

INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

OF FRENCH CNT

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EDITO

Comrades,

The French CNT is glad to present its newsletter for international contacts.

We will send you as often as possible this CNT-Info which will bring you informations about most of the activities of our organisation along with social and political news from France.

Since workers know no borders and that our internationalism must ignore borders it seemed important to create means of communication and information.

Do not hesitate to inform us as well about your activities and struggles. Send them to us at international@cnt-f.org

Anarcho-syndicalist and revolutionary syndicalist greetings.

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NO GOD, NO CAESAR, NI TRIBUNE
THE FUTURE IS OURS !!!

The result of the presidential election will inevitably affect our living and working conditions as well as our struggles. The candidate for the Right party finally won, including many of the Extreme Right's nauseating ideas in his discourse and programme.

The themes and the results of this election confirm that the French society and political life have drifted to the right.

In this situation, the Left is totally unable to suggest a alternative, be it political, social or economical. This is all the more terrible that many workers and many from the lower classes have voted for this candidate who, using demagogy or confusing them, managed to appear as the providential man bringing answers and solutions to their everyday problems and their fearful futures. Yet, these people cannot expect anything from this new president and his programme!

In his very first discourse, the futur president listed the founding ideas of his society project: work, authority, morale, merit, national identity.

So many values that fit the interests of the ruling classes and a

reactionary nationalist society project.

Inevitably the inequalities will go on growing, precarity will develop, the demolition of the public services and of the social protection will be accelerated. This moralism, tinged with religion, will reinforce their hold on society and the repressive and security tendencies will grow, making even more victims among the immigrants and the illegal residents. Very concrete measures will quickly follow if we don't oppose them:

reconsideration of the work code, attacks against the right to strike with the implementation of the 'minimum service' in the public transports, and a new tax shield in favour of the rich. So many measures that will greatly affect the workers and the lower classes and that will reinforce that inegalitarian capitalist society.

Rage and struggle rather than resignation!

In such a situation, we know that only a power struggle on the social level can change things and avoid that France undergo the same ultra-liberal experience as England in the 80s with Thatcher. It is necessary to stop the wait-and-see attitude that is so frequent after elections, we must organise and demonstrate, go on strike, occupy places in order to stop the liberal and security wave that is coming at us. We must defend what remains of our public services and our social protection system. Let's count only on ourselves and on our struggles, everyday, in our neighbourhoods, at our work places, in order to create an autonomous and emancipating social movement that will contain other ideas and a different society project. They get tougher, and so will our struggles!

The countdown is set off!

NOVEMBER 2005 : THE SUBURBS ARE BURNING

Before that date many occasional conflicts occurred since 1985 near Lyon, Toulouse, Paris. A movie was premonitory: *Hate* by Mathieu Kasovitz.

The arrival of Sarkozy as interior minister has changed the social context since he had the ambition to present himself as candidate for the 2007 Presidential Elections using the xenophobic and sectarian argument from extreme right (the infamous National Front). One of his declarations had a huge impact on people. He declared to clean the suburbs with a « Kärcher ». Police officers sure of Sarkozy's backing went for more provocations and interpellations on colored people.

During a police intervention at night in Clichy-sous-Bois (North of Paris and a so-called « sensible » area), 3 youths with their papers in perfect order got scared and ran away. They hid in a voltage transformer: two died straight away and the third one was badly hurt. Minister Sarkozy announced that his men flouted dangerous delinquents. This other provocative declaration brought even more anger from the youth of the area. Following a night of riot, the police threw a tear gas grenade in a mosque on a Friday night. Sarkozy said that nothing proved that the grenade was thrown by the police (as if people could easily get the hold on such things).

Anger and exaltation of the youth exploded in the area. They burnt cars, a police station, schools, post offices, pharmacies. In other suburbs, abandoned zones, the youth took actions by burning cars (except in Grigny where live ammunition shootings sent two policemen to hospital). For a month thousands of cars burnt from the most deprived suburbs of most cities. Also in certain countries around France the youth did the same (Belgium, Germany). The government took a law from the Algerian War time and declared « state of exception » for three months (until beginning of January 2006).

The media stressed the ethnical aspect of the events, even an Islamic influence. The reality is quite other. The vast majority of persons arrested and condemned straight

away (an uncommon celerity ignored in cases of financial scandals) were French or with papers in order. Very few were foreigners. Their common ground was to live in sectors of the suburbs with non existent infrastructures, to be unemployed, ...

The Regional Bureau of the CNT in the Parisian Region sent this press release on November 8th 2005:

“We are all hoods!”

