class libertarians. There are a variety of groups or individuals who consider themselves close to WSA and we to them, yet there's still distinct lines of differences. So rather than competing with each other or engage in undue sectarianism the WSA offered this proposal. While we don't necessarily aim for any sort of "organizational unity"---tho we wouldn't pass up new members--- we see this as a way of effectively using limited resources, coordinating activities and, of course, promoting the libertarian class struggle position. More as time passes.

Concretely WSA groups and members participate in a variety of struggles. It seems that consistant and on-going activities continue in the labor solidarity field, some shopfloor activities, propaganda, international solidarity, anti-militarist, feminist and general agitation areas. Due to the scattered nature of WSA membership sometimes it quite difficult to pull off some projects, but we hope that this next year will see an upturn in membership.

With all this said, we look forward to hearing what other IWA comrades have to say. Until then, we remain,

Yours in solidarity,
WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE
I.W.A.

WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

339 Lafayette Street • Room 202 • NY, NY 10012
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PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

1. The Workers Solidarity Alliance-I.W.A. nominates that both the Australian A.S.F. and the Brazilian C.O.B. be allowed to affiliate with the International Workers Association and become the Australian and Brazilian IWA Sections.
2. Clarification by the Secretariat as to the exact situation in Chile and the relationship the IWA and its Sections shall take towards the Chilean Libertarian Movement.
----The WSA seeks such clarification because there seems to be much confusion about the whole situation. Despite the Secretariat's recent Report. Also, the WSA is in contact with the "Hombre y Sociedad" group and they are continuing to seek our support for a U.S. tour, etc.
3. The WSA seeks further clarification and news on the IWA relationship with the struggle of South African workers.
----The whole situation was discussed at length at the September 1985 IWA Conference in Paris. The WSA committed itself to supplying addresses, etc. (which it so did). We have heard nothing since then and want to know the current status of this project. Also, the IWA should further discuss and consider the recent developments within the independent workers movement since COSATU has moved from a strictly syndicalist position to one that endorses the aims and goals of the African National Congress (as of early July 1987).
4. I.W.A. Commission of Inquiry into allegations against the WSA by certain IWW members (not the IWW as an organization), the magazine "Libertarian Labor Review" and the group Resurgence (all of the above participants seem to be interconnected).
----The WSA has been attacked by the above people since we were first founded in November 1984. The WSA has been unfairly attacked in the most vicious and unjust manner. The above individuals/publication has repeatedly called upon the IWA to denounce the WSA as the US Section and repudiate us from continued membership in the IWA. The WSA seeks a resolution of this problem by having the IWA 18th Congress issue a resolution in support of the WSA and a repudiation of those who have attacked the WSA.
5. Update on the Omori campaign and a discussion of certain allegations against Omori made from some in the Anarchist movement.
6. IWA develop further links with the autonomous workers and anti-militarist movements of Eastern Europe.
----The WSA believes that this, like S.Africa, is an area where our contacts are not strong and that the IWA needs to develop stronger links and provide more information about and solidarity with.
7. IWA Principles include new sections on women workers and general ecological issues.
----WSA favors these because these are important issues that have never been officially expanded upon by the IWA.

The Workers Solidarity Alliance statement of principles, which we are printing below, was adopted originally at our founding conference in November, 1984. More recently the WSA membership approved a section on racism, which is included below. We are still working on a section on sexism, which will be printed once we have completed it. Comments should be sent to: WSA
339 Lafayette St.
Room 202, New York, NY 10012

• Exploitation

Under the existing social system — capitalism — we can only live by selling our time, our talents and energies, to employers for a wage. When people must work, not simply to do things for each other, but to build up the power and wealth of a few, this is exploitation. This system of wage-labor gives to the bosses the power to make the decisions

ing class. It is useless to try to change the system by electing representatives to government office. Nor do we advocate the seizure of State power. A state is a top-down institution that puts power into the hands of a few. All efforts to construct a "workers' state" have only led to one form of oppression being substituted for another.

Russia, Cuba, China and the other countries that have a top-down system based on the fusion of economic and political power in the State, are not societies run by the workers, nor are they a step in the direction of human emancipation. The conflicts between these countries and the capitalist nations are not merely ideological but are dangerous skirmishes over territory and profits.

Since states exist to defend the power and wealth of bosses, wars

only has been demonstrated in numerous general strikes and revolutions in this century.

• Racial Discrimination

Capitalism, which thrives on inequality, has sustained social divisions on racial lines, where people of color are labeled "inferior" and subjected to discrimination which limits their freedom in society.

Early capitalist development in America was only made possible by the bondage of people of African descent, and the slaughter of the original inhabitants and the expropriation of their land. The ideology of "white supremacy" came into being to justify this

Forms of direct action that we favor include "sit-down" strikes, where people maintain control over the place of work; "squatting," where people jointly occupy unused buildings for their own use; "hot cargo," where workers refuse to handle products in order to support the struggles of others; "social strikes," where workers continue to provide their labor for the benefit of other working people in the community but deny the revenue or control of their labor to the bosses; and community- or nation-wide general strikes, which demonstrate the power that the workforce has when it is united.

WHERE WE STAND

about what will be produced, how it is produced and, thus, how we spend our time. This hierarchy or pyramid of power divides society into "classes" with a basic and irreconcilable conflict of interests. The struggle between workers and bosses will go on as long as society is thus divided.

What the individual bosses do is shaped by how the system as a whole operates. Though each company makes its own decisions, these divisions are determined by what will make a profit in the marketplace. They will pollute the environment, speed up work, lay people off or ignore unhealthy conditions if these things will help them make more profit.

People in this society are encouraged to define "freedom" in terms of buying things. Yet, a healthy environment and genuine control over our lives are not to be found in the marketplace.

The capitalist market, which subordinates human life to money-making, is a global system. The bosses' control of production, communication and finance has become increasingly integrated across national boundaries. Since the bosses' system is international, effective workers' struggle must become international as well, based on direct solidarity and coordination of struggles across national frontiers.

• The role of the State

We believe that the capitalist system and the modern state play an increasingly negative role in the organization of production, distribution and social life in general. They are clearly unable to deal with the deepening economic and political crises that they themselves have created. Since governments and capitalism have always rested upon domination and exploitation, both are inherently oppressive and cannot be reformed, won over, or used in a progressive way in the modern-day struggle for human emancipation.

Although the government and individual companies do not always see eye-to-eye, the basic function of the State — the courts and prisons, police and army, regulatory agencies and other State institutions — is to defend the collective interests of the employ-

ers are struggles between the bosses in different lands. Organized slaughter under state auspices will continue to happen as long as society is based on exploitation, hierarchy and competition.

• Workers Role in Social Change

Since oppression and exploitation take a variety of forms in this society, so must the struggle for social liberation be multi-faceted. Movements expressing the will of various communities, women, sexual minorities, young people, national and cultural groups, the aged, the disabled, and those who have specialized knowledge helpful to social progress must be seen as having equal footing and input into decisions affecting the welfare of the people. We are opposed to all forms of discrimination and oppression that bar people from fully participating in society and realizing their total potential as free individuals.

Educational work carried out by working class organizations on a multi-cultural and multi-racial basis is basic to any movement for working class self-emancipation. The best aspects of working class culture must be preserved while new forms of interaction and discussion in workplaces and communities are developed. Movements in this direction serve as an organizing force as well as a model of what a new society can be, since they challenge established social divisions, the oppressive aspects of modern culture, and the false assumption that the worker lives one life on the job and quite another at home.

In pursuing social change, we put our main emphasis on the role of people as workers, not because we think that all of the ways that people are oppressed in this society stem directly from the boss/worker hierarchy, but because no sector of society can emancipate itself unless the power of capital is overthrown. All workers have a common stake in the struggle against the employing class.

Workers have a collective self-interest in the creation of a society based on freedom and equality since we can only have power if we manage society together, through mass direct democracy. The potential power of worker solidarity for overthrowing the bosses and creating a new society based on collective workers' control of the econ-

omy. Capitalism continued to benefit from a racist heritage, which has provided pools of cheap labor and permitted some people to be subjected to worse treatment.

Solidarity, which is essential to making changes in society, must be based upon genuine equality, rejecting the idea that privileges can be founded on race or nationality. We stand determined to retain our humanity in the midst of a racially oppressive system by identifying with all the oppressed to the end that we will win full equality or fall together in the effort. We affirm that we are the enemy of racism and inequality everywhere. To this end, we support people of color in their struggle to achieve economic and social justice and equality.

