

THE
LIBERTARIAN
COMMUNIST

Free or Donation

ISSUE 9 JULY/AUGUST
2010

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

A Discussion Bulletin for the Anti
State, Non Market Sector

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

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After the Election

Well the election is done and dusted, bloody good job too. The sight of all those politicians going around, shaking peoples hands, holding babies, making promises they have no intention of keeping even if they could and general arse licking duties for a few weeks is enough to make your stomach churn and when its going on for weeks you begin to wonder if that carving knife you have in the draw is sharp enough to put you out of your misery but then maybe putting your foot through the TV screen will suffice. This time the speculation dragged on as tweedle-Dave and tweedle-Dum (as Freedom May 22nd accurately described them) settled the basis of their elected joint dictatorship to represent the interests of capital in the U K for as long as the pact holds. We are all only too aware of what the Con-Lib Dem coalition has in store for us and its nothing too pleasant but the same would have been of offer no matter which bunch of thugs had assumed power.

The most exasperating thing, especially for those who reject the profit system in all its guises, is that like so many things within capitalism, (but the election lasts longer), we know what we are forced to go through is a charade. The media, who seem to be more influential with every election this time we had the dreadful leadership debates, put forward the notion that the election was democracy in action; the result would be the voice of the people. Well if this was democracy you can stuff it where the sun doesn't shine. Is it possible that the term democracy can be given to a system where once every four or five years people get the opportunity to elect a government who will run a system which can only operate in the interests of a minority and to the detriment of the majority? Can it be a democracy when you have a choice between two or three parties who all stand for the same thing? The only difference between this and a one party state is that in the latter you are not allowed to stand against the ruling party whilst in the former the agenda is controlled so that real alternatives cannot be meaningfully discussed. Is it democratic when the most

Vital question of all, that of who owns and controls the means of producing and distributing the means of life is never even raised? This election like all others here and in other parts of the world will leave the ownership of those means in the hands of a few very wealthy individuals and corporations. No democracy in this sphere means that democracy does not exist. Why, we may ask, do the majority of people in elections worldwide (those who bother to vote) vote for the continuation of a status quo which is clearly not in their interest? Part of the answer is that the same minority who own the means of wealth production also own the means of promoting and perpetuating the dominant ideas in society. The state and the class it represents control such institutions as the education system and mass media, that same mass media that promotes elections as democracy in action.

So how might we go about overcoming this problem where because a majority of workers have accepted that capitalism is the only system possible they find it inconceivable that the solution to their problems lays outside the confines of that system? How do we get them to think outside of this box? In part the answer to this is that it is their involvement in struggles within the system that forces people to confront and challenge the notion that capitalism is the only system possible. However the point has to be made that the class struggle is not a simplistic process whereby it inevitably leads to people challenging the system. Involvement leaves some peoples ideas unchanged and some involved in bitter confrontation can turn to reactionary ideas. Having said that our involvement in such struggles and engaging with people in a variety of activities is indispensable if our ideas are to become more influential and workers are to gain the confidence needed to change society.

Writing almost fifty years ago Maurice Brinton makes some suggestions that are still relevant today [See Maurice Brinton: *Revolutionary Organisation in Workers Power*, Page 50, AK Press 2004]. Firstly, he suggests we need to communicate to workers involved in conflicts details of other workers struggles. This can be done as Brinton suggested, through the revolutionary press but today we

have a wider variety of methods at our disposal via the enhanced world-wide communications network. This also includes bringing information about workers' struggles worldwide as well as making available a detailed history of the class struggle. This helps workers involved in confrontations realise that what they are facing is nothing new and draw lessons from the past. A second point raised by Brinton is the way we involve ourselves in everyday struggles whether in the workplace, community or in anti war movements and today we would have to add ecological issues. Such involvement has several objectives. The first is obviously to secure victory for the workers involved but it is important to encourage people to organise themselves rather than applying a detailed blue print for how workers should conduct themselves. However, as Brinton argued, this does not mean drawing back from presenting our own ideas and trying to convince workers about the wider implications of their struggles. In addition to this, as we argued in an earlier issue of TLC, we see the need for the development of local social centres or bookshop/cafes. These could be used for local groups to hold meetings, make literature available, be used for social events and for workers involved in struggles to co-ordinate their activities and for fund raising events. Workers need to be able to come into contact with anti capitalist ideas on a daily basis. There are no easy answers of how to confront the hold that dominant ideas have over a majority of people but what we can offer is the space for groups and individuals in the anti state, non market sector to discuss ideas of how we could proceed based on their own experiences.

