

DIRECT ACTION

INDUSTRIAL SUPPLEMENT FREE

FIGHT TO WIN

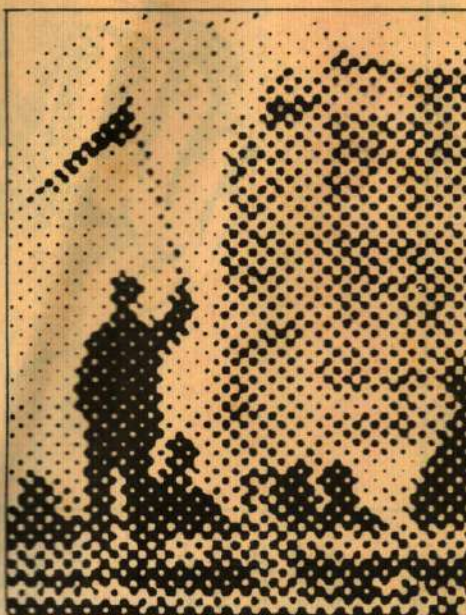
The publication of this Direct Action Supplement should be seen, perhaps, as a statement of intent. It reflects the ongoing debate within the Direct Action Movement (DAM) about the direction we intend to move in, with few illusions, and more importantly the direction of the (dis?)organised working class in the face of a continuous onslaught by the Tory Government.

As the Trade Unions openly cave-in to, or comply with, the bosses; as they become more and more divorced from the day to day reality of those they are meant to represent i.e. working-class people, we see Anarcho-syndicalist organisation as more relevant than ever.

We realise that in recent times especially, to most workers Anarcho-syndicalism is unfamiliar, though not inherently alien. This we intend to rectify.

We are open about our intentions and our politics. We have no 'hidden agenda'. The Networks that are mentioned elsewhere in this issue *have* been set up by DAM members who work in those industries, though the membership of them is not

COMMENT



exclusively composed of DAM. *That is neither our wish or a condition of being part of a network.*

At the moment these networks are small and so initially act as propaganda group and as a focus point for militants. However, interest in them is increasing and we hope to see more networks being set-up, and existing ones getting bigger, in the not-too-distant future. In the long-term, the intention is to federate them, on

a national level, into a Union that is both willing and capable of fighting for our class.

The creation of such a Union is the reason for the DAM's existence. We don't see the DAM as end in *itself*. A unique position amongst political organisations in Britain.

There is nothing that the DAM can do that the Union won't be able to. There is plenty of things that the Union will be capable of that the DAM isn't. This is because the DAM can only operate within the political field, thereby divorced from the workplace.

What then of DAM? At its National Conference held recently, there was a lengthy debate on this point. In fact it centred more so on what the DAM's role should be *now* rather than at the point of the networks federating.

We realise that there is some confusion about the relationship between the DAM and the Networks, as there was when the Despatch industry Workers Union (DIWU) existed. Some people thought that DIWU was a DAM 'front'; in fact although set-up by two DAM members (both Despatch riders) DIWU at its peak never had more than a

Continued on back page

INSIDE: State of the Union(s), Transport, Education, Organisation, International.

A FIGHTING UNION

REVOLUTIONARY UNIONS

The first thing to say about an anarcho-syndicalist union is that it is NOT a trade union of ANARCHISTS, but an anarcho-syndicalist union of WORKERS.

We completely reject the concept of TRADE unions as being divisive and put forward INDUSTRIAL unions as the alternative.

For us it doesn't matter if you are a cleaner, typist, canteen worker or mechanic, if you work in the same industry e.g transport, you would be in the same union - one industry, one union! The idea is to increase our strength in the fight against management and the bosses.

STRUCTURE

An anarcho-syndicalist union is almost completely opposite in its structure and decision making process to the present day TUC unions, which are run by full-time officials (on wages that can be compared to a boss rather than a worker) who are out of touch with their members.

We believe that real union democracy means that all decisions are taken at the base first, in the workplace branch meeting, which is open to all members. That is where election of delegates and any office holders takes place. Any and all such delegates/office holders are subject to immediate recall and are always accountable to the membership.