In front of the violence of a State which send the police on us as a mean to fight against poverty, in front of a State which promises us a Marshall Plan for the last 30 years for poverty areas conventionally called suburbs, in front of the violence of a State which only obeys to the MEDEF [Movement of French Companies, roughly 750 000 companies all sizes and all sectors on the whole of France. 35% of its members have less than 10 workers, 70% have less than 50. Basicly a bosses union], willing to crush our last social protections, in front of a State responsible for the tension through its Interior Minister who dealt with the postal services and the maritime industry conflicts with its special police force, the same force which raid and evict thousands of Sans Papiers.

The « republican awakening » of the government is an attack with an Algerian War aftertaste against us workers, unemployed and the youth. The CNT denounce the use of the curfew decree which does not respond to the demands of social justice of the population.

Never with the exploiters! Always with the exploited! »

VICTORY AGAINST THE CPE

The 6 Villepin ordinances.

So called laws in favor of employment, the 6 Villepin ordinances were voted in august 2005 in the middle of the summer holidays when France is asleep. Good timing guys!

New Employment Contracts (or CNE): 2 years time contract where layoffs don't have to be justified. Concerning companies from 20 workers and more. Lower indemnities for layoffs and unemployment.

Resettlement of the counting of the effectives: workers under 26 do not count in the effectives. So more bosses can use the CNE but it also limits the number of shop stewards, the advantages in nature and so on.

Check employment enterprise: used instead of the boss declaration at the social insurances but also instead of the work contract and the work certificate. Concern companies with 5 workers and more.

Social insertion within the defence institutions: professional formations last from 6 to 24 months. For the « youth without diploma or profesional formations or on the way of social marginalisation ».

Tax credit and exemptions: concern workers under 26 who worked 6 full months between july 2005 and december 2007. Lowers or suppress the boss assessments for housing for companies under 20 workers instead of 10, lowers the boss assessment for the professional formation for companies from 10 to 19 workers.

It's been a year since our last try to abrogate the CNE has failed. A year that this government keeps attacking openly the CDI first with the CNE then with the CPE. A year that the workers try to face this government. A year of struggle.

Indeed it was the first time that a government dared to programme the end of the CDI and to change it into the unique work contract (CTU) normalising precarity, the first time it imposed work contracts where layoffs do not need to be justified: the CNE and the CPE. And this year was also significant by its rough conflicts between workers and unions on one side and the government on the other side. Rough through the tactics and strategies adopted by the government and means of defense of the workers and the unions. The government passed the CNE Bill without any parliamentary debate and for the CPE it was a real arm wrestling. On the workers and unions side, there was two battles: one on a legal level against the CNE and the other one in the streets against the CPE. Two strategies: an almost defeat for the first one, an almost victory for the second one.

Two exemplary movements

In august 2005, in the middle of the sleepy summer holidays, Prime Minister de Villepin imposed the CNE in the name of the fight against unemployment. If the CNT reacted straight away with a plan of action, the opposition and the unions took a while to react. The only other union reacting swiftly was the CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail, under the influence of the Communist Party] which brought to the State Council an appeal for the violation of convention n°158 and the article 24 of the European Social Charter, those two put the obligation to give reasons in case of a layoff. Quickly it became obvious that the only aim of the CNE is to give the possibility for the bosses to fire workers easily. Resistance got organised mostly with the CNT: leafleting at the workplaces and a demonstration is organised as early as september 2005. But the movement is not followed and mainstream unions remained silent. On october 4th a demonstration marked the end and the failure of the movement. All left wing parties and unions marched under a « Against precarity and high cost of living » banner. We were the only ones to march for the removal of the CNE. But workers did not give up the fight and instead they used the legal way and went to Court for unjustified layoffs and they often won their cases.

There is a limit to the judicial struggle: in march 2006, Justice Minister issued a communication bill asking judges of Labour Courts to ignore the validity of the reasons for layoffs in cases of CNE. The CNE is not legal according to international and european laws and yet it is not going to disappear.

And a blow against the youth.

The CPE is the government's answer to the suburbs' riots of November 2005. This so-called providential miracle was supposed to be the answer to the economical chaos. It is immediately understood by the youth of the suburbs and elsewhere as a special CNE... another provocation. The reaction is immediate and will only get bigger: as soon as the law is voted, the struggle gets organised, first in universities then high schools and workplaces. More and more university occupations and workplace strikes (in both public and private sector) brought millions of people into the streets. The government answered by repression. No matter how hard it hit the movement, in April the government had to suppress the CPE.