The Libertarian Communist is sent out by post or email, free of charge. We would like to thank those readers who have made donations either by money or postage stamps. Such donations help keep this discussion bulletin going and hopefully will help achieve, in time, a bigger and better publication. If you wish to make a financial contribution please make cheques payable to (World of Free Access) and send them or stamps to, C/O Ray Carr, Flat 1, 99 Princess Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset, BH12 1BQ.

Letters

Just one letter for this issue this concerns the article in issue 7 on the Libertarian Communism journal produced by SPGB members in the 1970s and the letter concerning this published in the May/June issue from Mike.

Dear Lib Com

Further to "Mike" about the history of the original Lib Comm. It was *originally* called **Critical Theory and Revolutionary Practice** but soon became **Libertarian Communism**, by which name the whole run of the journal (and its associated group) is known by. This is a full publishing history which you might want to publish as a **JUST FOR THE RECORD**:

Libertarian Communism Journal

- i) as an internal publication within the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

"Critical theory and revolutionary practice"
no. 1, October 1972

Unnamed journal, (undated and unnumbered but annotated no. 2,
April 1973)

Unnamed journal, (undated and unnumbered but annotated no. 3,
September 1973)

"Revolutionary Communism", no.4 (no date but late 1973)

"Libertarian Communism", no.5, April 1974

"Libertarian Communism", no.6, June 1974

"Libertarian Communism", no. 7, January 1975

- ii) as the publication of the organisation Social Revolution

"Libertarian Communism", no.8 (undated but June 1975)

"Libertarian Communism", no.9 December 1975

"Libertarian Communism", no.10, July 1976

KAZ

Industrial Unionism.

It seems to me that "Industrial Unionism" with its principled opposition to capitalism and the state belongs in a fairly uncomplicated way to the organisations of the anti-capitalist, anti-statist, and anti-reformist sector. However, Because of a recent misunderstanding regarding the character of "Industrial Unionism" I experienced with someone with a generally superb grasp of the "Thin Red Line", I realised the understanding of revolutionary industrial unionism, as a group truly belonging to the anti-state non-market sector, might not be as ubiquitous as I had previously imagined. I thought it might be helpful to write an "Industrial Unionism" 101 for TLC to promote discussion of this subject. Moreover, because of the misunderstanding I encountered I thought it best to make it excruciatingly straightforward! All apologies to everyone who already knows everything that follows!

Most unions in the UK are trade unions (although, to confuse matters, there are many trade unions that use the term Industrial Union, even though they organize by trade or craft and not by industry). Trade unionism has become the conventional means by which workers organize to "bargain collectively" in order that they might sell their labour-power at the best possible price and improve their working conditions. If you are reading this fine journal it will be stating the bleeding obvious to say that trade union activity, including strikes, is necessary in capitalist society to fight against the economic inequality inherent in capitalism. Sadly, this activity will never be sufficient to promote meaningful and lasting social change because the mainstream unions lack any overall criticism of capitalism, in

which a tiny minority own and control the means of producing and distributing wealth, as inherently unfair. Therefore, they tend to be co-opted by capitalism into misleading the workers that they share interests in common with the tiny employing class. In addition, all too often unions are led by fat cat salary earning General Secretaries and other senior officials who "bargain collectively" with bosses behind their members' backs to reach "negotiated agreements" which are then binding on the rank and file. For these reasons, among others, trade unions end up seeking only an improvement in immediate conditions without going on to seek an "impossible" alteration in the basic relationship of wage-labour and capital. Basically, mainstream unionism is thoroughly "reformist". Obviously (to continue to preach to the choir here) trade unions should continue their efforts to obtain the best conditions they can for workers, and should be supported in that struggle (and industrial union members are often trade union members through this necessity).

