

Workshop 1 notes

‘Turning the tables on the state’ Achieving human & social rights in the 21st century

Saturday, 11 March

Group One’s discussion on achieving human and social rights in the 21st century.

Bearing in mind the state’s control by corporate capitalism and the conscious drive to suppress all forms of opposition, we know we can only succeed by bringing together all campaigns, as none can succeed on their own.

While we need to continue to fight individual causes, like the **NO 2 ID** campaign, we need a vision beyond.

Since the present government has lost its authority in the eyes of the majority of the electorate, now is the time to get noticed by presenting an inspiring vision of the future, drawing on socialist ideals, but using words which have not been ‘demonised’.

There are enough people around who want change and who are prepared to do something about it, as in the anti-war demonstrations and those challenging global capitalism, but their energy is being lost because of lack of direction and political outcomes.

We decided that education was the key to making people realize the inter-connection between all the different issues, and setting up links between campaigns.

We discussed the need to stop the spread of fear by government propaganda, which is used to legitimate the erosion of our human rights.

Our objective must be to introduce new forms of democratic control in embryo, parallel with those of the state and a viable alternative, able to cope with social and environmental and other crises as they arise in the near future (otherwise we can be sure the far right will be ready to step into the breach.)

We need to campaign for a Bill of Rights, including economic ones. Some of us thought that if workers ran corporations, they would do things in different ways, but we need to be aware of the issues behind production impacting on the environment.

We agreed on the need for a ‘living constitution’ with periodic reviews.

The structure of AWTW organisation should avoid insularity by using a ‘feedback mechanism’ between the core Steering Group and the peripheral focus groups dealing with the issues of Culture, Environment etc. using representatives. Each of these should maintain contacts with like-minded groups, drawing them together and enlarging on their experiences for the benefit of all groups and to consolidate and mobilise support.