

Obituary: Gerrard Van De Berg (1909 -1997)

Anarchist Communist Federation

1997

Life long activist and council communist Gerrard Van De Berg died February this year after a long illness. Gerrard was active in the workers struggles in his native Netherlands and across Europe. A member of the communist tendency influenced by Anton Pannekoek, he was a strong opponent of authoritarianism. Lenin's polemic "Left Wing Communism- An Infantile Disorder" was directly aimed against him and his comrades. Gerrard was a carpenter by trade and was active in the workers movement and greatly respected for his integrity and fierce intelligence. He used whatever medium he could to get his message across: broadcasting on the airwaves or talking face to face he gained the respect of those who listened. He was in Paris in May 68 where he denounced the leadership of the student movement for its lack of revolutionary theory. In 1973 he participated in a year long factory occupation in France where he worked to influence the dispute towards a redistribution of wealth. He was a stalwart of the solidarity movement for Spain and later a campaigner against the Vietnam war. Gerrard was always active until ill health restricted his abilities in his last months. He was an inspiration to successive generations of Dutch radicals and his funeral was attended by around 150 mourners who knew him from different times and areas of struggle. He will be missed.

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