An anarcho-syndicalist union has no permanent full-time paid officials. If, as has been known at various times, the workload is so great, a wage may be agreed but only at the holders previous wage and for a limited term. Also, the rotation of delegates and post-holders (i.e. secretary) after a fixed term ensures that any encroaching bureaucratic tendencies are curtailed.

The workplace branch would link with others in the same industry at local, area/region and national level. This is to co-ordinate action and solidarity. Each branch would retain its AUTONOMY, meaning it is in control of its own affairs.

The unions of DIFFERENT industries would then come together also, in the local federation, the regional federation etc. The 'local', perhaps centred in a building, would also be open to other representative organisations like tenants associations for instance. This would help create both cross-union solidarity AND community bases and

ties. The 'locals' would form the backbone of the union. Together with the industrial federations this would form the (national) Confederated union.

This structure would be totally different to any reformist or existing working class organisation,

ORGANISE



AGITATE EDUCATE

however the difference of structure is in ITSELF not enough. The activity and involvement of the union members is still the most important part of any anarcho-syndicalist union. The difference between anarcho-syndicalist and present unions is this basic point: *The structure of an anarcho-syndicalist union with its power and decision making at the base, its system of federation and networking mean that it can fully utilise what is actually the real power of any working class organisation - vitality and initiative and the day today involvement of its members.* In other words an organisation that is LIVING.

FIGHTING TO WIN

With this vitality must be the commitment to FIGHT. Structure and workers participation is not in itself enough to win even a wage rise.

We are not saying that workers should wait for an anarcho-syndicalist union to be formed before we should take direct action, only that direct action is a fundamental part of anarcho-syndicalism.

We have to use our experience and imaginations to do whatever is necessary to win. To allow our imaginations to flourish, workers must be in control of our own destinies, not pawns in some union leader's power game.

How often have we heard the irrelevant cries from the 'left' to ask the TUC to call a general strike whenever a group of workers is in struggle. And conversely, how pathetic is the TUC in its tokenistic posturing, calling for 15 minutes 'dignified' stoppages, days of action, birthday parties for the NHS and so on.

People taking industrial action know what is best for their workplace. But lessons must be learned. Faced with a hostile government prepared to spend a fortune to win industrial disputes, the all-out and stay out approach is as archaic as the reformist trade union movement itself. As shown by the

miners, the P&O seafarers and the News International printers, holding out month after month was no substitute for class solidarity. We don't need any more glorious defeats.

There are classic examples of effective action, from work to rules to go-slows, sabotage, selective and all-out strikes to occupations. During the 1989 local government workers' strike there were instances of computers being sabotaged and essential files being locked away to stop any scabs doing the work. French railway workers sabotaging tracks, ambulance workers occupying stations, miners blocking motorways; solidarity actions where, for instance, miners supported nurses, railway workers refused to carry scab coal, and so it goes on.

The best methods are those suited to the prevailing situation, and no-one knows that better than the workers involved. Direct Action gets results, but more than that it EMPOWERS workers.

We totally reject collaboration with the exploiting class. What they design to give us, they may take back. What we take is ours, and we will not allow them to steal from us again!

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

In advocating the building of industrial networks and revolutionary, or anarcho-syndicalist unions, we ARE advocating a complete break from the influence of the TUC/Labour Party straight-jacket.

We want politics in the real sense, not just putting a cross on a ballot paper every 4 or 5 years, or marching to Hyde Park, placard in hand, shouting slogans.

When we say we want workers control of industry it is not purely to prove that we could do it, just to replace management for profit with SELF-management for need. We would like to see a radical change in the whole structure of industry, as part of IMPROVING our lives and our environment.

We want revolutionary change, but not the false idea of some mythical homogenous mass rising to fulfil its historical destiny. This is pure fatalism of the kind that destroys any chance of a genuinely CREATIVE force capable of destroying capitalism once and for all. We seek and desire a revolution of the individual and community in harmony, where every member of society feels a part of that society and so plays an active part in it, rather than being a mere cog in a vast machine outside of their control. Capitalism needs to be totally eradicated. To allow ourselves to be accommodated within it as the likes of Smith and Willis would have is to destroy our humanity and lose all social responsibility.