However, real social change can only be secured by workers organizing as a class and struggling for the abolition of the wages system, not just for higher wages. That is the point of "Industrial Unionism". Revolutionary industrial unionism belongs to the Anti-State Non-Market sector because of its program for the self-liberation of the working class from wage slavery, exploitation and oppression. It is not trade unionism, not simply because it organises on the basis of industry and not on the basis of trade, but because it is a movement for radical change that asserts that the working class need to organize (as a large industrial union) precisely in order to establish a classless society without State or Market. Its program seeks to further the organization of working people into a class acting for itself, seeks to further the defeat and overthrow of the supremacy of the

employing class and seeks to further the achievement of an alternative society by the working class "consciously and democratically" through its own organizations. In addition, because, it belongs to the Anti-State Non-Market sector, it is led from the bottom up by its rank-and-file membership rather than by fat cat salary earning leaders and/or vanguardists. All workers are included and have an equal say in the industrial union organization (including those who are disabled and unemployed), and it unites all workers across trades, industries and countries without distinction of gender, sexuality, ethnic/cultural identity or religion. And yes, obviously, it organises on the basis of industry and not on the basis of trade or craft! (for an explanation of how this is designed to work see <http://wiiu-uk.tripod.com/what-is-revolutionary-industrial-unionism.html>)

To the best of my knowledge (and I am open to correction on this), there are at least two (possibly three) "Industrial Unions" in the UK:

1. The IWW, a grassroots, democratic and militant union that seeks to organise ALL workers in ALL industries in ALL countries into One Big Union. It is not controlled by or affiliated with any political party or political movement. No money goes to politicians. Membership dues are used to maintain the union and assist organizing campaigns. As a result, monthly dues are low.
2. The WIU, which is very similar, but is a Deleonist industrial union in the sense that it seeks to encourage the working class to organize both politically, taking power through democratic elections, and industrially, to exercise that power by its full control of the means of production and distribution. However, the WIU recognises that, at this time, there is "no single political party that can be said to stand as a singular representation of the principles of revolutionary industrial unionism".

3. Possibly SolFed. I am uncertain to what, if any, degree SolFed would wish to endorse my description of industrial unionism [no reply to my e-mail].

Therefore, although their constitution includes the excellent phrase “Revolutionary unionism is based on the class war and holds that all workers must unite in industrial unions that fight for our liberation from the double yoke of capital and the state”, I cannot unequivocally include them here. From their web site, they look like thoroughly good folk to me though, and obviously belong to the anti-capitalist, anti-statist, and anti-reformist sector!)

For further information about IWW-UK go to <http://iww.org.uk/> and for further information about WIU-UK go to <http://wiu-uk.tripod.com> (And for SolFed, given the above, go to <http://www.solfed.org.uk/>)

There are also two further sites I would recommend looking at, one pro (and generally full of exceedingly useful information) <http://www.deleonism.org/>, and one anti but still quite useful for further discussion http://www.worldsocialism.org/articles/socialist_industrial_unions.php .

There you go granny, that is how you suck those eggs.

Mike Young

PROBLEMS OF REVOLUTION

Hopefully this will become a regular feature of The Libertarian Communist but as always this is dependent on readership interest and involvement in terms of either responding to issues already raised or raising new areas for discussion. The aim of this section will be to discuss problems and issues involved in the revolutionary change from capitalism, a system dominated by the state and market

with its interest on profit and capital accumulation to one of communal ownership, free association and living in harmony with the planet. The issues raised can be on how we might achieve our aims or the problems we may face when we get there.

The following discussion is on how we will obtain the things we need to live in a free society, will there be some restrictions as supporters of Labour Time Vouchers maintain or will it be based on free access?

LABOUR VOUCHERS OR FREE ACCESS?

