
What is Anarchist Unionism?

Introduction

The American labor movement today is in a state of deep crisis. A decade of concessions, givebacks and takeaways, plant shutdowns and decline of many basic industries, and declining union membership have made this plain for all who care to look. The pattern of strike-breaking, union-busting and anti-worker decisions by the National Labor Relations Board and courts grows unchecked. No effective attempt to organize non-union workplaces or oppose the employers' offensive has taken place.

Yet, throughout this decade of defeat and decay an undercurrent of worker militancy continues, in spite of overwhelming odds. Often, however, this militancy has been outweighed by widespread despair and frustration among working people, who find themselves demoralized by the worsening state of affairs in the labor movement. What fighting spirit

does exist among the rank and file has yet to find a coherent, organized basis to overcome the skepticism and demoralization.

The cause for this long period of defeat can be seen in the very structure and ideology of official American trade unionism. Continuing bureaucratic domination, corruption, centralization of power and reliance on electoral politics and lobbying political leaders have robbed workers of direct initiative and control over their own affairs. Divisions by craft, industry and geography have stood in the way of real, effective solidarity. Continuing sexism and racism have prevented full participation in the labor movement by those who stand the most to gain by it. The backward ideology of collaboration with the bosses by those who officially speak for the American worker still cripples the labor movement, as it has for decades.

What is needed now is a renewal and reconstruction of the

a Workers Solidarity Alliance brochure