BUS STRATEGY

A STRATEGY FOR BUS WORKERS is now available from us should you not have seen a copy or would like more. It is a look at the bus industry, trade unions and our working lives by bus workers themselves and proposes a strategy for tackling the basic problems facing us - low pay, long hours, poor working conditions, a lack of organisation in small companies and increasing competition leaving us the losers every time.

We strongly recommend all busworkers read this and get copies around their depot.

Transport Workers Network, PO Box 73, Norwich, NR1 2EB.

Education

Taken from The General Assembly, Spring 1993 Bulletin of the Education Workers Network.

John from Merseyside EWN looks at the future for staff and students in the Further Education sector

On April 1st this year virtually all F.E. colleges will be removed from local authority control and placed under the control of the F.E. Funding Council. This is far more than a bureaucratic re-organisation - the implications are extremely important for staff and students alike.

WHO WILL CONTROL THE COLLEGES?

Colleges have never been run on a democratic basis. Most are controlled by local councils who have shown only limited interest in them. They have a long record of complacency and mis-management. The day to day running of the colleges is undertaken almost exclusively by principles who are only nominally controlled by boards of mainly unelected governors. Under incorporation the colleges will become self managing rather like the NHS Trust hospitals. This will make the college management even more powerful. A central body called The F.E. Funding Council will ensure that colleges that don't fit in with government plans will have their budgets cut or cancelled. So from April onwards there will not even be the pretence that the colleges are subject to democratic control.

THREAT TO STAFF

The implications for staff are immense. Their present conditions of service and pay can be altered by the management providing the management go through a process of "consultation" first. Most college principles have joined a sinister organisation called the College Employers Forum (annual subs £7,000). The leader of this organisation, Robert Ward, is a particularly nasty piece of work. He is demanding that there are massive changes in staff conditions e.g. teaching hours to increase by at least 50%; holidays halved; and no pay increases this year for any staff who do not accept these new conditions. If these proposals are accepted then the demand for teaching staff will be reduced and the quality of service will suffer greatly. There will be no more national negotiations. Pay and conditions will be negotiated at local level. The

staff in some colleges may be able to protect themselves for a while but in colleges with weak union organisation the staff can look forward to a very rough ride in the near future.

RECOGNITION FOR SCABS

The Employers Forum are insisting that the scab unions be given recognition and equal status to the T.U.C. unions. This is despite the fact that the scab outfits are tiny and hardly capable of organising anything. The T.U.C. unions aren't much better and are only now beginning to wake up to the threats coming from the employers. Although I suspect they are more worried about their own jobs than those of their members.

Fighting the Scab Unions

ATTACKS ON STUDENTS AND COURSES

Students will almost certainly suffer in that courses will have to operate on a profit making basis. This means that you will have to pay enormous fees or enrol on courses that the government selects for you. There will be strong emphasis on low level training courses, which experience shows are pretty useless in actually getting students jobs and at best qualify you for the most boring and poorly paid jobs.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The situation is serious but not hopeless. We need to get organising now. All staff and students should prepare themselves for any an all eventualities. It is likely that changes will be introduced at different places throughout the country with existing staff and students remaining relatively unaffected for a while. It will be new staff and courses that will be hit first. We need to liaise nationally and be ready to react when colleges and staff are picked off. The official unions don't have a good fighting record but we will be able to use them to communicate with fellow workers and students. The coming fight in F.E. will without doubt test us and the unions.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION

While we call for workers solidarity we see no reason for it to be restricted to Britain or any other country. As capitalism, and indeed state's, are becoming increasingly internationalist in outlook, everlooking for new 'markets' to exploit, so too must we REKINDLE the spirit of internationalism amongst workers.

Thatcher's policy of free-market capitalism went hand in hand with rabid nationalism and jingoism. Anyone who opposed her policies were condemned as traitors, the 'enemy within'. Along with everything else, the Labour Party and the TUC capitulated and ended up using similar slogans. "British" this and "British" that, almost trying to outdo the Tories in patriotism.