In the following discussion more space is likely to be taken up with Labour Time Vouchers (LTV) than with Free Access this is simply because whilst free access has its critics and problems it is less complex than LTV, not that the latter is highly complicated but there are more organisational problems to be considered. Although LTV are also known as simply Labour Vouchers, Labour Certificates or Labour cheques, for this discussion we are going to use the term Labour Time Vouchers (LTV) as this term seems to best describe what they are all about.

Free access is best summed up by the notion, **“From each according to their abilities to each according to their self determined needs”** Thus in a free society based on the common ownership of the means for producing and distributing the things we need to live, people would voluntarily contribute their labour to society based on their abilities and to a certain extent their interests and would take from the common store of available goods based on their self defined needs. Whilst it would be expected that the overwhelming majority of people capable of working would do so there would be no compulsion and people would not be limited in terms of consumption but society would expect most to act in a reasonable and logical manner and not take more than they need. LTV were first proposed by Robert Owen in 1820 and were advocated by Marx [**Critique of the Gotha Programme**] as a means of organising labour and consumption in a socialist/Communist society

as it first comes out of capitalism. Workers receive a certificate from society that they have contributed such an amount of labour (after deducting her/his labour for the common funds), and this allows them to withdraw the same amount from the common stock of the means of consumption. Workers thus contribute the same amount of labour to society in one form that they receive back in another form {p.16}. The De Leonist Socialist Labor Party (DLSLP) argues that in a socialist society private ownership of the means of production and distribution, the profit motive and money as a means of exchange will all disappear and a new system of production for use would use LTV which workers could exchange for goods and services. Workers will receive a LTV from their union showing they have contributed a certain amount of hours and the vouchers will give workers the right to withdraw from the social store as much as they have contributed to it, less that reserved for the common funds [The People, December 1999].

Whilst there is little doubt how free access would work, the controversy surround its feasibility and practicality, there are disagreements between supporters of LTV of how they would operate.

Supporters of LTV agree that they are paid for hours of labour performed; they are not money but are used to purchase goods and services. However there are about four debateable issues .(1) will all workers get the same amount of LV for a certain amount (say one hour's labour or does it depend on the degree of difficulty or desirability of labour performed? (2) Are LV a temporary measure or are they permanent? (3) What happens to those who cannot work? In this respect some LTV adherents argue that some basic necessities should be free to all. Others say enough vouchers should be given out to those who cannot work or work enough hours so they can afford basic necessities or enough vouchers should be given out to those determined (by someone or some group) to be needy or justifiably unable to work to ensure they can afford basic necessities.

(4) Will Labour Time Vouchers Circulate? To this question some answer no, once a purchase is made a LTV is destroyed or must be re-earned by labour. However some

believe that LTV should circulate like money, some believe they should be able to be invested (not for profit) or that when something is purchased the seller should be able to reuse them [World Socialist Movement (WSM), What are Labour Vouchers? See their website]

FREE ACCESS: SOME CRITICISMS AND COUNTER ARGUMENTS

Free access is viewed by its opponents such as the De Leonist Socialist Labor Party as a non market utopia. In a reply to Frank Girard [Discussion Bulletin Jan/Feb 2001] They argue that free access would allow the old parasite (capitalist) class to be able to take just what they want from society without having to work for it. In [Socialism's Consumer Market, De Leonist Society of Canada, original dated Jan/Feb 1997] it is argued that the free access argument is based on the false premise that the capitalist class and its supporters would bow to the will of a socialist majority and would not attempt to undermine it by, for example, using squads to strip the market bare of food. A basic argument against free access is that some people would simply take more than their fair share and thereby cause shortages that would cause massive disruptions to the system. Before he came to favour free access Frank Girard argued that the concept of LTV did provide an answer to the most common objection/question raised against free access; what about the lazy people who would refuse to work? The LTV supporter's argument was that all those who were capable of working would have to work. The WSM [see its website, What are labour vouchers?] argue that now and for some time enough could be produced, in an ecological manner, to satisfy the self defined needs of the world's population. With a conscious majority, (well over 51%), in favour of socialism world wide even allowing for a situation where some people do act in an irresponsible manner, such as refusing to work or taking more than they need, there is not going to be enough of them to disrupt and destroy a system of free

