

organizations are the vehicle for change. If all working people are to end up in control in society, then the form of association which brings about the transformation of society must be a form of association controlled by working people in general, rather than putting some minority of leaders in control.

In building organizations on the job, and in the community, which working people control directly ourselves, this provides the basis for social transformation. For several reasons:

- To begin with, because industry is necessary to society and therefore the unity and action of people, when it occurs in industry, gives us leverage to make change.
- Second, because the life of society must go on, and this means that there must be a way of providing for people's needs in a period of social transformation. The takeover of the economy by democratically organized associations in the workplaces guarantees that production will continue to be carried on, by people with the knowledge and experience to do the job.
- Third, the fact that the new workers movement developed a practice of direct, democratic decision-making by working

people themselves gives us a guarantee that we will have genuine, democratic worker control after the smoke clears, rather than finding ourselves with a new set of "leftist" bosses running things, as has happened when the revolution is consolidated through party leaders taking over a State.

"That sounds fine, but I'm still unclear as to how syndicalism, or anarcho-syndicalism, differs from other forms of left-wing unionism. What about left-wing unions like the UAW or AFSCME?"

Anarcho-syndicalism completely rejects top-down and centralized forms of organization. We believe that the best form of organization is that which flows from below, just as the best form of tactics are based on direct initiative from below. This means decisions being made in a decentralized way. Through such means as workplace or community assemblies. Places where all who attend can voice their opinion and help to shape (and later to carry out) policy.

Unlike in the political parties or reformist trade unions, we propose a form of organization that rejects the concept of a permanent bureaucracy. Instead, we propose the idea of individuals only holding elected office for a

limited time period, such as a year. And even then, we think the majority should be able to recall them any time they want to. And at the end of their tenure, a person holding a responsible post should give up that position and let someone else do it for awhile, so that the movement does not become dependent on just a few people, and as many people as possible have the experience of carrying out responsibilities. In those cases where the movement decides that a position must be a full-time job, the person holding that position certainly shouldn't be paid more than the average worker, otherwise it's just an invitation to careerism. This form of organization has the advantage that it makes it hard for an entrenched bureaucracy to develop, who usurp the will and control of the rank and file (even though they may have been well-meaning at the start).

One of the most important principles of anarchist unionism is that workers organizations (and community organizations, too) must be controlled by the rank and file. If you look at the weaknesses of the present unions, the cause is not just "misguided" leaders. Just changing leaders won't solve the problem. Those unions are set up so as to ensure top-down control, which is why sell-

outs can happen. They are not set up so as to facilitate rank and file action and control. That's the problem. Unions like that are just not suited to making a fundamental challenge to the power of the bosses or fighting for our emancipation from exploitation. This means a new workers movement must be developed that is independent of the existing union hierarchies.

"Well, what does that really mean?"

It means that as workers begin to reject the way things exist today, they will begin to see the need to organize from the bottom up, and will begin to organize their struggles in a direct, self-managed fashion.

Self-managed workers' organizations, such as workplace assemblies, rank and file coordinating councils, and unions free of top-down control (and similar organizations in the communities), are the kind of organization that can provide the vehicles for self-liberation.

While self-emancipation may not be just around the corner, we argue that anarchist unionism offers a practical and constructive alternative to the existing ways of "taking care of business," as well as being a way to lay the foundation for social change. The proposals for rotating positions of