Here too the CNT played a dynamic rôle in the struggle from the very beginning and tried to make direct democracy being respected in a context of political intrigues for the control of the movement. And we also always pushed towards the strike in sectors where we are present especially the education industry. For political parties and unions since they could not stop nor control the movement they had to follow...

This victory remains with a bitter taste: the CPE is being buried but those same parties and unions kept on preventing the movement to spread to the rest of the law on equality of chances despite our tentative to do so.

Only the struggle rewards.

This year was emblematic. First of all because the State policies in matters of employment as the armed force of the bosses showed through its nature as well as its realisation an absolute power of class over another one. It seemed it was time to destroy the last social protections by any means: legal, illegal and using the force. Indeed they got away with most of it.

Obviously by denying class struggle syndicalism and direct action and favouring partnership syndicalism most unions including the CGT got weaker. Because this type of syndicalism (from top to bottom) exclude the implication of workers in defense of their interests and take their desire to struggle away. The limits of negotiations are

always the bosses' one and it discredits the efficiency of syndicalist action.

Emblematical because the anti CPE movement showed that if the juridical struggle is not useless, the legal way is far from enough. Because it is only with the strike and in the streets that we win struggles. It is where our victory lies in.

The law on equality of chances: the outcome of two months of struggle.

4350 arrests, 1985 detentions, 637 trials (among which 400 immediate appearance before the Court), 71 prison sentences and 188 other sentences. All the arrested ones where considered as hoods according to the media were generally students or young precarious workers who've never been arrested. The reason for an arrest was always the same: acts of violence.

All witnessed arbitrary and rough arrests with physical and verbal aggressions during detention and many suffered physical and psychological pressures to lead them to accept immediate appearance or to give a DNA sample.

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IN POSTAL SERVICES : THE BAN OF THE CNT UNION

On January 27th 2006 an agreement is concluded between the management of La Poste and partnership unions (CFDT, FO, CFTC, UNSA and CGC). SUD and the CGT did not oppose the agreement although as majority unions they could have done so. This agreement aimed to evict the CNT from the union scene at La Poste by suppressing any possibility of expression within the company. On top of thi, the agreement contains attacks against the right to go on strike. Saying that it is reactionary and liberticide would not be exaggerated and this text is the model for the whole of the public sector in the future at European level.

What union right before that ?

Union right at La Poste came from the statute of the public sector which insured two types of rights for unions. The first one concerned unions declared which benefited as soon as they are constituted at La Poste four fundamental

rights: leafleting outside the workplaces, union boards, collecting the dues and organising meetings outside worktime. The second one concerned organisations called representatives which means they got a certain number of votes at the elections of the administrative council or at the paritarian elections. So, they benefited from offices, time off for union work, permanents paid by the company, possibility to organise meetings during worktime. This is the kind of unionism that we denounce. During the years 1984-1988, La Poste tried to suppress those four fundamental rights but the Administrative Court maintained them systematically. La Poste capitulated. On top of those rights our syndicates won locally (Lyon, Paris, Val d'Oise, Bordeaux,...)

offices because of our representativity and the federation of Postal workers of the CNT won in 1989 the possibility to use union envelopes.

The January 2006 agreement suppressed all those rights of declared unions. There is only liberties for mainstream unions. People from the same side can now discuss the future of all workers...

Union and the bosses partnership against class war

The agreement was presented as the expression of a renewed social dialogue which comfort the place of the « representative unions » and this is all true: mainstream unions have the monopoly of the freedom of speech, more means and advantages which are insured to the union permanents. It is a dialogue where unions leaders and the bosses of La Poste do social work by crushing other unions. And by the way, the preamble declares that « the use of the right to go on strike induces the obligation for mainstream unions to give a notice to the bosses ». It condemns wildcat strikes opening the door wide to future repression against those who dare going on strike spontaneously. The preamble also states that « using those rights insure the respect of the persons and their fundamental liberties like freedom of movement and freedom of work ». This partnership between the bosses and the unions as well as those who remained silent authorised the interdiction of the picket line,

blockade of the workplace and the repression against workers on strike, workers who use the historical tactics of the working class.

We can clearly see here the liberticide aspect of this text restraining not only union rights but also reinforcing the control of the right to go on strike. The model is given by the MEDEF forcing for a strong union partnership with the bosses, « cogestion » instead of the class war. Naturally it shows the actual situation between classes. And it is bad news for the workers.