access. To this the argument could be added that free access cannot be related to the sort of mass consumption we see in the advanced capitalist systems where people are urged to change products constantly in order to increase sales {see Murray Bookchin quote in issue 8 of TLC, page 3}. Kropotkin [The Conquest of Bread, Page 221] argued that the day when any civilized association of individual asked themselves the question what are the needs of all and what are the means of satisfying them? It would see that in industry and agriculture it already has the means to satisfy those needs providing it has the knowledge of how to apply those means to satisfy those real needs.

CRITICISMS OF LTV

The arguments in favour of LTV have already been stated in putting the case against free access but to sum up 1) They would provide a means to control former members of the capitalist class and their supporters if they attempt to disrupt and bring down a socialist system in its infancy. 2) The argument against people refusing to work or taking more than they needed do not apply with a system of LTV as all would have to contribute and could only take on the basis of what they have contributed. They would therefore not have the problems associated with a system of free access. As we have already noted there are differences between those who advocate LTV as to how they might operate. So first of all how would the amount of labour contributed by each person be calculated is it as simple as one hours labour is worth say five LTV irrespective of the difficulties and skills and worth to society of that labour? [Kropotkin, [The conquest of Bread, pp.196], suggests that while you could estimate two workers both labouring for 5 hours per day over a period of one year and suggest that over that time they have contributed equal amounts, you cannot divide their work and estimate that one hour or day of one is worth the same as the hour or day of the other. This ignores, he argues, what is complex in industry and agriculture, it would be ignoring to what extent all individual work is the result of past and present society as a whole. Frank Girard, [Discussion Bulletin May/June 2000], also notes the problems involved in quantifying goods and services in terms of

time and this, he points out, will lead to a group of workers having to administer them, spending time outside of the areas we usually regard as useful production. Girard suggests that the administration of LTV would be an activity very similar to that of banking or business accounting and could lead to an aspect of control associated with accounting. A similar point is made by the WSM who argue that some body will have to decide who gets them, how many, are they to be reused or destroyed and this might lead to more than simple administration, the system might have to be policed with some engaged in activities to make sure people are not taking things they have not paid for. [WSM: What are Labour Vouchers?]

As we have seen there is some disagreement between supporters of LTV over the issue of whether LTVs would circulate. The WSM argue that if LTV circulate they are money but if they do not circulate but are only used to account for hours worked and goods taken, they are not money as defined in the broader capitalist sense, although to workers they would seem to amount to the same thing. It is generally agreed by their supporters that LTV could not be used to accumulate the means of producing wealth their purpose would be limited to limit consumption and enforce work [WSM]. John Crump [A Contribution to a Critique of Marx, Solidarity/Social Revolution 1976, pp10-11] argues that the only way to prevent LTV exchanging between individuals would be a strict policing system.

WOULD A LTV SYSTEM BE JUST ANOTHER FORM OF CAPITALISM?

The WSM and Frank Girard in criticising LTV as envisioned by the SLP and John Crump criticism of them as advocated by Marx in Critique of the Gotha Programme all question whether such a system would simply be another form of capitalism. The WSM, argue that LTV maintain the idea inherent in the wages system that our human worth is determined by the amount of goods we produce or own. Likewise Girard [Discussion Bulletin May/June 2000] argues that LTV as described in SLP literature are remarkably like money and the new system sounds like the old market system with a new

medium of exchange. Crump {**A Contribution to a Critique of Marx, Solidarity/Social Revolution, 1976, page 10**} in tracing the problem back to Marx in, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, goes a stage further, Marx, he argues, was basically advocating a lower and a higher phase of communist society and here there is some continuity between Marx and Lenin. In the first phase the means of production are communally owned but workers, in order to live, have to supply their labour power in return for a voucher which allows them to consume. Thus workers, Crump argued, are little different to wage workers, they are voucher or certificate labourers and they would need a lot of convincing that they are in a different position to their status under capitalism. Whatever the myth workers would stand before the means of production as propertyless certificate labourers and those means would still confront them as an alien force. Thus this first phase is nothing more than a form of capitalism. ***“no matter how insistently Marx might have applied the label “first phase of communist society” to this society which he described in the Critique of the Gotha Programme, as soon as we examine it in any form of depth we can see that it is a form of capitalism” [John Crump, op cit page 11]***

