

# What Is The **WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE?**

## **THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE**

is a national working class anarchist (anarcho-syndicalist) organization.

The Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA) is composed of people like yourself. WSA members work in different areas, such as manufacturing, services, and high tech industries. Some members are students. Unfortunately, under capitalism, there are workers without work; and so unemployed people are WSA members too. The WSA is also composed of non-waged and non-salaried workers such as homemakers. And our organization includes part-time and under-employed workers as well.

One of the WSA's founding principles is to actively seek to change the world around us. WSA members do not sit by while the ruling class and its allies continue to oppress and exploit us where we live and work and while they attempt to destroy and divide this world and the people who inhabit it. Rather, WSA members place primary emphasis on *actively* engaging in both short- and long-term struggles to free ourselves from exploitation and domination.

WSA members are active in struggles such as fighting the boss on the job and fighting against do-nothing trade union officials. We also support class war prisoners, community struggles and the struggle against both capitalist and so-called "socialist" militarism; and we support workers internationally through strike support activities at home. WSA members are also active in the fight against racism and sexism.

The WSA believes that only by collectively and democratically engaging in persistent action, discussion, and debate, will we be able to reach other people who are disgusted with the way the world is today.



## **ANARCHISM**

So, you are probably asking yourself, what are the goals, methods and means of the Workers Solidarity Alliance? And what does the WSA mean when we talk about "working class anarchism," "class struggle anarchism," or "anarcho-syndicalism"?

The WSA defines these terms as meaning the direct struggle by the working class against all forms of capitalist and state oppression. Anarchism is an ideology based on the right to live freely and cooperatively. Anarchism means the right of free expression and voluntary association.

Working class anarchism (or anarcho-syndicalism) also means the collective right to own and control the places where we live and work. Working class anarchism means that we don't need a boss to tell us how to manage our workplace and coordinate the manufacture of goods and services with others—or to allow a landlord to kick us out at his whim.

The WSA describes itself as "anarcho-syndicalist" because we see the building of a revolutionary labor movement as primary. The word "syndicalist" simply translates from Latin into the English word "union." We use the term syndicalist because we are part of a broader movement of likeminded organizations that have historically used the term "anarcho-syndicalist" or "revolutionary syndicalist" to describe themselves. These organizations, including the WSA, belong to the International Workers Association (more on the I.W.A. later).

Anarchism also means that we don't need politicians of the right or the left and their political parties and state apparatus to pass laws that benefit a few, or to dictate social rules from above. And we certainly do not need a State to probe into our personal lives. In short, anarchism means that we control our destinies through voluntary organizations we create.

## **LABOR**

To the Workers Solidarity Alliance, the "working class" are all who sell their labor for a wage or salary (except executives and managers). We also believe that homemakers, the unemployed and retirees are part of the working class even though they earn no wage or salary.

The WSA sees the working class as the main sector of society which is continually oppressed and exploited. The working class is in a prime position to overthrow the ruling class given its economic role in society. It is we, the workers, who provide the bosses with the skills, knowledge and labor that gives them



their profits. Without us, no plant or office could run. No ship could sail. No train could run. No periodical could be printed. No offices cleaned or document typed. No food produced or served. No computer could run.

The WSA's concept of unionism is different than that of the reformist AFL-CIO and similar trade unions. While these trade unions only want their "fair" share of the economic pie, anarcho-syndicalists want the whole pie. We want a society where the producers and consumers are in control, not bosses of any type.

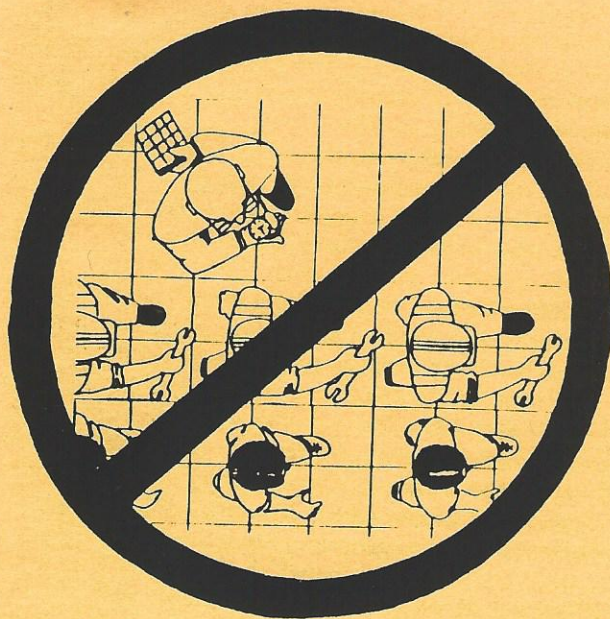
Reformist trade unions are organized along bureaucratic, centralized lines, similar to those of the State. The WSA's anarcho-syndicalism *rejects* this form of union organization. Instead, we favor revolutionary unionism which is directly managed by rank-and-file members—from the bottom up, not the top down.