• Direct Action

The way to fight for social change is through direct action. Action is direct when it is people fighting for their own aspirations, not relying on politicians or trade union leaders to fight for them. For direct rank-and-file control over struggles against the powers-that-be, movements have to be based on the direct participation of the people in the struggle. Direct action must be collective because only solidarity provides the power to transform society.

On the other hand, a strategy that relies on indirect action, such as electing representatives to government office, encourages a division between leaders and led, between those who make decisions and those who follow them. Electoral politics also leads to statist solutions because it tends to define the issues in terms of what State policies a set of leaders will implement. Because a political party is a vehicle for putting a leadership into State power, a political party cannot serve as a vehicle for people intent on creating a non-authoritarian society.

We particularly reject the so-called "vanguard" party as a model because it can only serve as the embryo of a bureaucratic state machine, as we see in the "communist" countries. Such parties exist at the expense of independent working class movements and they have, once in power, developed managerial elites every bit as fascinated with the arms race and the profit motive as their capitalist counterparts.



countries. Such parties exist at the expense of independent working class movements and they have, once in power, developed managerial elites every bit as fascinated with the arms race and the profit motive as their capitalist counterparts.

● Unionism

As the labor movement has failed over the years to mount a fundamental challenge to the power of the bosses, the unions became increasingly top-down in structure and integrated into the system. The officials who run these organizations work to contain workers' struggles within the framework of their long-standing relationship with the employers and politicians.

Since the problem does not stem from "misguided" leadership, we do not seek to change the labor movement through a strategy of electing a different union leadership. As the existing unions are not suited to overthrow boss rule, a workers movement that can transform society will be built independently of the existing union hierarchies.

The system's economic crisis, and the resentment of workers against the bosses and against the union hierarchy as well, will engender struggles in the coming years, struggles that could lead to the development of a self-managed workers movement. We cannot hope to play a role in these struggles, to put forth our ideas and our program, if we remain aloof and abstain from them simply because they take place within the context of the existing trade unions. So long as workers' struggles are organized through the existing unions, we participate in those unions and their struggles.

As workers move towards more militant action and more widespread solidarity, the creation of organization on a new basis becomes a more realistic possibility, as workers move to take over more direct control of their own struggles. Independent rank-and-file organization, which exists to some extent today, is a forerunner of the movement that can change society.

Self-managed workers' organizations, such as workplace assemblies, rank-and-file coordinating councils, and unions free of top-down control, are the kind of organization that can be the vehicle for self-emancipation. Such organizations tend to have a more transitory existence during a period when fundamental social change is not on the immediate agenda. On the other hand, the development of self-managed organization of workers in solidarity with each other on a mass scale would mean a revolutionary crisis for the bosses' system.

For the development of a workers' movement that is "self-managed" by the rank-and-file, we advocate direct democracy, with basic decisions made in assemblies, not imposed by leaders. People who are elected to coordinate struggles or negotiate with the bosses or the government should not be paid officials and they should be subject to immediate recall and mandatory rotation from office after a short term.

To encourage the development of a workers' movement based on direct action, solidarity and direct democracy, we favor the formation of action committees in workplaces as well as networks of anti-authoritarian workers in industries or companies.

● Workers' self-defense

We have no interest in echoing the hypocrisy of the employing class when they denounce the "terrorism" of small armed groups or guerrilla armies. From Poland to El Salvador, the State's "forces of order" are the main instrument for striking terror into the hearts of the people. Yet, we do not agree with a strategy for social change based on armed actions by political minorities. Such a strategy substitutes the armed force of a political "vanguard" for working class solidarity and invites entrapment by provocateurs.

The bosses will not give up their power and wealth voluntarily. A period when the working class is beginning to pose a fundamental challenge to boss rule is likely to see violent clashes. Although we would want violence to be minimized, we recognize the use of armed force as legitimate in defending the movement for social change.

Since the workers' movement to re-organize society on the basis of self-management cannot succeed without the break-up of the State and its armed machine, it is important to spread class-consciousness within the ranks of the armed forces and to link their concerns with those of workers in civilian life.

But the defense of the revolution must be the responsibility of a workers militia, organized and controlled by the workers' mass organizations, not an army or guerrilla force controlled by a minority, such as a political party. If working people are to have control over industry and society, they must also have direct, democratic control over the defense of their revolution.

● Towards a self-managed society

Workers in every nation repeatedly pose their own desires and demands in opposition to the programs of private capital, corporate and State bureaucrats and political party hacks. Workers create, sometimes with great clarity of vision, movements and new forms of organization which pose demands that no State can fulfill, inherent in which is a desire for freedom and a vision of what a new society could be.

We favor the development of a workers movement based on direct democracy, not just because it will be more effective in the present-day fight against the employing class, but also because it foreshadows — and lays the basis for — a society of freedom and equality, without authoritarianism or exploitation.

Self-emancipation means that the working class, through its own united action, must seize and manage the entire system of production, communication and distribution. Tenants must take over the management of the buildings where they live. Dangerous technology must be re-designed or dismantled. The time that people must spend in work can be greatly reduced by eliminating the unnecessary work created by the current system, and sharing the necessary work of society among all those who can contribute.

The most basic organ of decision-making in a self-managed society should be the face-to-face democracy of assemblies of people in workplaces and neighborhoods. But self-management cannot be isolated in small, local units. The economy as a whole must be managed by the entire working class.

To do this, it is necessary to create some means for bringing together workers from the different industries and localities in order to decide what to produce, what sort of technological development to have, and how to organize the defense of the revolution. This can be organized through conferences of delegates, elected by the rank-and-file and subject to immediate recall and rotation from office. The delegates would present, discuss and act on the ideas and goals developed and approved by the local worker assemblies. This would provide the people with a means of establishing priorities for production that are not determined by bureaucratic decree or the capitalist market but by collective, democratic decision-making.

We do not want to fight a revolution only to find that we have placed in power a bureaucratic elite that pursues its own interests. Any administration elected to carry out the will of the workers should be subject to mandatory rotation from office after a brief term, immediate recall, and no special pay or privileges in comparison with the average worker. They should operate under specific mandates from the various democratic decision-making bodies in society, and not attempt to impose policy on behalf of the people.

The interdependence of production on a global scale means that a workers revolution must be an international movement. A movement for social change will still be subject to the dictates of the world capitalist market and the power of the bosses' military forces insofar as it is, not a movement to change the world-wide organization of society.

Economic reorganization on the basis of self-management can be realized on an international scale through the same kind of decision-making bodies as would exist on a regional or national basis. The alternative to a world of warring nation-states is a world human community of self-managed regions united on the basis of common interests and mutual respect.

Dear comrades, What follows are a number of articles from the September, november issues of Rebel Worker, on working people's struggles in Asia and the Pacific. As little coverage has been given to these struggles in the media in Britain, and, to a slightly lesser extent in the U.S.A. I felt it might be valuable to use the English Language Discussion Bulletin to get this info around. What do you think? Let us know if you want this to be a regular aspect of the Bulletin. Send in anything you've got.

Paul Stevenson (ASF-IWA)

UPDATE ON FIJI

The proposed ACTU bans against the Rambuka regime were dropped when an official of the Fiji T.U.C. representing perhaps 30% of Fiji's trade unions came to an agreement with the new regime. The A.C.T.U. leadership jumped at the opportunity to drop the bans and when a representative of the remaining 70% of Fiji's trade unionists took the risk of coming to Australia to denounce the deal and call for the bans to continue, he was ignored by the A.C.T.U., who claimed that they couldn't enter into any disputes within the Fijian trade union movement.

Meanwhile, the repression in Fiji has continued. All political activity has been banned, as well as industrial action on wages and conditions. Also, in line with Rambukas fundamentalist Methodism, all gatherings on Sundays, except for religious purposes, have been banned. This is aimed at the Indian community, who gather for sporting events and social activities on Sundays.

Trade Unionists continue to be harrassed. The General Secretary of the Public Service Association is in hiding while the Assistant Secretary is given a body search each time he enters the Public Service Credit Union Offices. The Executive Secretary of the airline workers union has been detained and beaten by police.

Meanwhile Rambuka has made former Governor General Ratu Camasise Mara the new president of the Republic. The former Prime-Minister of the regime removed in the election before the coup has become prime minister again. Speculation is that this was the original intent of the coup - to put the traditional ethnic-Fijian chiefs from the Eastern Islands in power perpetually. Alternatively, the economic effects of the coup (the collapse of the sugar crop, tourism and the Fijian dollar) has forced Rambuka to put a democratic face on his dictatorship as quickly as possible, by re-appointing the old "democratic" leaders of the constitutional monarchy to the new regime.