Several questions arise from this discussion. Is a society of free access possible given a substantial majority in favour of common ownership and production for need/use? How would we deal with a significant group of capitalists and their supporters who tried to disrupt and bring down a society based on voluntary labour and free access in its infancy? Are concepts such as LTVs outdated given the potential of modern society to be able to produce and distribute enough to satisfy at least the basic necessities of the world's population? Did Marx only advocate such a system because in his day a society of free access would not have been feasible? Are a system of LTV merely capitalism in another form?

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

ITUC Annual Survey of Trade Union Rights 2010.

One reason why members of the anti state, non market socialist/anarchist sector work for a free society is the lack of fundamental rights for many workers throughout the world. In some parts of the

world this denial of rights can be anything from starvation wages which might lead to loss of life to a more immediate form of murder. Whilst it is claimed that such atrocities do not happen in so-called capitalist democracies, those countries that come under that umbrella have no hesitation in trading with regimes that deny their own citizens basic human rights and who continue to murder those who stand up against them.

In June the ITUC announced the results of its Annual Survey of Trade Union Rights 2010 and the results do not make good reading. In 2009 101 trade unionists were murdered, this was an increase of 30% over 2008. Columbia remains the most dangerous place for anyone standing up for fundamental workers rights with 48 murders, there were 16 in Guatemala, 12 in Honduras, 6 in Mexico and Bangladesh, 4 in Brazil, 3 in the Dominican Republic and the Philippines and 1 each in India, Iraq and Nigeria . The survey also revealed, (unsurprisingly for anyone who has a grasp of the realities of world capitalism), that the pressure was growing on fundamental workers rights around the world as the impact of the global economic crisis on employment grows ever deeper.

The ITUC report also recorded an extensive list of violations suffered by trade unionists, (i/e workers), struggling to defend workers interests in 140 countries. Most probably this is a vast underestimation as workers are either deprived of the means to make their voices heard or do not speak out due to fear of reprisals which could result in the loss of their livelihood or endanger their physical safety. Thus the survey documented harassment and other forms of intimidation, a further ten attempted murders and 35 serious death threats. Many trade unionists remained in prison and in 2009 a further 100 joined those already **incarcerated**. Many others were arrested in countries such as Iran, Honduras, Pakistan, South Korea, Turkey and Zimbabwe. The general trade union rights situation has continued to deteriorate in countries such as Egypt, the Russian Federation, South Korea and Turkey. According to the ITUC survey there were numerous reports of strike-breaking and strikers facing repressive measures in each region and thousands of workers demonstrating to claim wages, oppose harsh working conditions or highlight the harmful effects of the global financial and economic crisis faced beatings, arrest and detention. In Bangladesh six workers who were on strike for a pay increase and settlement of outstanding wages died after police intervened.

Internationally recognised labour standards seem to be coming under increasing pressure and this is leading to more and more workers facing

insecurity and vulnerability in employment and 50% of the global labour force are now in precarious jobs. The difficulties faced by such workers to organise industrially and exercise what rights they may have are linked to their vulnerable labour market position. The survey focused attention on many cases where, while trade union rights are officially protected in legislation, restrictions on legal coverage and weak or non-existent enforcement added to the vulnerability of workers already struggling due to the crisis. Severe restrictions or outright prohibition of strikes still exist in a large number of countries. The term severe restrictions on the right to strike could well apply to the United Kingdom as, in view of the amount of legal challenges where ballots have resulted in a vote for industrial action, could the next comment where it states: *"Furthermore complex procedural requirements, imposition of compulsory arbitration and the use of excessively broad definitions of "essential services" provisions often make the exercise of trade union rights impossible in practice, depriving workers of their legitimate rights to union representation and participation in industrial action"*.

When has any government or employer's spokesperson ever been heard to comment when confronted with a majority vote in favour of strike action that workers have a legal and human right to go on strike? Near the end of its report the ITUC note that 2009 was the 60th anniversary of the ILO convention 98 on the right to organise and collective bargaining, which has still not been ratified by countries such as Canada, China, India, Iran, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam. Thus, it adds: *"approximately half of the world's economically active population is not covered by the convention"*.

The truth is that capitalism cannot afford to grant the basic right for workers to organise and take industrial action effectively without the intervention of the forces of the state or thugs hired by private capitalist employers. This is one of the reasons the working class, worldwide, cannot afford to let capitalism continue.

Industrial News (2)

Tea workers face threat of Imprisonment from "Ethical Tea Company"

According to the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF), June 2010) workers who participated in a protest last year against the abusive treatment of a pregnant 22 year old tea garden worker could face prison sentences of up

to 7 years. Mrs Arti Oraon, a tea plucker who collapsed after being forced to work whilst eight months pregnant on a tea plantation estate owned by Tata Tea is now facing criminal charges.

Nowera Nuddy Tea Estate is owned by Amalgamated Plantations Private Limited a company 49.98% owned by Tata Tea which has now rebranded itself as Tata Global Beverages, Tata's wholly owned Tetley Tea is the second biggest global tea brand and a leading member of the UK's Ethical Tea Partnership. The IUF report that Tetley sources tea from Amalgamated but not it claims Norwera Nuddy, this assertion has been used by Tetley to abdicate all responsibility for documented abuses in its supply chain.

Worker dissatisfaction was heightened by a lack of workers rights including long standing problems over the denial of paid maternity and sick leave and poor housing. After first agreeing to meet with workers the management and the medical officer left the estate and declared a lock out which lasted for 2 weeks. A second lock out lasting from September 14th to December 12th was declared when workers refused to accept the suspension of 8 workers who management claimed. The problems can be traced back to August 2009 when Mrs Arti Oraon collapsed in the field and was taken to the hospital on a platform towed by a tractor after the medical officer refused to make an ambulance available. When other workers found out about her treatment 500 workers, mostly female, gathered in protest outside the medical facility and demanded sanctions against them were the leaders of the mass protest.

The dispute is still ongoing and according to the IUF there have been no negotiations, no compensation and the workers targeted for suspension are still suspended. In late April police arrived at the plantation and announced that arrest warrants had been sworn out for Arti Oraon and 11 other worker activists, including the already suspended workers, on charges including theft, grievous bodily harm, unlawful assembly, criminal intimidation and unlawful confinement. These charges can carry prison terms of 7 years or more. **(See the IUF website for full details)**

WHAT'S HAPPENING

News from the ASNM Sector.

The following is a report on a meeting organised by the Radical History Network in June.

Radical History Network of NE London
c/o PO Box 45155 , London , N 15
4WR.

Radicalhistorynetwork.blogspot.com
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*"celebrate our history, avoid repeating our mistakes"*

At last night's meeting, RaHN discussed the life and times of Colin Ward [1924-2010] who died recently. He had written more than 30 books and has been described as the anarchist of everyday life. Chair Dale Evans opened the meeting with extracts from a DVD on his life then speaker Glyn Harries, from Hackney, introduced the subject with comments mainly on his role as writer, practical adviser and social theorist. One of his books on "Influences" was highly recommended.

The main theme was his idea that below the surface of all societies, was a sub culture of libertarian life which reflected the ordinary person's response to conditions, good and bad. People were always trying to control their lives, and for example the provision of welfare benefits by the friendly societies and trade unions came well before the official welfare state.

Features like allotments, residents and tenants associations, and the wide existence of music groups were a continuous reminder of popular creativity and imagination, quite separate from any free market or State arrangements.

Every person in the audience of a dozen spoke in the discussion, and in the business section many local activities were mentioned. There was a busy literature stall.

*For information on the RHN and future meetings see below*

This was posted on the World in Common forum.