Workers and unions autonomy against trade Unionism

This is an historical agreement for two reasons. First because it is the logical outcome for Trade unions or « cogestion » unions. It tells a lot to hear nothing from unions. It shows unity among trade unions sharing the same counter revolutionary values and using the same tactics than capitalism and without really trying to oppose it. Beyond particularities specific to each organisations this unionism turns its back on the working class. And the leaders of the SUD-PTT Federation by not opposing this agreement bury for good the notion of an alternative union, that notion they pretended to create at the beginning of the 90's. The SUD-PTT Federation did support this text which ban all possibilities of expression of other unions. Now it becomes clear that the reconstruction of a revolutionary syndicalism cannot happen through the cogestionary institutions. A divide splits between grassroots activists either in a syndicalist structure or by self-management in committees supporting struggles, in general assemblies and those who are integrated in structures put on by the State and the bosses. Many SUD-PTT members understood that and protested against the position of their federation and gave their support to our struggle. Because as soon as the text was applied, the CNT boards were removed from certain workplaces (Tours), had to give back occupied offices (Bordeaux, Lyon) and sanctioned the CNT for handing out leaflets (Paris).

Organising the resistance

The Congress of the CNT-PTT Federation which took place late April 2006 in Bordeaux planned out a resistance line to this attack of La Poste bosses. On the legal side, we contest the agreement in Court and the lawyer of the Federation demanded that La Poste abrogates it because of discrimination and illegality.

Meanwhile our federation started a campaign on the ground with mass leafleting, posters, stickers, stamps to stick beside postal stamps, petition cards to send to La Poste headquarters. A confederal leaflet will be addressed to La Poste users. We have also met other small syndicalist structures hit by the same interdiction like the Confédération Autonome du Travail (Autonomous Confederation of Labour) and the Syndicat des Fonctionnaires (Civil Servants Union). An unitary leaflet is on the way along with a text to send to the local sections of various unions.

One thing for sure: the struggle continues, the federal action knows no weakness

and when work starts or under the coat CNT leaflets pass around. It is not the open repression nor the legal interdiction that will crush the anarchosyndicalist and revolutionary syndicalist movement whether it is at la Poste or elsewhere.

THE FUNCTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS **IN THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM**

For the past 30 years, the French government has decided to suspend the entrance of foreign workers to the territory. 30 years and the question is still actuality and still stir up many debates and controversies oscillating from « zero immigration » to « opening of the borders » yet we all know that the decision of suspension of July 1974 did not have the anticipated impact and contributed to devastate even more the little protection for foreign workers diving them into a greater precarity and forcing them to let their situation known to the public in the middle of the 90's.

The 80's had a conclusive turn responding to the imperatives of a crisis. Delors plan of 1983, using Raymond Barre thesis in 1979, imposed a review of the economy based on restructuring and modernisation of wages relation: competition, higher productivity, rationalising the costs, adjusting strickly the offer and demand... they became the leitmotives around which politicians found a consensus. Since then, converted to liberalism, the various governments cared more about the progression of capital rather than workers protection. From 1984-1985, the « new liberals » require less social obligations and the liberalisation of labour law which means all workers protections. In every industry we see new types of work contracts like the generalisation of the CDD, temp agencies, subcontracts, false independents and all the helped contracts... The system reached the use of illegal practices, a cross between the use of financial helps from the State and the hijacking of the rules organising the relationship between workrs and the bosses.

The most obvious example of this deregulation is the use of Sans Papiers workers used as flexible instruments or tools. A cheap workforce which never goes on strike and cannot contest when you fire it.

In other words, with high growth like recently under the Jospin government [leader of the Socialist Party applying right wing policies], the recruitment of

foreigners (legals or not) was used to compensate the stiffness of the workers with french nationality who refused low wages, unpaid additional work hours... The problem was not the lack of workforce but the social disponibility of the workers.

During recession times, the foreigners will reajust the need for a workforce to the offer and demand of production.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CESEDA LAW AND THE EDUCATION WITH NO BORDERS NETWORK

The CESEDA law project [work contract for the foreign workforce] in its philosophy perfectly fits in the system; since it allows a strict control of the need for a foreign workforce and since it send them towards precarity, those ones will accept any kind of work.

The nationalist argument saying that foreign workers and migrants put in competition on the work market would make sense. But this competition is elaborated strategically by the bosses and the State to create useful conditions to make more profits.

If all workers could take conscience that the more precarious some of us are the more it will send us all straight into precarity, the State would have to reconsider its conception of immigration labour and labour in general.