A genuine workers movement has got to completely reject this.

If we promote SOLIDARITY we can hardly accept reactionary attitudes, like racism and sexism, that help weaken any possibilities of action. Likewise, we see no place for nationalism as far as positive change is concerned. Workers are exploited everywhere - that is our common link. We have far more in common with French railway workers, Polish miners

or South African street cleaners that we have with any British boss or politician.

The DAM is the British section of the International Workers Association (IWA), which was formed in 1922. Up until the end of WWII it had over 5 million affiliates around the world, consisting of revolutionary and anarcho-syndicalist unions. These were workers organisations free from the influence of political parties and the state. A combination of war, fascism, state-communism and capitalism all but broke it. But not quite! With the death of Franco in Spain and the subsequent rebirth of the CNT (Confederacion Nacional Del Trabajo), the Anarcho-Syndicalist union, the IWA got a new lease of life.

Although nowhere near its previous strength, there are IWA sections in more than a dozen countries. Some are small propaganda groups at the moment, others are functioning unions. When in time, the industrial networks federate it is hoped that organisation will replace the DAM as the British section of the IWA.



1st of May

The Government, not surprisingly, has announced plans to abolish the 'May Day' holiday. Whether they abolish it totally as a holiday or rename it is yet to be decided (in recent times some Tory backbenchers have suggested "Winston Churchill Day". This shouldn't come as a shock since old Winston wasn't averse to ordering the police and army to shoot workers).

Now we would argue for people to fight for the right to have a holiday (at anytime of year) but we are not going to start bleating over this, as no doubt the 'left' will - call for the TUC to call a General Strike! - and elements in the Labour Party. These people have already abandoned 'May Day' as a workers holiday, many years ago.

'May Day', the 1st of May, is that or nothing, bank holiday monday is just another concession to the bosses. Instead of trying to defend something that has been reluctantly given to us, we should be calling for the RECLAIMING of 'May Day' as OUR day, a day to remember those who died in the struggles against the capitalists, and a day to have a bloody good time!

It doesn't really matter what the Tories say or the Labour Party/TUC hacks, the First May belongs to us and we'll never give it up.

CONTACTS

SECRETARIAT: c/o Leeds DAM-IWA: 52 Call Lane Leeds, LS2

SOUTH EAST

North London DAM-IWA: PO Box 1681 London N8 7LE
East London DAM-IWA: c/o 84B Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
Deptford DAM-IWA: PO Box 574 London SE4 1DL
South Herts DAM-IWA: PO Box 493 St Albans AL1 5TW

EASTERN

Norwich DAM-IWA: PO Box 73 Norwich NR1 2EB

WESTERN

Bristol DAM-IWA PO Box 948, Bristol, BS99 5QE
Norton-Radstock DAM-IWA: PO Box 1592 Midsomer
Norton BA3 3FH

MIDLANDS

Leicester DAM-IWA: c/o 70 High Street Leicester

NORTH EAST

Leeds DAM-IWA: Box DAM 52 Call Lane Leeds LS2
Middlesbrough DAM-IWA: c/o Leeds
South Yorks DAM-IWA: PO Box 122 Doncaster S Yorks

NORTH WEST

Manchester DAM-IWA PO Box 29 SWPDO Manchester M15 5HW
Liverpool DAM-IWA: PO Box 110 Liverpool L69 8PP
Preston DAM-IWA: PO Box 384 Preston PR1 6PQ
Burnley DAM-IWA: c/o Preston

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh/Glasgow DAM-IWA: PO Box 516 SWDO Edinburgh
EH10 7JH

INDUSTRIAL NETWORKS

Transport: c/o Norwich
Education: c/o Manchester
Public Service: c/o Manchester & N London

NETWORK SOLIDARITY FUND

Donations and standing order payments can be made to:
Network Solidarity Fund, Acc. No 12282083 Sort Code 16-16-25
Royal Bank of Scotland, Manchester Chorlton-Cum-Hardy Branch,
44 Wilbraham Road Manchester, M21 1AR

THIS IS THE DAM

1. The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.
2. Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.
3. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self-managed production for need, not profit.
4. In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.
5. We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the workplace and the community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers' organisations must be controlled by the workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers movement. Any and all delegates of such workers' organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.
6. We are opposed to all states and state institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all states do not exist to protect the workers of those states, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.
7. We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to control their own lives and environment.
8. The Direct Action Movement is resolved to initiate, encourage and wholeheartedly support the creation of independent workers' unions based on the principles of anarcho-syndicalism.
9. The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism: a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.