Wildcats in South Korea

"The storms of youth precede brilliant days"
- Lautreamont.

After the student uprisings' breath of fresh air which security forces tried to quell with various forms of deadlier and deadlier tear-gas and with the lull that followed, the South Korean workers appear to have begun to make moves for more radical changes than the reformation of South Korean capitalism.

17 year old Ms. Kim earning 60c an hour in a shoe factory expressed herself eloquently enough when she said, "We want our own union....its the right time for it". Many of South Korea's unions are mostly tools of management and the State whose combined authoritarianism has kept workers' demands to a minimum strikes were not tolerated and neither were independent labour organisations. "The most important issue now is how workers will elect their own representatives", Mr Choe Jang-Jip, sociologist and labour expert at Korea University finally after all his degrees comes to the same to the same obvious conclusions, that Kim knew instinctively.

At the so-called opposition spuriously clamour for gradual reforms where nothing changes at all, generalised wildcat strikes throughout the country closed down over 300 companies including the State's showcase car industry. At the Hyundai corporation in the industrial town of Ulsan, workers battered down closed factory gates with sledgehammers, occupied the plant's 6 divisions and burned an effigy of Chung Yu-Yang the corporation's founder, who a few days before was actually held captive in his offices before being freed by security force's riot squad. Later thousands of workers led by forklift trucks, cranes and two company fire engines paraded through the streets of Ulsan cheered by an estimated crowd of 75,000. The riot squad watched but would not intervene in the face of such popular mass support. In other incidents around the country a group of workers trashed a police headquarters set up in an apartment block. And if know thine enemy is ever to make any sense, the 500 workers who were reported to have vandalised the home and car of an established union leader took the struggle for their own organisations to its logical conclusion. Most of the newly formed

independent workers' groups are not officially recognised and technically illegal; although latest reports are that Hyundai officials have been forced to recognise and negotiate with a newly-formed car workers union. In Taejon violence erupted when students demanding workers rights battled with riot police. More than 4,000 student representatives from 95 universities across the country assembled on a Taejon campus to form a nation-wide student council.

"We know nothing about politics", said a striking Chinyang Corporation worker, "All we want is a better life". This is not expecting too much too soon but in the light of the above actions becomes a general realization for immediate change. The presidential elections proposed by Roh Tea-Woo (pronounced NO) leader of the ruling Democratic Justice Party becomes so much domestic rubbish. When on one hand the military bolstered government threatens to deal "sternly" with labour unrest as it did in crushing the 1980 "spring of freedom", and on the other hand the same ruling political party calls for "sweeping reforms" politics in South Korea is a game of heads you win, tails you lose. A dead-end street no less. Minister of Justice Chung Hea-Chang puts paid to parliamentary reforms of any significance by calling for harsh measures against the "impure elements" of "anti-state" forces supposedly infiltrating industry. The minister seems to be searching for the phantoms that are keeping South Korea's bourgeoisie awake through the long nights worrying what tomorrow will herald. Or maybe its another attempt to

prefabricate that same old bogey as a pretext to forcibly try and stop history.

"these young workers think it is their world"

- Yoo Chul-Jin, senior vice president of Hyundai Heavy Industries

After 16 years of being hounded in the wake of South Korea's "economic miracle", the workers who produced this so-called miracle, appear to be making tentative steps to what could hopefully be an offensive in which they may finally break with the sham of capitalism's market forces once and for all. Anything short of this, although allowing space to breathe, would be ultimately futile. If the South Korean rebel workers retain their momentum, keep hold of and develop their own forms of struggle, rejecting all mediation, the "two Kims" and their banal opposition becomes so much flotsam to be discarded. Capitalism's experiment in South Korea would be over and its commodity totalitarianism on the verge of paralysis. Any reforms that are imposed will have little to do with the magnanimity of the government or its opposition; nobody is that easily conned. If the State appears to retreat its because the rebel workers have taken the initiative for radical social change to break out of the claustrophobic suffocation of South Korea's "economic miracle".

Today's fanatics of the Economy-who want to bend the living along the graphs of bankers' interest rates- have no strategy of domination other than to stir up the war of each against all. Everyone is impelled to adhere to these degrading times. But for high school students of Soweto townships and striking miners of South African mines, the students and workers of South Korea as well as the Aboriginal rioters of Brewarrina New South Wales, this has gone on for far too long. In this period of uncertainty, the only certainty that is really evident to anyone is greater and greater control over work, community and more generally over all social activity.

J.D.



Higher Wages Not Bullets

There have been 553 documented human rights violations against trade unionists in the Philippines since President Aquino came to power over eighteen months ago.

This figure comes from Carlita Ratestan, National President of the Association of Democratic Labour Organisations and member of the National Council of the May 1st Movement Trade Union Centre, who was recently in Australia seeking union support for Philippine unions.

These violations include:

- violence (including killings) against workers or picket lines by the military and police.
- "salvagings" (murders), arbitrary detention and torture of trade union activists.

Trade union activists are routinely kept under surveillance by plain clothes police, secret police and the military. Attacks have increased in the last month or two. This is shown most spectacularly with the killing of Leardno Alejandro, Chairperson of the Bayan coalition of "progressive" groups and movements, who was shot seven times in the face after leaving a meeting which had called a one-day general strike over wage increases and against increasing repression of workers.

On May 1st, this year a demonstration about the assassination, last November, of trade union activist Rolando Oriate was told by the Minister of Justice that he could not act on the assassination because of military involvement in the killing.

Trade unions in the Philippines were influenced by the US in the 1930's and 40's and emphasised only bread and butter issues. From the 40's through to the present, successive governments have suppressed any attempts of unions to go beyond these issues - or even to organise at all.

Union centres, like the May the First Movement, cut across this history linking workers' struggles strongly with popular issues of human rights, US bases, and political control. Little wonder they are attracting this kind of repression. The Aquino government promised to increase basic wages and to remove repressive anti-union laws - but has failed to deliver. And the pressure is on in the form of increased military participation in the form of increased participation in the Aquino Cabinet and constant threats of military coups from outside the government.

The Aquino government itself has been considering a "State of Emergency" declaration. Despite these attacks, the May the First Movement and other union centres continue their intensive educational work with the rank and file unionists and beginning on the 12th of October mounted a week of protests culminating in 10,000 striking workers marching on the heavily guarded presidential palace shouting "higher wages, not bullets".

Philippines Update

SOLDIERS ATTACK NESTLE STRIKE UNION CALLS FOR BOYCOTT

Police and Philippine Constabulary soldiers dispersed with water cannons the picketlines of the United Filpro Employees (UFE) at 2 strike bound factories of Nestle Philippines and arrested several strikers in different incidents.

The first attack came on October 26 at the Cagayan de Oro plant in Mindanao, southern Philippines where police arrested 52 strikers. Those arrested were subsequently released through the intercession of officials from BAYAN (New Patriotic Federation), a cause-oriented group.

On the following day, 50 workers at the Nestle plant in Cabuyao, Laguna (about 30 kilometers south of Manila) were forcibly dispersed by armalite-wielding soldiers from the 224th Phil. Constabulary Company led by Capt. Lanada. At least strikers were arrested, without any charges, after the incident. When released on the next day,

PAMANTIK, a workers' alliance in the area. However, they were attacked anew on October 29 by the same constabulary forces using water cannons and arrested 19 workers this time.

All were detained at Cabuyao Municipal Hall on charges of "acting in conspiracy, armed with pillbox, molotov cocktail bombs and other incendiary devices" despite apparent lack of evidence. The union denied the charges.

Meanwhile those arrested were asked to pay bailbonds amounting to US\$120 each or remain in detention.

The dispersal prompted the striking Union of Filpro Employees, an affiliate of the Drug, Food and Allied Industries Workers Alliance-KMU, to announce plans for a boycott of all Nestle products.

The dispersal came after President Aquino issued directives to the Department of Labor and Employment to dismantle barricades in strike-bound firms restraining strikers from paralyzing production. The virtual strike ban, guaranteed by the unrepealed Marcos-era labor laws, is being challenged by 130

lines in Manila prior to the violent dispersal operations at Nestle.

Rudy Paglinawan, union spokesperson, said the military actions manifested the collusion among management, military and labour department to negate the workers' right to "peaceful assembly for the redress of their grievances."