So it is this constant restructuration of production that aims for only more profits and this is how we should look at the use of foreigners as workforce (with or without papers) and our revendications should be ripened in that way. Denouncing it as a social rigidity and precarity of all workers.

Réseau Education Sans Frontière [Education with No Borders Network]

The Education with No Borders Network (RESF) has been highlighted by the media since spring 2006 and no one can ignore it because its action is so wide. This network

brings together many unions and associations and wants to federate parents and staff of the education to organise solidarity around Sans Papiers children and families.

The history of RESF is recent (2 years): few activists, the signature of big organisations which are ok or don't dare to refuse and those letters appear everywhere in France as soon as the police try to deport parents or come in schools to get children to deport them. The initial success is such that Sarkozy has to calm the situation down: a bill insure the right for the children to end their school year normally. But the bill is one thing and reality is another thing: everywhere we have to fight to save a pupil, a family. Support Committees sprout out everywhere and get the approval of parents and school staff. Sarko got it all wrong.

The means of struggle are diversified: from the traditional petition and the gathering in front of the school, « sponsoring » at the city hall and the constitution of files for them to get regulation of papers, but also syndicalist defense, banners on schools and bringing them to the Prefecture in the process of their regularisation. And even the strike: if we are always present for any sort of action it is our duty to remind that this mean can bring fast results. In Paris we used it twice: in january with a total strike of four schools of the Olivier-Mettra group in the 20th arrondissement this lead for a Moroccan mother to see her decree of deportation cancelled and then she also get a card to stay 10 years on the French territory. In march in a high school of the same arrondissement, the strike of all the staff freed a chinese father who was detained in Vincennes and was meant to be deported any time soon.

We convinced our coworkers and it worked: since then, even RESF activists who were more legalist via the city halls (the institutional laft is too happy to get a virginity after having deported thousands as well) did recognise that the CNT activists were not only ready to do their part of the job but also capable to bring in effective means of struggle (and keeping hope even with the most desesperate cases). We are useful.

Once again, the Interior Minister repress immigrants and the nationalist ideology, attacking them without even trying to think why these people are coming every day, thousands of them, men, women and children to find a better life. Once again repression is the only answer brought to solve of an economical, historical and humanitarian problem.

The CESEDA laws (rules about the entrance and the stay of foreigners and asylum

seekers) are not new at all, they only confirm a utilitarian vision of the immigrants and a securitarian context.

The main changes consist in hardening the access conditions to French «eldorado »:

suppression of the obtention of a one year card for « familial and private life » after being ten years in France.

The 3 months visa is not considered as a process to enter France and later wish to stay.

For foreigners with an irregular situation you need now to prove a good integration in the country to get papers: more financial resources, good housing conditions,...

Mixed marriage: the foreign partner must be entered in France legally and must have papers in order when the marriage happens. In cases of divorce, the foreign partner loses his/her right to stay on the territory.

Work for foreigners: the right to stay is always temporary:

1- Card with the mention « temporary worker », « hired man », no permanent work contract, subordination to the boss, being sent back at the end of the contract.

2- « capacity and talents » card: selection of « good » elements for the economy, qualified workers leaving their country.

From the beginning of last summer, deportations get more and more numerous, police minister do not hesitate to use Vichy methods and at the end of the year, attacking children.

Thankfully thousands of french people for who the immigrant is not the source of all evil get organised in solidarity. They are the neighbours, parents of children, classroom mates. These persons and the network did manage to get immigrants to stay in France. Initiatives and resistance of the Cachan squatters permitted to avoid the worst: indifference and being forgotten.

INTERNATIONAL SYNDICALIST CONFERENCES I07

From Friday, April 27th to Tuesday, May 1st 2007, the CNT organised a series of international syndicalist meetings called I07.

These meetings followed the syndicalist conferences called I 99 in 1999 in San Francisco and I 02 in 2002, in Essen, Germany. This conference aimed at sharing our experiences, debate and find ways to reinforce our links.

DEBATES, CONCERTS, MEETINGS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

About 250 militants from the five continents came for the occasion. Some comrades from IWA sections were also present but as individuals and not delegates of their organisation. Many French CNT militants went to the capital to attend the meetings.

The debate dealt with syndicalist issues (cooperatives, repression, representativity, UE, precarity and relocation...) as well as social issues (antisexism, campaign against Coca-Cola, migrant workers, antifascism, housing struggle, anti-imperialism and neocolonialism...).