WINNING THE CLASS WAR

The DAM pamphlet 'Winning the Class War - An Anarcho-Syndicalist Strategy', which sets out the reasons for the industrial networks, is being updated and will be available in the near future.

Anyone who would like a copy of the first one FREE should send a SAE to Box DAM, 52 Call Lane, Leeds LS2 or PO Box 574 London SE4 1DL

CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?

The British trade union movement is in financial and ideological crisis which will worsen with the election of a Tory government for the fourth successive term. These two facts are closely linked. Since Thatcher was elected in 1979 trade union membership has fallen markedly and continues to do so. The TUC's latest annual report shows that membership has almost halved since the Tories came to power, with only six million now entitled to vote in union elections.

This has also had a dramatic effect on the TUC's and individual union's incomes. Many unions are now in debt and have been forced to borrow money to keep going. As a result, according to TUC figures, a massive 10% of dues goes towards the repayment of debt, in other words our hard-earned money goes straight to bankers and their rich friends. This has forced a rash of amalgamations over the past few years, the latest of which is the merger of the AEU and the EEUPTU to form the second largest union in the country, with NALGO, NUPE and COHSE soon to follow to form a new union, UNISON, of 1.5 million members.

We would welcome these new super-unions if their main aim was to increase the industrial strength of workers. However, the current amalgamations are inspired only by financial viability and the desire of union

bureaucrats to retain their power and well paid jobs. Whilst the merger of unions along industrial lines - for example and RMT-ASLEF merger - would be of immense benefit to workers in their fight against management, little or no thought is given to that in any of the recent or proposed mergers. What is now occurring is the formation of a number of general unions or mini-TUC's which will accept anyone as members and indeed compete with each other for members, often trying to win single-union sweetheart deals with management.

Coupled with this merger-madness is the move away from workplace militancy to more of an American-style business union mentality. Unions increasingly see themselves as pressure groups who will be able to influence government by the use of professional negotiators elegantly expressing their views without the need for strike action. More and more they see their members as clients who pay dues in return for services - hence the growing emphasis on mortgages, credit cards, insurance and even membership of BUPA in the case of the old EEUPTU.

We believe that over the last 20 years the trade unions have become more and more divorced from the point of workers' power - the workplace - and the move

towards super unions will only increase that trend. This can only lead to unions being alienated from their members and therefore of little value to ordinary working people.

There is a need to build workplace organisations that will concentrate on improving pay and conditions while constantly stressing the need to change the whole capitalist system, which is the ultimate source of misery and oppression. We will be part of that movement believing that the future lies in working class organisation based on the workplace and not 'super unions' who measure success in terms of a balanced bank book and the number of credit cards issued to members.

Consequently, we want to set up networks in every industry working towards building revolutionary unions. Initially these networks would provide information and support for workers in struggle.

While rejecting the existing unions as beyond reform, we will continue to work inside them to defend working class interests. We will, however, be promoting workplace resistance, not standing in union elections on so-called 'radical' platforms. It is in workplace organisations and not New Unions formed through amalgamations that the future of the working class lies.

PRIVATISATION SHAMBLES

The following two articles are taken from 'Transport Worker' No. 4 Spring '93

PRIVATISATION SHAMBLES

The Government's "Railway Privatisation Bill" eventually published on February 1, is an utter shambles. Not from the point of view of a railway worker (although it will certainly mean mass redundancies, wage cuts and the scrapping of safety standards and conditions if implemented) it is a shambles because it runs counter to the Board's own strategy for privatisation and because it has failed to achieve any support from the finance capitalists of the City of London in whose interests it was originally conceived. It is clear to even the most loyal Tory propagandist in the media that MacGregor has come up with a real turkey.