The 1,700-strong union of the Switzerland-based multinational company struck last September 10 demanding a wage increase and protesting the hiring of casuals to take over the jobs of regular employees.

The union said their demand is only "crumbs" compared to the US\$50 million profits earned by the company between 1984 and 1986 alone.

Since the strike, the management terminated 70 union officials and refuse to bargain with the union.

Nestle supplies more than 50 per cent of the total milk demand in the Philippines. The union said the company is not losing, contrary to its claim, since it has enough stocks of finished products and has resorted to importation through the government's import liberaliz-

SMILING DICTATOR SMASHES UNIONS

The world's newest dictator "smiling" Gitiveni (Steve) Rambuka - "Christian and "patriot" who says he will restore "democracy in a year" has taken the road of all dictators - by suppressing the trade union movement in Fiji.

After the first coup in May restrictions were put on trade union activity and a number of trade union activists were detained, a fact not reported by the bourgeois press in this country. At that time the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) instituted a number of bans against the new regime. The Fiji Trade Union Congress (TUC) secretary later reported that these had been vital in saving the trade union movement in Fiji. Rambuka has said that Fijian unions must look to the Singaporean example of responsible trade unions. In Singapore trade union leaders are appointed by the government and Independent labour organising is suppressed.

With the second coup the Rambuka regime has closed down the TUC headquarters - sending the staff home and is guarding it with troops and police. They have also closed down and put troops into the offices of the Public Service union. The motivation of these attacks seem to be aimed at:

(1) Undermining the unions which provide one of the bases of the Labour Party - one of the parties making up the deposed Bavandra coalition government.

(2) Reducing the possibility of opposition to its plans to "Fijianize" the public service. Already a number of Fijians of Indian background have been sacked from senior public service positions. Control of the public service, along with the military and police, is essential to any new regime - shown by the fact that Rambuka is minister for the public service, as well as army chief.

(3) To restrict any Independent Industrial and economic opposition to the regime generally. After the first coup, cane cutters - largely of Indian background - struck thereby severely delaying the harvest and striking a heavy blow to the Fijian economy.

After the second coup the ACTU immediately banned all shipping to and from Fiji. It has also said that it will ban all airline flights to and from Fiji (except occasional Qantas flights to pick up stranded tourists) from November 1st unless restrictions on trade unions are lifted. The Fijian TUC has

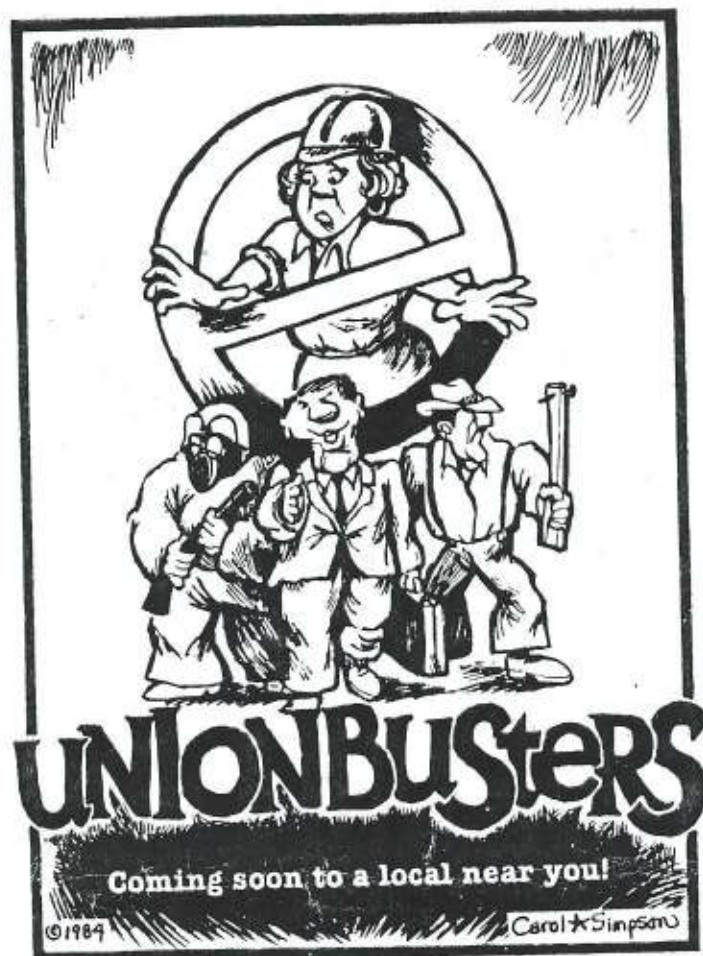
endorsed this action. Such an action would have a severe effect on the Fijian economy given that tourism, much of it from Australia and by people in transit to Australia, is a central part of the Fijian economy.

The Rambuka regime has responded by calling on the Labor government to pressure the ACTU to withdraw the bans - and given the "realistic" position Hawke and Hayden have taken on Fiji-rejecting government bans for example, this seems likely! Maybe yellow-cake Bob (Hawke) can follow in the shoes of Pig Iron Bob (Menzies) and bust union bans against repressive military regimes!

The Fijian Minister for Economic Planning, Trade and Industry has drawn up plans to counter that ban. Rambuka has said that they will look to Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan (whose human rights and labour relations record we all know) and France and Japan (whose economic and political colonialism are famous) for "new markets, new allies". Fiji's new information minister has described "trade union colonialism in its

worst manifestation". It seems to this writer like an increasingly rare example of international trade union solidarity. The ACTU, for all its weaknesses, being one of the few trade union centres willing and able to do this today. (Perhaps that's why the South African government stopped the COSATU Confederation of South African Trade Unions, secretary from coming to address the ACTU last month?)

Again the "anti-colonial blind" has been used to suppress human rights and keep Fiji, totally in the Western sphere (the coalition's policy against the US war ships has been overthrown, France has offered to build a naval base and the US has already sold them two patrol boats). One member of Rambuka's cabinet, Minister for Prime Industries, Aprsal Tana, former trade unionist, is a personal friend of Cuba's Fidel Castro, good anti-colonial credentials! Again supposed issues of "race" and "ethnicity" have been used to prop up a dictatorship that will attempt to repress all independent workers self-organisation.



Workers Solidarity Alliance Report to 18th Congress of the International Workers Association

April, 1988

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1. Introduction

It is with pleasure that the Workers Solidarity Alliance, IWA section in the U.S., presents this Report to the 18th Congress of the International Workers Association in Bordeaux, France. This is the first WSA report to an IWA Congress since the formation of our organization in November of 1984.

We hope that this Congress will be a very successful one. It appears to us that the IWA is on the upswing all over the world, even in places where we do not yet have any formal sections. Although communication problems still exist, there also exists a renewed level of commitment, energy and solidarity by comrades. The number of informal (that is, non-voting) IWA Conferences have increased since the 17th Congress and there has been more face-to-face contact between comrades and sections than at any other time in recent memory. During this period between Congresses, the General Secretary has reported numerous times where IWA solidarity helped workers in their fight.

We believe that we will see even more progress for the IWA in the immediate future. The WSA can be counted on to do its part to build anarcho-syndicalism and advance

the ideas and principles of the International Workers Association.

On the following pages you will find what we believe to be an accurate picture of the situation in the United States today.

Comradely greetings,
Workers Solidarity Alliance-IWA

2. WSA Progress Report — 1984-1987

The WSA-IWA was founded three and one-half years ago over the weekend of November 23-25th, 1984. We were formed with two principles in mind. They were (to quote from our founding conference report) "to promote, and contribute to, the autonomous workers struggles founded on the anarchist principles of direct democracy and direct action. In addition, through affiliation with the IWA, the new organization will work towards solidarity with other sections [of the IWA]." We further stated: "Until now there has been no existing national workers organization engaged in explicitly anarcho-syndicalist activity." And that all those attending our founding convention "agreed on the need for an organized expression of working class anarchism."

Prior to the formation of WSA there existed an informal network of anarcho-syndicalists, primarily based around specific projects, publications and annual conferences. Militants were involved in solidarity activities with workers and libertarian struggles and organizations in Latin America, through the Libertarian Aid to Latin American Workers committees, the journal *No Middle Ground* and the various IWA campaigns and support and informational activities coordinated by the NSF-IAA. WSA militants were also active in supporting the struggles of independent worker movements in both Eastern Europe and South Africa. Furthermore, we were also active in promoting the concerns of the unemployed and in the cultural sphere as well. At the founding con-

vention commissions were formed to deal with the above, as well as an editorial group for our publication *ideas & action*.

