

MAY-DAY

ORIGINS

MAY 1 1886 saw 340,000 workers striking all over the United States demanding an 8-hour day. The following Monday in Chicago the police fired on strikers at the McCormick Harvester Works and six workers were killed. The next day a protest meeting was broken up by the police. In the ensuing fighting a bomb was thrown at the police, killing one outright and fatally wounding seven others. Evidence came to light later that the bomb had been thrown by a police agent.

THE BOSSES, however, used this incident as an excuse to victimise leading working class militants and to attempt to break the trade unions. After a farcical trial, with a jury composed of businessmen, their clerks and a relative of one of the dead policemen, four anarchists were hanged. A fifth committed suicide before sentence could be passed.

IN 1888, the American Federation of Labour continued the 8-hour day movement with May 1 as a day of action. The Paris conference of the Second International in 1890 fixed Mayday as an international day of solidarity for the 8-hour day. That year demonstrations took place all over Europe and America.

RITUAL BORE

NINETY TWO YEARS after the Chicago demonstration, where are we? Just another institution, just another great yawn. In Dublin at the Trades Council March we are supposed to listen to boring speeches about "socialism" from equally boring trade union bureaucrats. And to think Mayday was once a day when the working class displayed its strength, organisation and its spirit. What is important about Mayday is that "once upon a time" there was a show of strength and solidarity on an international level . . . and we can do it again.

ANARCHISTS were a major force in the 8-hour day movement, and we believe that anarchist ideas are equally relevant to the class struggle today. Our goal is a free socialist society where the working class holds direct power through its own rank and file organisations. We don't want a "workers government" anymore than we want "socialist bosses" - we want real freedom, a genuine system of working class power.

THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT is very new to Ireland, most groups are only in existence since the beginning of this year, we are only starting to build a real organisation. If you want to contact us for more information write to:

Dublin Anarchist Group,
c/o Resources Centre,
168, Rathgar Road.
Dublin 6.

REAL SOCIALISM :: WHAT IT MEANS

Much of what is called "socialism" does not provide workers with real control over what effects their own lives. Most left groups, because of their vanguard politics, would end up creating an all-powerful state which would lead to a new 'benevolent' ruling class. Yet, surely, the building of a state structure - as opposed to direct control by the rank and file organisations of the working class, is alien to the concept of socialism.

Under real socialism we would have no state and no state courts, judges, prisons or police. This was Marx's idea of socialism.

If most of the left have strayed from this ideal, one form of socialism has not. Genuine socialism is anarchist. The anarchist ideal is a free society wherein private property and states/governments do not exist. Only with freedom from capitalism and the state can we win real workers control and freedom from all bosses.

We are fighting for a society where there is complete destruction of sexism, liberation for women and gays. For a society where there is real workers control and peoples control.