It was politically important for the Tories at the last election to promise to privatise the railway. Partly for John Major to satisfy those Tories who doubted his Thatcherite credentials, and partly to maintain the flow of wealth to the City financial interests from asset stripping the industrial infrastructure, but mainly because the railway represents a body of organised labour which defeated the government in 1989, and is still capable of doing so today.

Anyone who believes that the rail unions are as impotent as our leaders pretend, or that the Tories have forgotten the co-ordinated strikes on the railway and London Underground, has fallen for the oldest trick of the boss class - whenever possible bury discontent under a conspiracy of silence (the Manchester Piccadilly guards, the LU company plan) - but if they are threatened with co-ordinated industrial action they will respond with a deluge of lies which would make Saddam Hussein look reasonable.

UNPOPULAR CAPITALISM

The recession has made a mockery of the governments already incoherent plans to sell off the railway. Certainly, it is impossible to maintain the charade of 'popular capitalism' through a public shares issue when the public are suffering from a recessionary crisis. It is even proving difficult to interest the financial sharks and playboys (Stagecoach, Branson etc) who might have been expected to rush in while wiser and wealthier predators circled impatiently waiting for disaster to strike in order to snap up the bargains. MacGregor claims over 50 expressions of interest in

taking on a franchise, but had successfully resisted the urge to name one. The Tories have ended up with the humiliation of privatisation without any buyers. Unless they are prepared to make massive investments in infrastructure quickly, buyers will not come forward.

CONTRACT CRAZY

The rearguard action of Bob Ried and the BRB, to resist the breaking up of the InterCity network is the most public example of their opposition to the Government's plans. BR management have their own strategy for reducing labour costs. This involves keeping intact a small national rail network, but drastically reducing the size of the workforce from 130,000 at present to about 30,000 essential staff and then contracting out the remainder of the work to outside companies. This would restructure the industry along the lines of the NHS with the emphasis on an internal market and extensive use of contracts to outside companies.

During the last year, examples of the drive towards contracting out have become more and more common, particularly affecting S & T and Per'Way departments. At present a consultation document from Network South East is being passed around, in which management propose to contract out all P.Way renewals, tamping and lining, drainage, fencing, track welding and lineside management. This would leave track maintenance, inspection/patrolling duties and ultra sonic track testing to be carried out by P.Way workers. Management on Thames/Chiltern (the line in question) are looking towards 75% of all work contracted out. This strategy is probably more dangerous than MacGregor's dogmatic shambles, because it could be implemented as an extension of the O for Q management restructuring exercise, already in place.

A REVOLUTIONARY UNION

What both the strategies for industry have in common, is that they are both attempts to drastically reduce the ability of railway workers to organise against the demands of modern capitalism. This is interesting because it underlines the threat that industrial organisation still creates for capitalism in the 90s. The lesson for railway workers is that we must take every opportunity to move the struggle to restructure our industry onto our terrain. This means industrial action; united with workers in the coal industry and local

government. The TUC call for a 'One Day Strike' on March 17 is pathetically inadequate. The big question for workers trying to defend their living standards and jobs today is "how to fight and win without seeing a repeat of the TUC's treacherous role in the 1980s?"

ROT AT THE TOP

RMT funds pay for the good life

It may come as a shock to many RMT members in these days of financial restraint by the unions to find that the union does have money when it comes to ensuring that officials are kept in the lifestyle they have become accustomed to, as the following will demonstrate:

At the 1989 Labour Party Conference, Brother Knapp and half a dozen of his hangers-on, including one RMT-sponsored Labour MP, had a week's hotel bill of over £8,000. More than a year's net pay for most railworkers. At the same conference, over £4,000 was spent on a free bar at a reception in a top hotel to which Labour Party and union dignitaries were invited.

"Honest Sam MacCluskey" received a £75,000 pay-off to leave the union and still retains a union mortgage.