For a more detailed analysis of the origins of WSA, we suggest that comrades review the Libertarian Workers Group's *Report to the 17th Congress of the IWA*.

A review of our first year of existence shows that the WSA got off to a slow but reasonably good start. We were able to reach new people in areas where we had not been able to before. Indicative of this was our ability to reach people in the Rocky Mountain states in the Western USA and in portions of the Southern region. The WSA also continued to maintain contact with anarcho-syndicalists and working class anarchists in Canada as well.

In the area of practical activities, we worked with the Canadian comrades on several projects, including a campaign to help free several hundred Iranian steel industry strikers. We also continued to support our Canadian comrades' efforts to produce a pro-working class anarchist newspaper (*Strike!*).

Other areas of activity included: developing closer ties and relations with other IWA sections and the Secretariat, support for the CNT-E in its struggles for its historic patrimony, support for the struggle of the British miners and the DAM campaign in this regard, and support for the factory occupation struggle of the Guatemalan Coca-Cola workers.

The WSA was also active in the struggles of the unemployed, around the issue of Bhopal and toxics, meat packing industry workers, office and garment workers. WSA local groups also issued leaflets and other local propaganda as well.

Upon the completion of our first year of existence, the WSA began to see problems with the commission form of organization and conflicts emerged with certain individuals in the IWW. In regard to the commission form of organization, we found

that we were unable to adequately coordinate and carry out activities within the respective commissions due to our small and scattered numbers. Since that time we have put this form of organization on the back burner until it can be developed in an effective way.

In regards to the IWW, the WSA should officially state that we continue to support comradely relations between the IWA and the IWW despite certain principled differences.

The WSA has consistently offered to work with the IWW on mutual projects, and such joint work has existed in some local areas. We recognize that there are good militants inside the IWW. The WSA further recognizes that the anti-WSA activities of two former General Secretaries of the IWW (both still active members of the IWW), based around the group *Resurgence/Libertarian Labor Review*, are not reflective of the IWW as a whole.

The WSA believes that there is room for principled and honest differences within the revolutionary syndicalist movement. We further believe that there are also principled ways by which to express such differences. A dogmatic "correct line" attitude and practice will not advance revolutionary or anarcho-syndicalist ideas.

As the WSA entered its second year, we began to see our membership level off, with a majority of our membership residing on the East and West coasts, with little growth in the Midwest. Part of the reason for the lack of membership in the Midwestern region has been the increasingly more open hostilities of some in the Midwestern IWW and the defensive posture these attacks put the WSA in.

In the area of domestic activities, our second year found us involved in several worker fights, including the Hormal meatpackers, airline workers, office and garment workers. In the area of international solidarity, the WSA supported the struggle of South African workers, independent peace and worker movements in Eastern Europe, Omori in Japan and with other IWA sections and related movements. In the area of propaganda, we were able to continue publish-

ing *ideas & action*, a pamphlet on the struggle for the shorter workweek and leaflets were produced, and the New York group issued their newsletter *On the Line*.

Furthermore, the WSA participated in the Paris IWA Conference and at the IWW's Haymarket International Conference, as well as other anarchist events that were also being held in Chicago during the Haymarket Centennary. WSA held, or co-sponsored, other meetings locally commemorating both the memories of the Haymarket martyrs and the 50th anniversary of the Spanish revolution.

As the WSA's Boston 1986 convention (our 3rd) got underway, there were discussions about the WSA's initial problems in reaching more people than we had so far. We noted how the working class had continued to be battered. For six years, strikebreaking, union-busting, wage cuts and general deterioration in living conditions went on almost unabated. Though this was a good time to promote our ideas, yet we knew that we couldn't do it alone given the small size of the WSA, our lack of resources and a whole host of other problems. Yet we felt that something needed to be done.

We decided that the WSA should try to initiate the development of a "common program" among libertarian worker groups and activists. Contact with a number of other organizations was proposed with the aim of possible participation in a future conference around the theme of the current crisis in the American labor movement. A proposed four-point program was put forward for discussion. This program called for: (1) anti-bureaucratic struggles in the trade unions; (2) solidarity across economic, racial, and sexual divisions; (3) for independent, self-managed workers organizations; and (4) for international solidarity.

To date there has been some limited movement towards the realization of the above proposal. To see if there was agreement to move ahead with other like-minded groups and individuals, an initial discussion of these proposals with people from outside the WSA took place during the WSA's Western Regional meeting in December of 1986, and again

in November of 1987. We are hopeful that our initiative will have positive results and that our libertarian ideas will be able to be more effectively agitated and carried out within the workers movement.

During these first years of our organization's existence, despite some turnover in membership and the constriction of WSA growth in the Midwest, our organization continued to be active and we continued to develop stronger and better ties with the IWA and others in the international libertarian movement. Attacks from certain people in the IWW continued and this caused us to waste time, energy and resources in fending off these attacks. Yet, at the same time, those in the IWW who chose to continue their attacks rather than accept us as comrades to work with, as the U.S. section of a fraternal international, became more isolated, both within the IWW and within the international movement (particularly after their attacks on us during the Haymarket Centennary and their cooperation with the pro-*renovado* Hull syndicalists).

WSA members in San Francisco and Boston developed cordial working relationships with local IWW groups or individuals, as did WSA members in Colorado and Louisiana who hold joint membership in the IWW and WSA.

In addition to the "common program" discussions, there were also discussions of racism and sexism during this time frame, which eventually resulted in the addition of sections on these topics to our statement of principles ("Where We Stand").

During the last year we saw interest in the WSA expressed by a group of prisoner rights activists. The issue of prisoner organizing was discussed at our 4th Convention in San Francisco. The WSA did decline the prisoner rights group's request to enter WSA as a group for several reasons. One reason being that they were currently involved in an internal fight within the IWW (and we didn't need a bigger problem with the IWW than we already had). Secondly, the mass entry into WSA by a large bloc of a single-issue-oriented group would radically change the nature of the WSA.

The 4th WSA Convention also re-evaluated the "common program" initiative, which we mentioned earlier. We feel that our revised understanding of the prospects of such an initiative are more in line with current realities and we hope this will help in facilitating implementation of the program. Other items discussed and acted upon were: the proposed IWA English language discussion bulletin, election of IWA Congress delegates, the general anarchist movement in the U.S., international issues, press and propaganda, and on-going problems with the *Resurgence/Libertarian Labor Review* people.

Conclusion

As the Workers Solidarity Alliance-IWA moves through its fourth year, we do so with realistic expectations. We know that many problems still exist here in the United States that impede the development of a revolutionary workers movement. We know that the WSA is very much affected by the general state of our class and we know that we must do all we can do help beat back the bosses' offensive. We are confident that, despite the problems that exist, we shall see a modest growth of numbers and influence by the time of the next IWA Congress. This will be possible because we not only have the powerful ideas of anarcho-syndicalism behind us, but we will also have the solidarity and mutual aid of the IWA as well. Also because the WSA is composed of militants who are committed to seeing anarcho-syndicalism again become a powerful force within both the workplace and the community.

3. WSA and the IWA

Since our inception, the WSA has maintained a staunch internationalist perspective. One of the motivations for the founding of the WSA was to organize a U.S. section of the IWA. Prior to the formation of the WSA, only two local groups in the U.S. belonged to the IWA: the Libertarian Workers Group of New York City and the Syndicalist Alliance of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The WSA has shown its solidarity with other sections on various occasions since we were formed in 1984. The WSA aided the IWA from the

first days of our existence. At our founding convention we resolved to support the CNT-E in its fight for both its historic patrimony and for its archives. And shortly thereafter the DAM in their campaign on behalf of the miners.

Since 1984 the WSA has developed extensive contacts with both the Secretariat and the sections, especially the DAM and the Australian ASF. The contacts with the DAM and the ASF has resulted in our participation in the English Language Discussion Bulletin. Good communication also exists with the Northern European Subsecretariat (who were able to raise some funds for the locked-out Hormel meat-packers), the CNT-F, CNT-Exilio (Montreal, Canada) and the NSF. And periodic communication also with the FORA and Japanese WSM.

Since our founding, the WSA has also supported IWA calls for aid to the Brazilian COB (and COB railworkers), Omori, the Laura Ashley strikers, the CNT-F railworkers, Puerto Real shipyard workers and other CNT-E appeals. We have done this through leaflets, pickets and through the press.

The WSA views internationalism as especially important in this day of corporate and cultural globalism. Effective solidarity and contact across national borders is absolutely necessary. The crisis that the North American worker faces is no different than that of most workers in the industrialized West. Working class isolationism (i.e. nationalism and racism) in the face of drastic assaults on workers' conditions and rights, and the radical restructuring of industrialized economies, is, at best, a backward step. If the times call for anything, they call for an increased sense of internationalism and the agitation and implementation of our ideals.

Although the IWA can't be on top of every struggle, coordination in those struggles we get involved in is quite important. A look at the IWA support for the British miners, Laura Ashley strikers, the COB railworkers and the CNT-E proved that when there's good organization we can make a difference. The IWA should strive to constantly improve our organizational capabilities.

The interesting aspect of many of the workers' struggles these days is their reliance on the use of direct action, solidarity and creativity. The late 1980s and early 1990s present us with a very opportune time to propagate revolutionary syndicalism. Libertarian unionism provides workers with realistic tactics to fight the bosses, both at work and in the community. No other form of unionism provides for direct action, unlimited solidarity and genuine self-organization. What other unionism fights for both immediate gains and building a new society at the same time?

Reformist unionism has shown workers how not to fight the bosses. It's important that we all share our experiences, learn new things and attempt to develop ways of aiding each other and the working class of the different lands. We believe this is possible and we'll strive to do our share towards this end.

A review of the Congress Agenda and supporting documents by the sections shows recurring thoughts and themes. The need for more propaganda, discussion bulletins, and solidarity are only a few of the constant themes. The WSA is generally supportive of most of the resolutions in these areas. There have been a number of previously discussed and now formally proposed ideas on IWA restructuring, the WSA believes these should be given careful consideration. We agree with the USI's call for a discussion on anti-militarism.

The WSA concurs with the NSF's proposal regarding the IWW- initiated International Labor Conference. Since 1986 we have asked for clarification on this since it appears to some that the IWA is being sectarian for not taking a formal position sooner. Also in regards to the IWW, the WSA proposes that the IWA resolve the long-lasting dispute between ourselves and the *Libertarian Labor Review/Resurgence* group and their IWW faction.

The WSA proposes that the IWA issue a resolution stating that the WSA is the recognized section of the IWA in the U.S. And that any person seeking membership in the IWA should join the WSA. The WSA further believes we should be absolved

of any charges and complaints issued against us by the above-named publication, group and faction in the IWW.

We put this forward in a spirit of wanting to end close to four years of nonsensical name-calling, sectarianism and waste of the movement's resources, time and energy. We hope that a greater spirit of cooperation between ourselves and those in the IWW, and amongst the libertarian movement in general, may prevail in the future. It has not been unusual to hear from an interested comrade thinking of joining WSA but who says they'd rather not because of the in-fighting. The WSA chooses to fight the class enemy, not some group of "correct liners". So we hope the above will help to clear the way for movement-building to progress in the U.S. If there's any time in the history of postwar libertarian unionism when movement-building was needed, that time is now.

Finally, the WSA looks forward to the future with hopes for success on the part of the IWA. Who would have ever thought ten years ago that the IWA would once again grow and that the message of workers' self-emancipation would be agitated once again by sections in 15 countries, supporters in several others, and prospective sections in two others? Our movement has had a combative history, yet has been nearly crushed at times. But still the grand ideas of the First International have always found a way of regenerating. And so again this regeneration process has found its way back into the reality of the world's working class.

4. Transformation of the American Working Class

Perhaps one of the most significant sociological changes in the composition of the U.S. working class since 1950 has been the permanent entry of women into the paid (or wage labor) workforce. Whereas women have traditionally been consigned to the "shadow economy" by unpaid labor (childraising, housework) that supported a largely male labor force, the situation has changed under advanced capitalism. Like Black slavery in the last century, women have been "liberated" only to

a newer form of servitude. Not only do women continue to perform the traditional burdens of childcare and housework, but also now must work at jobs which pay less than positions occupied by males.

Along side of this, technological and managerial changes are re-establishing in advanced capitalism the 19th century division between skilled and unskilled. The trend is toward a minority of educated technical workers, in great demand with higher pay, and a majority of unskilled or deskilled workers who must content themselves with menial jobs, minimal pay and even parttime work and chronic unemployment. Much of this has been described in sociological analysis (e.g. Mallet and Gorz) of the "new class" and the microelectronic revolution. The line between workplace and community blurs as modern capitalist "development" becomes as obviously devastating as the economic costs.

The re-improvement of large sectors of the American population (seen variously in governmental fiscal crisis, the drop in home ownership, the increase in the numbers of homeless encamped in parks and doorways, and the widening of class divisions) has replaced the 1950s American Dream of rising consumption and easy credit. The specter of tent cities now seems as likely as the prospect of suburban developments once did. Traditional methods of managing the capitalist crisis (especially corporate liberalism) and traditional means of organizing consent (such as trade unionism) have failed even in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. The American public is offered only the inevitable path of austerity with the decades-old images of prosperity still in its memory.

Against this bleak picture of "no future," only the complete break with commodity values offered in libertarian communism gives hope.

5. U.S. Class Struggle: Introduction

The period since the last IWA Congress has seen many of the same conditions prevailing as when last reported. There have also been some positive changes as well as negative ones here in the United States.

As reported elsewhere, the social and economic conditions of the American working class has reached new lows. Oppression, destroyed communities and lives; poverty wages; despair; hunger; depression; anger; union bashing; corporate mania; and, in some instances, determined fightbacks by workers.

Below you will find a report on what's been happening on the shopfloor, within the labor movement, and mention of several key struggles since 1984. Limitations of space do not permit going into every fight of every industry, trade or profession.

As we begin to move into 1988, American workers find themselves little better off than they did in 1984. Despite all the Reagan Administration's (and the bosses') claims of a "new prosperity" with low unemployment and low inflation, nothing could be further from the truth. For millions of unemployed or underemployed industrial workers. Or for the low-paid service sector workers as well.

In a survey entitled "Employer Bargaining Objectives, 1988" (Bureau of National Affairs), unionized workers can get a good sense that the bosses' onslaught will continue. The BNA survey stated that "Management negotiators intend to be tight-fisted in 1988." And that "competitiveness is [the] buzz word." Also in this report we find that "Two-tier wages to continue" (that is, workers doing the same jobs in the same workplace for a lower rate). Also the survey predicts that "[b]enefits would be scaled back."

Furthermore, according to the BNA's *Labor Relations Week*, the bosses' "National Association of Manufacturers Chief Economist sees little chance of manufacturing wage gains jumping" for 1988. With predictions that wage increases will be limited to only 2 to 4%. Yet two-thirds of all bosses surveyed by the BNA predicted that 1988 would be a profitable year.

These predictions and statements by the bosses should cause great concern to the more than 1 million unionized workers whose collective bargaining agreements expire in 1988. And to the majority of non-union workers who have no control

over the policies of their bosses. Major agreements will expire in the mining, trucking, rail transit, rubber, oil, aerospace, agricultural implement, auto-manufacturing (Chrysler), electrical products, motion pictures, apparel, shipbuilding and other generally "hard-pressed" industries. Workers in these fields can expect to see some of the same hard-nosed bosses' demands and strategies as other workers are currently facing. And they themselves have probably already faced three years ago (most U.S. contracts run for three years).

It should be added that the current wave of labor-bashing here in the U.S. can be traced back not to the firing of the 11,000 air traffic controllers, but to the sell-out labor agreement reached between the United Auto Workers union and the Chrysler Corporation back in 1979.

After years of professing how militant and progressive the UAW is (in the traditions of European social-democracy), the leadership of the UAW, in the face of Chrysler's bankruptcy, agreed to deep wage, benefit and work rule cuts (we call them "concessions," the bosses call them "relief"). The concessionary accord was supposed to save the company and jobs. This plan, it should be added, was aided by the office of the President of the U.S., the then-Democratic (the so-called "friends of labor") Administration of Jimmy Carter. As you can well imagine, despite the concessions, further jobs were lost and more concessions were ultimately given. So it should be noted that despite all the talk of the Reagan-inspired offensive, it was actually the Carter administration which set the wheels in motion for the current bosses' offensive.

Shortly after the UAW granted concessions at Chrysler, all of the bosses began to jump on the "let's-plead-poverty" bandwagon. In every basic industry, from steel to textiles, union after union began to grant the bosses concessions. It should also be noted that concessionary demands were also asked of organized service-sector workers as well and were not limited to the "smoke-stack" industries. Many times these concessions were granted despite sizeable rank-and-file opposition. This op-

position was not able to carry the day. The stage was then set for continued labor-bashing.

a. Strikes Down

The continuance of concessionary bargaining, the upswing in the use of "permanent replacements" (scabs) in strikes, heavy layoffs during the severe 1980-82 recession, and the massive reactionary attack by the State and the bosses has led to an all-time low in the use of strikes by workers. A good indication of the confidence the bosses feel in their ability to take labor head-on is fact that, according to the BNA survey, 77% of companies with expiring contracts in 1988 are willing to hire scabs. This figure is up by 70% from the previous year.

According to government figures (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), there were only 30 strikes involving 1,000 or more workers in 1987. In 1986 there were 69 strikes of 1,000 or more workers and in 1985 there were 54. The 1986 strike figure represents an increase from the low point in 1979. It should be noted that from 1947 (when such figures were first recorded) to 1979 there were never fewer than 200 strikes per year of 1,000 or more workers.

Although strikes are down, the use of certain forms of traditional syndicalist tactics (such as direct action on the shopfloor, building community support, and putting other pressure on the company without striking) are being used more and more. Some examples of what we are talking about will appear later in this report.

b. Significant Anti-Worker Legal Developments

In 1987 the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed a National Labor Relations Board (the government agency which regulates labor/management relations) decision which okays the hiring of scabs during a lockout — one of the most significant anti-worker rulings over the last seven years.

On a local level there has been an increased use of injunctions against strikers by local courts as well. In a situation involving the United Mine Workers union, it was apparent that the bosses of L&J Equipment were out to bust the UMW by forcing a

strike. Once the strike was in progress, the company hired armed thugs to provoke violence and intimidate people. Picket line violence flared up. A local court ruled that the violence was started by the workers and then put on a tight injunction which virtually stripped the picket lines of strikers. Then the NLRB heavily fined the union and found the union in violation of a "anti-coercion" statute of federal labor law and at that point the strike was severely crippled.

One last example of the intense anti-worker sentiment of the State was another NLRB ruling that a boss's property rights should prevail over the worker's right to picket. It should further be mentioned that in light of all these bad National Labor Relations Board rulings, the AFL-CIO has responded not by calling for mass action in strike situations, but rather they have sought legislation that would outlaw the use of scabs during strikes.

6. The Class War Front: 1984-1987

At this point in the report let's turn our attention to current trends within the labor movement and particular struggles that have occurred since our last report.

a. Pattern & Coordinated Bargaining

One event working to cripple labor's ability to take on the bosses has been the breakdown of pattern bargaining. This has been especially apparent in nearly all basic industries. Pattern bargaining is the setup in which there are national standards on conditions and benefits and wages with one or more unions covering all the companies in one particular industry, or all the plants in a particular corporation. Where there is more than one union involved, as in electrical manufacturing, various forms of coordinated bargaining occur.

Concessionary bargaining has undermined this pattern bargaining approach by the business unions. Few national agreements now exist in steel or meatpacking, for example. And, as in 1966, when GE fought the concept of multi-union coordinated bargaining, 1988 will once again see

GE attack the national agreement and the concept of coordinated bargaining in the electrical manufacturing field.

National agreements and standards pose an interesting question for North American syndicalists. Although current agreements allow for negotiations over local issues, the question is, Do national agreements take away from local autonomy and create centralization? The valiant struggle of meatpackers' Local P-9 is an example of the worst case of bureaucratic-style pattern bargaining.

Yet the question remains for libertarian workers, Does pattern bargaining (as opposed to plant-by-plant bargaining) go against the basic libertarian principles of local autonomy and decentralization? We would argue both Yes and No. In the case of a single privately owned plant, there's great merit to this argument. Yet in an integrated industry, company or multi-national corporation, pattern and coordinated bargaining is a must in this day and age, we'd argue.

Some argue that pattern bargaining is also a ploy by trade union bureaucrats to dominate and centralize their power. To a degree, and under current conditions, this assessment is correct. But as libertarian workers, we must pose our alternative to bureaucratic dominance and centralization instead of outright dismissal of pattern bargaining.

As revolutionary syndicalists we fight for what is possible and practicable in the here and now. As well as for the future. Ultimately what is needed is a new labor movement controlled from the bottom up and industrial in character. One union for one industry, service or profession.

In the absence of this setup, a libertarian position regarding pattern and coordinated bargaining could be: (1) Coordinated Bargaining Committees of various unions or shops within a chain should be composed of rank and file delegates who serve a limited tenure and are recallable by a majority of workers at any time; (2) Research activity be as widespread and decentralized as practicable; (3) Each location to retain the right to negotiate and strike over local issues despite agreement on national or chain issues; (4)

Workers at profitable segments of the chain or industry be allowed to pursue their objective of advancing their membership's interests further, as should've been the case at meatpackers' Local P-9.

Finally, if there's anything that these past four years have shown organized workers, it's that unity at the individual plant level alone simply isn't enough. The increased dominance of multinational corporations and the impact on national and international trade and bargaining have drastically altered the means of achieving solid bargaining power under today's conditions. The increased power of corporations and the mobility of capitalism encourages business unions to allow one group of workers to be pitted against another within the same corporation or industry. And such has been the case during this round of the bosses' offensive.

b. Labor-Management Cooperation Schemes

Over the past decade "worker participation" schemes — commonly in the form of Quality of Work Life plans, Quality Circles, Labor-Management Participation Teams, and Employee Involvement Plans — have become the norm in large manufacturing corporations.

Sadly enough, pledges of union-management cooperation are found in 45% of the contracts in a 1977 government survey, up from just 25% in 1979. The number of Quality of Work Life programs found in today's agreements has doubled since the 1984 Congress.

"Worker participation" under capitalism is nothing more than a polite term for a radical restructuring of the workplace. In a sense, it's no longer a luxury item for managers who are interested in experimenting with productivity, but is considered absolutely necessary for corporations increasingly committed to restructuring the very nature of production itself.

These so-called participation schemes have been pushed on workers by many unions and management (particularly in the automotive and telephone industries) as a way to cut costs and minimize job loss in the face of "competition" and restructur-

ing. Even so, such plans are poison for workers and many workers recognize how toxic this so-called "new partnership" style is.

In addition to the benefits management obtains from such worker involvement programs in the new production processes, labor peace is essential in "flexible" manufacturing. The use of "just-in-time" inventory systems, where manufacturers store no more supplies than are necessary for immediate production needs, means that companies are particularly vulnerable to strikes or any other disruption of the work process. This was evident in the 1986 strike at GM's Delco parts and battery plant.

The need to work-to-rule and use other forms of non-cooperation are essential if workers are to defeat such anti-worker policies, speed-up, job elimination and other profit-oriented schemes. And surely the need for educating workers that such schemes are no substitute for real workers' control is a must if workers are to begin to turn the tide against the bosses and their allies within the labor movement.

c. AFL-CIO

Before moving into the area of specific struggles during this period, mention should be made of what the AFL-CIO has been up to. We do this not because we believe that the AFL-CIO has done anything to advance the class struggle — in fact it has hindered it more than it has advanced it. Rather, the Federation (as it's commonly called) has been forced to go through changes itself.

As labor continued to decline to its lowest point since the 1930s, the stodgy bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO began to look for new ways of maintaining their position of power and to find new ways of organizing the unorganized.

After several years in the making, the AFL-CIO released what has been called by one of their Vice Presidents as a "revolutionary" document. This document is called *The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions: A Report by the AFL-CIO Committee on the Evolution of Work*. This so-called revolutionary document contains nothing revolutionary in it. In some respects it represents

quite a few steps backwards and does nothing to pose militant guidelines and perspectives for current and future struggle. Not that we could expect this from the AFL-CIO or any reformist union labor federation.

The *Report* came up with such "novel" ideas as issuing credit cards to its members, low cost vacations, associate union membership (as opposed to full-fledged union membership participation), use of electronic media to the tune of \$13 million to spent on a "Union Yes" campaign that will use national advertising such as commercial TV, cable TV, local and network radio, and "pilot experimental organizing committees."

The *Report* calls for such internal "democratization" schemes as leaders being "attuned" to their membership, new members orientation programs, and "greater resources for training officers, stewards and rank and file members." The *Report* further states that unions should increase cooperation rather than confrontation with each other and with employers. And that unions should use modern technologies in their organizational work. And, yes, unions members should be allowed to give "advice" and "guidance" to the union hierarchy.

While the *Report* may contain some interesting concepts, nowhere it call for the advancement of the class struggle. In short, the *Report* calls for merely minor changes within the labor movement and ultimately means business as usual for the average worker.