The WSA believes there can be no place in the labor movement for entrenched bureaucracies which are self-serving instruments of power, manipulation and control over the rank-and-file worker. Rather, anarcho-syndicalists of the Workers Solidarity Alliance pose the alternative of a labor movement that is composed of organizations where decisions and policy are directly controlled by the workers in the shops and offices.

All workers who are delegated to positions of responsibility must be subject to immediate recall by a majority of those who elected them; and there must be mandatory rotation from office after a short term—unlike now where many trade union officials are in office for life and where the average union member has little or no control over such trade union officials.

In building organizations that are directly managed by the rank and file, we would not only create more effective organizations for fighting the bosses; we would also be laying the foundation for a new economy run by working people. This is why we call such unions "revolutionary." Only a movement that is run democratically by working people themselves can create a society in which workers manage industry. In a post-revolutionary, self-managed society, the centers of decision-making would be general meetings, of workers in their workplaces, and in the community. The various facilities in each industry, region and nation, and on an international level, would be linked together in federations, with decisions made at conventions of delegates, uniting the ideas of the whole workforce.





### **WSA's PROGRAM**

That's all well and good, you may say, but what about the here and now? Given that it may not be practical to organize such revolutionary unions at this time (particularly if you belong to a reformist trade union), the WSA advocates the following program.

We believe it's possible for rank-and-file union members to form independent shop committees, rank-and-file coordinating councils, networks of like-minded workers and action committees where mass revolutionary unions are not immediately possible.

These organizations would act separately and independently from the trade union bureaucracy. Such bodies would draw their own demands, settle problems, and act under strict democratic workers' control. These bodies, it is hoped, would coordinate their activities with others in their particular economic sector and with other such organizations in a given reformist union. These bodies would act as a dual power base within the reformist trade unions to fight both the corporate bosses and the trade union officialdom. The WSA sees such rank-and-file bodies as the embryonic revolutionary unions of the future.

Of course, many of us work in places where no unions yet exist, not even the sell-out variety. In such situations we favor building new independent unions that would be run directly by the rank and file—



unions that would fight for workers' interests through the direct action of the workers themselves, rather than relying on the government or professional trade union leaders.

On the tactical level, the WSA believes in the use of *direct action* as opposed to *indirect action* to win both short term and long term goals. Forms of direct action that we favor include "sit down" strikes, where people maintain control over their 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 struggle of others; "social strikes," where workers continue to provide their labor for the other working people in the community, but deny the revenue or control of their labor to the bosses; and community-wide or nationwide general strikes, which demonstrate the power that the workforce or general population has when it's united. It's the WSA belief that a massive general strike (or set of general strikes) along with the occupation of workplaces will ultimately bring down the capitalist class and government.

On the other hand, a strategy that relies on *indirect action*, such as electing representatives to government office, encourages the divisions between leaders and led, between those who make decisions and those who follow them. Electoral politics leads to State-imposed solutions because it tends to define issues in terms of what government policies a small set of leaders will implement. Because a political party is a vehicle for putting leaders in power, a political party can't serve as a vehicle for people intent on creating a truly free society.

The WSA particularly rejects the so-called "vanguard" party concept of the marxists because it can only serve as the embryo of a bureaucratic State machine, as we have seen in the "communist" or "socialist" 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 militarism and pushing production as their capitalist counterparts.

To say that the WSA stands for working class self-liberation is not enough. The Workers Solidarity Alliance doesn't see things simply in terms of on-the-job exploitation.

Since exploitation and oppression take a variety of forms in this society, so must the struggle for social liberation. Movements expressing the will of various communities, women, sexual minorities, young people, national and cultural groups, the aged, the disabled, must also be encouraged and supported. We are op-



posed to all forms of discrimination and oppression that bar people from fully participating in society and realizing their potential as free individuals.

The WSA firmly believes in the concept of working class internationalism. We are proud of the fact that we have and will continue to aid workers throughout the world in their struggles for freedom, whether the struggle be in the Eastern European bloc, the U.S.-dominated bloc, or the so-called non-aligned bloc.

The WSA doesn't practice its internationalism in isolation. We are affiliated with the world body of revolutionary unions and groups, the International Workers Association (IWA). The IWA has existed as an explicitly anarchist and revolutionary unionist international since 1922, although the current IWA traces its origins back to the First International of the 1860s. The IWA is the international expression of revolutionary working class cooperation, coordination, unity, solidarity and struggle.

It is the WSA's hope and desire that you have found this pamphlet of interest. We have merely attempted to highlight some aspects of where we stand on certain questions, and how we differ from others who offer their own solutions to the problems around us.

If you have any questions regarding the ideas described in this pamphlet, by all means get in touch with us. We always *welcome* questions. We hope that you will contact us. And if you agree with our aims and goals, then please join us in fighting for a world free of exploitation, oppression, and domination.

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