Branch meetings (metallurgy, education, construction, postal services, health, culture, archeology...) and meetings devoted to geographical zones (Palestine, Europe, American continent, Africa, Mediterranean zone) also took place.

The meals and the evenings were animated by concerts and libertarian choirs.

The demonstration on May 1st, which bore the hallmark of our internationalist and anticapialist struggle, was a huge success. The red

and black procession gathered about 6000 dynamic persons.

The international meeting which took place on April, 30th, was also particularly intense and moving, with the intervention - among others- of Marta from Atenco (Mexico) holding a machete in her hand or that of Raed (Palestine) or our Guinean comrade from the CNTG talking about the victorious general strike against the dictator Lansana Conte which ended up with the death of 100 workers.

REINFORCE INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

During the confederal meeting, the CNT international secretariat and the Italian USI suggested to the other organisations to elaborate an international anticapitalist coordination with a common website (in different languages) as well as a mailing list and a forum.

It was also suggested to start international campaigns concerning the liberty of circulation, the struggle against precarious work (suggested by the Polish CK-LA) or the defense of syndicalist rights (related to the American IWW struggle against Starbucks coffees).

HEADING SOUTH!

I07 is an important step for our internationalism: it was indeed the first time that so many militants had come from Africa, Oceania or Latin America.

This element is important and illustrates our will not to confine our internationalism to the Western and European world.

What better example of what we want our internationalism to be than the intervention of our SKT comrade from Siberia being translated from Russian into French by a Malian train worker?

The struggle continues!!! Long live the international solidarity!!!

International Secretary CNT

http://www.globenet.org/webmail/src/download.php?absolute_dl=true&passed_id=3092&ent_id=1&mailbox=INBOX.Sent&sort=6&startMessage=1&show_more=0&passed_ent_id=0

WHAT IS THE FRENCH CNT ALL ABOUT ?

The CNT is trying to engage in a different sort of trade unionism. Long ignored and marginalised, it is reemerging today strong in the knowledge that things need not necessarily get worse and that it is not too late to switch to a different approach...

For years and years we have been fed on illusions - industrial expansion, social progress, access to consumer goods for the waged... Trade unionism has picked up some bad habits : institutionalisation, parasitism, corporatism and lost its sense of solidarity.

Bedazzled by the economic miracle, wage-earners have steadily allowed specialist negotiators take over the management of their interests. Employers were only too happy to be faced with professional trade unionists rather than those troublesome, unpredictable wage-earners...

And then bang! Along comes the 'crisis' bogeyman, liberalism bounces back, the welfare State is on its way out and look where we are now : society is riven between the unemployed and seasonal workers on the one hand and the waged on the other. And the latter are faced with runaway profiteering, production quotas, deregulation, the extinction of the whole notion of public services, restrictions on social protection, economics lording it over all. All politicians, left or right, bear the responsibility for this situation.

The Third World is squeezed until it bleeds, the natural environment destroyed by industrial or nuclear pollution, there is cynical trafficking in arms and militarisation of society, massive profits for the fat cats and unspeakable misery for those who are denied even the basic necessities of life... Is this what we want? This ghastly existence is foisted upon us and at the same time we wage earners are asked to help manufacture it, and we can refuse to do that.

Because we are the ones who manufacture all the goods and provide all the services,

we must gear these to the benefit of society as a whole rather than to fattening the profits or feeding the overblown ambitions of the few.

Which is why we reckon that trade unionism has to revert to what it ought never to have stopped being - revolutionary - which is to say, a vehicle for the dream of a fairer, more egalitarian, freer society.

So, in the short term, the CNT means to engage in a trade union practice that looks further than the timorous co-management of society as it presently stands. Naturally, the immediate interests of wage-earners have to be defended. But it is also a question of gearing up here and now for a different future by espousing a trade union methodology that discards the hierarchical outlooks that govern our present circumstances.

The CNT stands for activism in lieu of bureaucratisation, solidarity across trades boundaries in lieu of ghettoised interests, for a trade unionism freed of all political meddling.

The fundamental issue for the CNT is that people should decide things for themselves. At branch and trade union level, it is the general assembly that makes all the decisions : there are no watchwords parachuted in from outside, no 'lines' to abide by, no ulterior political considerations...

And this is a model that is applicable to struggles. It is for the wage-earners themselves to determine how their struggles should be conducted. Sovereign general assemblies of all concerned; no song and dance about trade union initials as the be-all and end-all; none of the deplorable petty-minded rivalries with which we are so familiar.

Nobody else does your work for you, so let nobody else make the decisions for you!