Group of the World Socialist Movement in Latin America

We have adopted the same principles of the World Socialist Movement and the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and its companion parties. It is going to be like a group of sympathizers of the WSM, and at the present time we are going to be based in the Dominican Republic, we are getting in contact with workers from other countries in Latin America including Haiti, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Brazil. It is not going to be a forum for chatting, it is going to be a forum of propaganda of the principles and aims of the World Socialist Movement. Our main objective is to propagate the real definition of socialism, and probably, we might get in contradictions with other groups in Latin America, region that is influenced by Castroism, Trotskyism and Leninism, and all sorts of state capitalist currents. Some of the contacts that we have at the present time were members of Leninist groups or the ICC.

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**Future events and contact information for the ASNM Sector**

Radical History Network of North East London

The next meeting is on Wednesday 14 July, at 8pm. "A Short History of Resistance to Public Sector Cuts"  
Venue: The Postmens Office" at the North London Community House, 22 Moorefield Road, London, N17.[The old Post Office]  
FOR FURTHER DETAILS, CONTACT ALAN WOODWARD  
ON 020 8292 8862  
or RaHN at alan@petew.org.uk  
Email:  
[radicalhistorynetwork@googlemail.com](mailto:radicalhistorynetwork@googlemail.com)

**worldsocialistmovement/SPGB:**

**worldsocialism.org/spgb: Postal address: 52  
Clapham High Street London SW4 7UN.  
Email [spgb@worldsocialim.org](mailto:spgb@worldsocialim.org)**

**Forthcoming Meetings**

All to be held at the above address on Saturdays commencing at 6.00 PM

July 3<sup>rd</sup> "Business Growth in conflict with the Environment" - Speaker Glenn Morris.

July 17<sup>th</sup> "Bitter Pill: Capitalism and the Pharmaceutical Industry": Speaker Dick Field

July 31<sup>st</sup> "Reforming Capitalism or the Socialist Alternative": Speaker Vincent Otter

**Northern Anarchist Network (NAN)**

If you want further information about this group contact: **Brian Bamford, 46 Kingsland Road, Rochdale, Lancs O11 3HQ or email [northernvoices@hotmail.com](mailto:northernvoices@hotmail.com)**

**World In Common: [www.worldincommon.org](http://www.worldincommon.org)  
Email [worldincommon@yahoo.com](mailto:worldincommon@yahoo.com)**

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

**Anarchist Federation: [www.afed.org.uk](http://www.afed.org.uk): Postal Address BM Arnafed, London WC1N 3XX. Email [info@afed.org.uk](mailto:info@afed.org.uk)**

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

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

**Industrial Workers of the World: [www.iww.org](http://www.iww.org) Or P/O Box 7593, Glasgow, G42 2EX** Email: [rocsec@iww.org.uk](mailto:rocsec@iww.org.uk).

**Workers International Industrial Union. [www.wiiu.org](http://www.wiiu.org) or [www.deleonism.org/wiiu.htm](http://www.deleonism.org/wiiu.htm) or see the article on Industrial Unionism in this issue,**

**Solidarity Federation. [www.solfed.org.uk](http://www.solfed.org.uk) or PO Box 29, South West D.O Manchester M15 5HW** Email: [solfed@solfed.org.uk](mailto:solfed@solfed.org.uk)

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**[www.Libcom.org](http://www.Libcom.org);**

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

**Wrekin Stop War**

This can be found at [www.wrekinstopwar.org](http://www.wrekinstopwar.org) or contact

**Duncan Ball, 23 Sunderland Drive, Leegomery Salop, TF1 6XX** email: [admin@wrekinstopwar.org.uk](mailto:admin@wrekinstopwar.org.uk)

**Red and Black Notes**

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

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**See also: Institute for Anarchist Studies, the very similar but separate Anarchist Studies Journal, Anarchist Archives, Red and Anarchist Action network [redanarchist.org](http://redanarchist.org). And Socialist Labor Party of America [www.slp.org](http://www.slp.org). (Not to be confused with the Scargill mob).**