Rather than promoting the idea that we, as workers, have nothing in common with the bosses, the Federation continues to pursue a policy of class collaboration, both here and abroad. Two clear examples of this can be seen in the AFL-CIO's continued support for the pro-government, pro-boss Federation of Korean Trade Unions and the Federation's acceptance of government funds to aid conservative, reactionary unionism abroad. Another aspect of AFL-CIO direction is indicated by the title of a recent article: "AFL-CIO Praises Employee Ownership Promotion." That is, the Federation supports workers buying ailing companies from the bosses rather than fighting for real workers control.

But to add a mystique of militancy, the AFL-CIO (through its Industrial Union Department) has launched a campaign called "Jobs With Justice." This campaign calls for demonstrations by workers and allies to demand full-time jobs, adequate living standards, workers' rights to organize and legislation on plant closings. This campaign also calls on workers to pledge to walk in picket lines or attend pro-labor demonstrations at least five times a year. This is coupled to an "aggressive" political action campaign to raise the minimum wage and for other pro-worker legislation. Added to this list of new-found "militancy" and "resurgence" is the Industrial Union Department's "new" strategy of using direct action tactics, on and off the shopfloor, rather than simply walking off the job as in times past (but only as a means to force employers to agree to contracts, not as an on-going movement).

Despite all of the "turns toward the left," the history of business unionism shows that when the trade union bureaucracy is in trouble, they often seem to veer towards the left. Yet when times are "good," as they were in the 1950s and 1960s, the official American labor movement was quite conservative in all respects. The current trend is merely a recognition that if the trade union hierarchy didn't veer left, they wouldn't survive (that is, "their" unions wouldn't). They wouldn't remain political power brokers and their leverage with the dwindling membership would diminish even more than it already has. The WSA believes that there can be no substitute for direct action-oriented, decentralized rank-and-file unionism as the means to reviving the fortunes of the labor movement.

7. Specific Industries and Struggles

Since the 1984 congress few tangible gains have been made by U.S. workers. In some cases there has been a reduction in the number of hours worked, yet, in the main, the number of hours worked has increased. In some cases Martin Luther King's birthday has been added as a new holiday, there have been some minor improvements in

child care, professional standards of health care, pay equity improvements for women, and some improvements in health and safety. Yet, as you will see below, industrial workers have basically not fared well at all.

a. Grocery, Retail & Meatpacking

The portions of these industries covered by collective bargaining agreements are mainly covered by the United Food & Commercial Workers Union (UFCW).

Like the United Auto Workers, the UFCW has for years tried to pass itself off as a "progressive" union in the CIO school of "social unionism" (though not as vocally as the UAW). Also like the UAW, the UFCW may have taken some reasonably decent positions (for a reformist union) on nuclear power and U.S. military intervention abroad, yet the UFCW bureaucracy has continued to take reactionary positions regarding shopfloor struggles and relationships with the bosses.

For example, in the grocery industry the UFCW has been signing concessionary four-year agreements with the various grocery chains. These agreements call for two-tiered wage systems, wage freezes and lump sum bonuses that are not built into the hourly wage rate, thus providing for what amounts to a wage freeze.

In the retail section of the UFCW, contracts have varied greatly. Looking for "stable" bargaining relationships with the employers in this industry, the UFCW has been signing concessionary contracts that include lump-sum payments, some two-tier setups, changes in night pay and elimination of Sunday premium pay.

Many of you are already familiar with the struggle of meatpackers Local P-9, as was evidenced by the Northern Sub-Secretariat's letter of support and donation to that struggle. The situation of the Hormel workers is only the tip of the iceberg. Sadly enough, the whole industry (which was heavily unionized and with a militant tradition of rank and file struggle) has undergone some heavy changes.

Family owned companies have given way to multinational ownership, such as the union-hating Iowa Beef Processors (owned by Occiden-

tal Petroleum). Bankruptcy plays have been used to gut contracts. In addition to cuts in pay, increased injury rates, including an epidemic of Repetitive Stress Syndrome, have resulted from re-design of the labor process and increased mechanization, with increased stress on productivity and speed-up. Conditions have deteriorated to the point that even commercial news commentators have noted that conditions have returned to the days of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (a turn-of-the-century expose of wretched conditions in the industry). And militant unionism has been replaced by conservative, pro-company unionism.

Space does not permit us to explore the struggle of Local P-9 and that of other meatpackers at length here. Suffice it to say that the valiant and militant standard bearers of class struggle unionism, the Hormel P-9ers, won over the hearts and minds of hundreds of thousands of workers both in the U.S. and abroad. And they also won the hate and wrath of trade union bureaucrats who would rather surrender than fight. As with the miners in Britain, the "official" labor hierarchy would not allow P-9 to win their fight. As with the British miners or the Spanish dockworkers, a P-9 victory would have meant the defeat of reformist unionism and may have heralded a new unionism. A unionism with more in common with revolutionary syndicalism than reformist unionism.

Currently locked out Hormel workers have been attempting to organize their own union of meatpackers, called the North American Meat Packers Union (NAMPU). To date NAMPU has not been able to become successfully entrenched amongst any group other than the locked out Hormel workers in Austin, Minnesota. However, they were able to put on a successful "Rank and File Meatpackers Conference." The conference attracted about 100 union and non-union meatpackers to discuss common problems and to work towards mutually acceptable solutions. All of this comes in the face of defeated strikes and continuing employer lockouts.

b. The Paper & Pulp Products Industry

In the paper and pulp products industry, workers have been taking it on the chin for about the past ten years, seeing job losses and granting the bosses financial, benefit and job classification concessions while corporate profitability was headlined across the pages of *Business Week* (12-1-87): "Reams of Profits for the Paper Business."

During the period since the last Congress the two unions representing workers in this industry have given three year agreements that contained wage freezes, widespread lump-sum payments, changes in work rules and the introduction of the "team concept" in some mills.

The current fight is being conducted against industry giants such as Scott Paper Products and Boise Cascade, to name just two. The most extensive struggle is being waged against the industry leader, International Paper Co. (IP).

Workers at IP are facing massive scabherding, court injunctions, company surveillance, harassment by state police, an anti-union media campaign, and lockouts since June of 1987.

The bosses plant by plant proposals (pattern bargaining was given up during the previous round of negotiations three years ago) are nearly identical. They are: an end to premium pay for Sunday work, elimination of Christmas as a shut-down holiday, the right to subcontract out union work, shifting health care costs onto union members, and the implementation of the "team concept" and other "flexible" work rules.

All of the above have been dubbed "unnecessary concessions" by the leadership of the United Paper Workers International Union. Apparently the UPIU is willing to grant more concessions, just not the aforementioned ones. Despite the fact that the UPIU leadership is quite conservative, and noted for making "back door" deals with the bosses, yet the UPIU has resorted to an aggressive fightback campaign. A campaign that could be termed "old fashioned unionism" since it relies heavily on direct action, membership participa-

tion at all levels of the struggle and community involvement. In addition, this campaign relies heavily on the use of food banks, spouse auxiliaries, picnics, demonstrations, roving pickets, and the use of the media. All of the above-mentioned tactics, it should be mentioned, had been pioneered, in this period, by the Hormel P-9 meatpackers. But in essence these tactics are what we in the revolutionary workers' movement have been calling for as appropriate tactics to beat back the bosses' offensive. The lessons learned by workers in this form of struggle well, we hope, educate more and more workers as to the need to return to the "old days" when the class lines were more clearly drawn. And when it took direct action to make any gains.

c. Automotive Industry

Since we last reported, the automotive industry, like other basic industries, has undergone massive changes. In the main, autoworkers, be they assembly-line workers or in the parts supplying area, have seen massive job losses.

1987 saw the renegotiation of a three-year contract between the main union of autoworkers, the United Auto Workers (UAW), and Ford and GM. This new three-year agreement has been touted as containing a "sweeping new job security program" that would maintain current employment levels. "Impending volume-related layoffs," according to the pact, would be the only time that either Ford or GM could lay workers off.

This pact was ratified by an overwhelming majority of the UAW members at Ford and GM. Despite the predictions that there would be a long strike at GM, this never happened. The much-reduced and battered UAW didn't want a strike, nor did GM. Yet the pact is riddled with holes and major UAW concessions were granted in regards to maintaining shopfloor control and job classifications.

Both agreements extend and enhance previously existing "job security" programs (negotiated in 1984). What makes this agreement "unique" (in a sad way) is the UAW's willingness to form joint union-management committees at a plant