At Maritime House, the old seamen's head office, there are over 130 flats. These are currently being let to union officials and others, for the princely sum of £25 a week, which isn't bad for a flat in central London. On further investigation it was found that one seamen's official had been sub-letting his flat at full London rates for a number of years. It also emerged that John Prescott has a whole annex to himself for which he pays a princely £35 a week. It is little wonder the man can afford to run a Daimler.

It gives us no joy to report the corruption, both moral and financial, which is eating into the very heart of our union. It also highlights the true nature of the financial cuts now being pursued within the union. The moves for a part-time EC and the financial strangling of the branches which is now taking place is little more than an attempt to centralise all power into the hands of union officials away from the activists. The union's financial problem could be solved overnight if all union employees, including Knapp, were to receive the average earning of a transport worker.

DIRECT ACTION

INDUSTRIAL SUPPLEMENT

FREE

handful of people who were in the DAM, a small minority.

Of course DAM members will attempt to create new Networks and act as militants within them - they are ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS after all! So to clarify: the networks that exist now are Anarcho-syndicalist in politics and structure but *independent* in decision making and activity. There is no DAM 'Central Committee' lurking behind them nor will there ever be.

LEAVING THE 'LEFT' BEHIND

We could fill this paper with articles about the history of Anarcho-syndicalism, from the First International to the Russian Revolution to Spain 1936, where the working-class gained more control than anything seen before or since. Alternatively, we could fill the pages with our vision of a free and equal society without class divisions. Both would make interesting reading and debate, but with whom? While we see a place for such writing we feel that most people are likely to ask us what we should do NOW.

We live in the present, therefore our starting point is 'What is happening and why, and how can we change things? Sterile debates with the middle-class led Marxist 'left' have not much favour with us or many others for that matter. One of these groups had, a while back, on the front page of its paper: 'British workers need a need a Bolshevik Party'. Sure, like we need an ice-pick in the head! Is it any wonder

that they are so derided by working-class people?

While the 'left' - from Trotskyites to those who thought Stalin was a bit of a liberal - has spent years debating what is in effect HISTORY, like religious sects, the bosses and the State have been fucking us over quite nicely, thank you very much. Question: What are we going to do about it? Debate whether Marx had a longer beard than Bakunin (anarchist) or suggest ways to organise and fight back? We know in which direction we intend moving in.

We are not opposed to political debate, and we certainly want a politicised working-class, but any discussion must be relevant and in context with the struggles that are before us today. The 'left' has paralysed itself, with little hope of recovery. We aren't going to waste our time and energy in mourning its demise. Quite the opposite. It wasn't long ago that socialists, communists and anarchists were treated with respect by workers. They were militants but were trusted because they were from WITHIN the same communities, as they could be called then. The 'left' have actually divorced politics from those same people because they are from WITHOUT. We have much lost ground to catch up on.

THE BUSINESS

We want a workers movement that is confident and has the commitment to fight a class war with the same conviction as the Tory

Party and their allies are doing now. A movement that is open to ALL working-class people, waged or unwaged, where Solidarity is not a mere slogan. One that takes pride in itself and its achievements.

We want nothing but the best for our class, and that doesn't mean 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work'. It means, in the short term, higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions. In fact we want what the middle-classes take for granted. Why shouldn't we have decent homes for all? We bloody built them!

We want all that and more. But it must be at the expense of the bosses not other workers. Surely the last 15 years have shown that sitting back and watching while one section of workers has been attacked (miners, printers, dockers etc.) has got us nowhere and the bosses in the position they are in today.

People will no doubt ask us how the type of Union we are advocating will be any better than the existing ones. The reply will be simple: It's up to you. YOU will be the Union. If you want to fight for higher wages or whatever then the Union will fight. We have nothing but contempt for the TUC bureaucrats who have, and are, selling-out the interests of their members.

From the 'Depressions' of the 20/30's to the 'Recessions' of today the rich have always stayed rich. Funny isn't it? And we've only ever achieved anything by fighting for it - right? It's time the bosses tasted the fear again.

VOICE OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM