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NETWORK FORUM BULLETIN....NETWORK FORUM BULLETIN....NETWORK FORUM BULLETIN

NUMBER 1

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first Network Forum Bulletin and thanks to all groups who responded to the questionnaires. All groups expressed a need for co-ordination in gathering and distributing information nationally in order to provide local groups with resources, contacts and to exchange experiences and ideas. It was felt that this would help groups stay informed about what's happening elsewhere and assist them in providing a resource base in raising the profile of networks locally.

ROLE OF THE BULLETIN

This bulletin is intended to complement the IB by drawing together the collective views and experiences of the groups regarding industrial networks. The contents of this (and future) bulletins will be based on your contributions. By assisting in the co-ordination of relevant information, we hope to support the IB by providing a framework for the development of local networks. The aims of this bulletin are:

- * to assist and support the IB by co-ordinating an exchange of information/resources/experience amongst local groups;
- * to provide a means for the spread of ideas/exchange of practice of organising industrial networks locally;
- * to provide a national focus for discussion around networks;
- * to support the development of a collective and consistent approach nationally to the organisation of networks drawn from the actual experiences of local groups/networks themselves;
- * to identify problems/issues which arise and to help in developing strategies to overcome them based on mutual aid.

The lack of consistent co-ordination of information/contacts/resources within DAM was reflected in the responses. Several groups felt that often one DAM group at one end of the country was doing something totally different to another elsewhere. The bulletin will rely heavily on the commitment of all groups in providing a flow of information to us which we can re-distribute. In this way, we can also assist smaller groups/individuals who expressed commitment to networks but were isolated and, we felt, deserved greater support from the rest of us.

HOW THE BULLETIN WILL WORK

Briefly then, we hope local groups/individuals will feed in information to us relevant to networks/potential networks - eg even if you have no education network locally, the closure of a further education college/dispute in Middlesbrough is certainly relevant and information which could be fed into local/national propaganda. The bulletin will include industrial information/local leaflets etc. It will be for groups locally to decide how to use it - eg the information about compensation in the NHS contained in this bulletin could be turned into a local leaflet (if anyone does that then send us a copy back°).

DEVELOPING CONTACTS

Drawing on your responses, the number of potential contacts we have between us is quite surprising and encouraging. Again people felt there was a lack of co-ordination and back-up in developing networks from them. This was for a variety of reasons - isolation, lack of information about what's happening in a particular industry and so on. Certainly we have contacts locally who could be put in touch with each other through existing networks - eg Council Workers, Health, Education, Transport. It was interesting (though not surprising) to see how these contacts came about - mainly through other activities DAM members are involved in - eg TOM, anti-Poll Tax.

We've pulled your ideas/experiences together and drawn up a checklist which we hope should help us collectively develop and maintain contacts with a view to building networks.

1. We need to begin to see the contacts we get through our involvement in campaigns as workplace/industry contacts rather than just someone we know within an anti-Poll Tax group - eg two education network members around Manchester were through contacts made this way. One has recently also become a DAM member while the other is a strong supporter.
2. If there isn't a local network, you can pass on information to your contacts about what's happening in their industry elsewhere - eg privatisation effects on local transport workers.
3. If there's a dispute on within the industry, network members/local DAM groups can help the worker draw up a leaflet/write an article for DA, distribute propaganda etc.
4. While local networks are small, as we have done in Manchester, they can mutually aid each other in doing this - eg Manchester Transport Network members used their own experiences of a recent strike in helping Education Network members draw up a leaflet identifying issues likely to affect education workers' in coming industrial action.
5. We need also to draw up local industrial/contact profiles to help us put workers in touch with each other and to identify local issues. Several DAM groups are already doing this while others are certainly considering it.
6. We need also to build up local resources for networks, DAM and DA - eg local Low Pay Units, health and safety resources, local law centres, anti-deportation groups, etc. This can all be fed into the Network Bulletin for national dissemination.
7. Development of local Network Solidarity Groups - we're doing this in Manchester and will let you know how things progress.

LOCAL PROFILE - MANCHESTER

We hope in future bulletins to do a variety of local profiles so that we can exchange views and ideas. Because it's within our own experience and because several groups are also considering doing something similar we thought it might be helpful just to set out what we are doing.

Firstly, we're drawing up a profile of local resources/contacts - eg Salford Law Centre, Manchester Low Pay Unit, Manchester Against Immigration Controls, local Health and Safety Executive, union contacts, Manchester Hazards Centre, local Action for Benefits group and so on.

We're also drawing up an industrial profile/database of potentially sympathetic workers/trade union activists. Once a month we have Network Solidarity Group meetings with an industrial discussion as a focal point, we also have an informal agenda which includes workplace reports, network reports, disputes and potential contacts/strategies. From these we also hope to turn in articles for DA.

In the longer term we hope to start targetting our database contacts with a copy of DA (free) plus a short questionnaire asking what they thought of it/what we could put in it to improve it/any industrial info/disputes they are involved in which could be included. DA 73 had a letter in it from an engineering worker in Liverpool and we are hoping he will develop links with a worker in Manchester from a similar industrial background - also a Liverpool-initiated contact.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING NETWORKS

1. Identify workplace/industrial contacts using campaigns/existing contacts etc (don't forget our own workplaces, if we have any);
2. Find out what's happening in their industry. Encourage and help them (if they want - we're not the SWP^o) write a short piece for DA about what's happening;
3. This also helps DA keep industrial issues raised and links back into the networks and Network Bulletin.
4. Don't forget to keep the network bulletin co-ordinators informed of contacts so that existing networks/other groups can provide support - eg we have some scattered healthworkers who we should keep informed/supported.
5. Develop local industrial profiles, identify contacts, feed in/draw out relevant info and send it to the Network Bulletin so we can pass it on.
6. Continue with our existing activities around disputes/strikes etc and continue to identify sympathetic contacts - again relevant articles in DA can be fed back into workplaces using sympathetic contacts.
7. Don't forget to see what's happening in our own unions, draw up and distribute our own propaganda (DAM, or networks if there are any - eg council workers are all affected by cuts, so exchange of information is useful. Most unions try not to let council workers know what's happening elsewhere in case workers get similar ideas^o

COUNCIL WORKERS NETWORK

Council workers in Manchester intend to organise a national meeting for council workers in the DAM plus contacts interested in forming a network. It is hoped this will take place in October for further information all DAM council workers should contact Steve in Manchester.

TRANSPORT WORKER

By now you will probably have received copies of Transport Worker. We hope to produce this every quarter. We see our role in the short term to produce a national bulletin and national leaflets through which we can build up contacts. Once we feel there is sufficient numbers the next step will be to form the network. We urge people to distribute the bulletin in their area and also send information to us in Manchester about anything to do with transport (buses railways etc.). We also feel it essential that groups send in any contacts or future contacts to enable us to build a network.

INDUSTRIAL PROFILES

Thanks to those groups and individuals who sent in industrial profiles in time° We are still waiting for several groups to respond. If we don't hear from those groups soon we will we have no choice but to pay you a visit° This is not a threat of violence but we will just get Tony and Ron to bore you to death° We hope to publish the complete profile in the next issue.

NETWORK SOLIDARITY FUND

This was set up at the National Conference to support building the networks. We have had two donations so far amounting to £110. Hopefully some of this will go as a donation to Transport Worker.

INDEPENDENT EDUCATION NETWORK REPORT

BACKGROUND

The North West Independent Education Network was brought into being by 3 DAM members, 2 students and a part-time lecturer. The importance of creating a network with a firm anarchosyndicalist base led to us adopting the aims and principles contained in our leaflets (see Education resource pack) to make it clear to potential members that we organised in a certain way with a pre-determined long-term goal of an anarchosyndicalist union in education. By establishing firm anarchosyndicalist principles we recognised that in the short term we would exclude groups who would see us as some form of new rank and file, for example. The aims and principles were adopted for two reasons:

- to exclude/reduce the likelihood of infiltration/takeover by Trotskyist groups such as the SWP;
- to make it clear from the outset that we were not interested in reforming the unions and having 'better leaders'.

DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership has been drawn from fairly committed/sympathetic anarchosyndicalist workers. The network is mainly a political and propaganda organisation. We've now got about 12 members and some new contacts nationally - in the immediate future this role has to continue and consolidate before we attempt to move forward. Members not already in the DAM were attracted to the network on the basis of the aims and principles. One network member has since joined DAM after about a year in the network. Contacts, members and enquiries have all come from distribution of leaflets, DA articles and DAM contacts - we also have sympathisers in some of our own workplaces who we hope to recruit to the network.

ACTIVITIES

We have fairly regular network meetings in the North West and in London. We have had one national meeting and urgently need another one to get a national bulletin organised like Transport Worker. Given our size and limited resources we have been to the forefront of various struggles affecting our industry both locally and nationally - certainly we have managed to increase the profile of our network. For example:

1. Queen Mary College - As a result of cuts Education Network members are involved/active in the cross-campus union committee thrown up as a result of the crisis. A parent also was involved in (and won) a fight against the National Curriculum Tests for 7-year olds.

2. University of Salford - The Education Network was the only organisation to actively protest against the harassment of a gay candidate for NUS elections. The leaflet (which dealt with the issue of harassment not the election) was widely distributed and well-accepted (see Education resource pack).

3. Further/Higher Education Colleges, Bolton and Manchester - Again we have successfully leafleted (thanks to support from Transport Network members) around industrial action, criticising the union, setting out demands and urging independent organisation. Union members, having discussed the leaflets

previously, attended branch meetings in large numbers demanding and getting the adoption of the points outlined. (leaflet attached)

The concentration on workplace issues, despite the size of the network, has been successful. We are clear about our propaganda - it attacks both bosses and unions; we do not call for new leaders but on workers and students to put their demands to union and bosses alike.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

The main ones are:

1. Size - we are small so it's difficult to respond to everything. Also, some enquiries have not been followed up - presumably because people may have been hoping for a larger organisation. We are continuing to develop and identify further contacts and push issues forward.

2. Other Political Groupings - All anarchosyndicalist networks will face this eventually. We must be clear from the start. We are anarchosyndicalists and the networks must remain so. Those who do not agree with the broad aims and principles should not be a part. This is an essential part of maintaining our structures and ideology. Future members/contacts will either be anarchosyndicalists or militant workers. We need to draw workers in, not 'politicos'. Most workers have had enough of 'politicos'. networks should be encouraging workers to have the confidence to organise for themselves by themselves so we need to build on our successes as workers. It is imperative the anarchosyndicalists in networks keep them on an anarchosyndicalist footing so they don't degenerate into rank and files and are lost. In the short term we will have a trickle rather than an influx of members - we expect this.

3. Victimisation - Building a network is a slow and potentially dangerous task. As activists within the reformist unions we know that they have been using some of us for years to raise and debate issues. As network members we must be aware of the potential for collaboration between unions and bosses. If we are attacked, victimised and isolated both of them will hate us and we are their enemy. Without setting ourselves up as leaders we need the support of other workers. We are not a secret organisation but we need to consider carefully the implications of all we do.

FUTURE STRATEGY

In the short term:

1. Consolidation of present structures - we need another national meeting, perhaps late September so we can get the newsletter out by mid-October. We need to continue to develop nationally, both organisationally and politically. We need to develop a consistent approach to what we are doing locally and share experiences/ information, etc.

2. We need to develop leaflets around national issues in education as well as locally to assist other groups in developing contacts.

3. We would appreciate the support of groups and individuals in sending information on what's happening in education to us so we can pass it on within our own network and to network co-ordinators (who will distribute it to groups).

We also need to be kept in touch with potential contacts, etc.

4. Schools - Presently all membership comes from further and higher education. We need to expand into schools - ideas are welcome on this as we have no contacts and a school is not the sort of place (unlike a college) you can wander into and leave leaflets about. The only leftie teachers we have are into reforming the unions - or closing down the schools altogether at the other extreme°

5. IWA Affiliation - We hope that all networks should recognise the need for future affiliation to the IWA in some form.

CONCLUSIONS

The IEN is now established on a firm anarchosyndicalist footing. We are an anarchosyndicalist network in an industry (education). Building contacts has not been easy but we have had some strong successes on which to move forward. We are small and could be much more effective but we have the basis now of a growing organisation in education. We need to concentrate on recruiting and keeping members from within education workplaces. We need to maintain and build our profile within workplace issues - this will strengthen the membership base of the networks. Some of the problems we will face we can't conceive of yet but we have taken our first steps and we are learning to walk. This has taken 2 years to achieve what we have achieved but we started with only 3 members and we now have at least 4 times that plus contacts coming in.

PROPOSED AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE HEALTHWORKERS FEDERATION

1. The Healthworkers Federation is a democratic organisation run by and for healthworkers who share a syndicalist perspective. We aim to provide a network of solidarity and support among healthworkers regardless of trade union affiliation and independent of political parties.
2. We believe that the interests of healthworkers cannot be met by the trade union bureaucracies that claim to represent us. We therefore work towards the industrial organisation of all non-managerial workers in the health industry and support the formation by workers of independent workplace organisation. We believe that such organisation must be syndicalist in character; being controlled by the workers, with all delegates being subject to instant recall by the members.
3. We believe that the interests of the employers in the health industry, whether in the public, private or voluntary sector, are opposed to the interests of the workers and the users of its services. Therefore it is necessary that healthworkers be uncompromising in dealing with management, using all methods of persuasion at our disposal.
4. Under the present system of exploitation and wage slavery no health service will ever meet the real needs of the majority of people. Therefore, while it is our short term aim to fight for better conditions for workers and users within the existing health industry, ultimately this fight must continue until we have won the self-management of health services to meet the real needs of all.
5. The healthworkers federation opposes all barriers to equality and unity, such as racism, sexism and homophobia.

PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL BASIS OF THE HEALTHWORKERS FEDERATION

1. Membership of the Healthworkers Federation is on an individual basis.
2. Membership is open to all non-managerial healthworkers who agree with our statement of aims and principles, including shop stewards and branch secretaries of non-geographical (ie workplace-based) trade union branches, where these are not full-time positions. Membership is not open to branch secretaries of geographical trade union branches, or to full-time union officials.
3. Potential new members from supervisory grades - including sisters and charge nurses - shall be subject to approval by all paid-up members of the Federation present at its next full meeting. Guests will not be present at any time while decisions of this type are taken. Where a local branch exists, a unanimous vote of the members of that branch is sufficient for any potential new member to be accepted. The branch is accountable to the full Federation for all its decisions.
4. A local branch shall be deemed to exist where three or more members of the Federation in the same workplace or locality meet and organise on a regular basis. Local branches should where possible have a local contact address.

The Healthworkers Federation is based at present in London and south east England, and organises itself accordingly. We have contacts outside the region. As we expand outwards, we shall amend the way we organise ourselves.

DISCUSSION

Since the introduction of the industrial strategy report we feel that there has not been enough debate. We therefore thought it might be an idea to include a discussion piece in each bulletin. Manchester DAM have set out a few ideas below. Hopefully other groups will contribute to future issues with ideas of their own.

We feel that the basic ideas put forward in the industrial strategy report are still sound but there's a need to refine a few areas. Certainly the analysis of the unions has, if anything, been proven correct. Many elements in the unions have moved ever closer to European models. Proposals to be contained in the next Labour Party manifesto include the so-called going rate for pay. This system is used in parts of Europe under which the so-called social partners - the unions, the State and capitalists sit down to decide what the economy can afford to pay workers in the annual pay round. To try and ensure that the going rate is adhered to, pay rises are determined at the same time to prevent so-called leap-frogging in pay rises.

Also the right to join a union will be guaranteed by law or, put another way, the right for unions to organise in the workplace will be guaranteed. Needless to say the severe restrictions on the right to strike introduced by the Tories will remain, only this time having the backing of unions anxious to avoid any action which will damage a future Labour Government.

This is big move away from the traditional union position where power was based, not on legislation, but on the unions' ability to control shop-floor militancy on one hand while on the other being able to call industrial action for their own ends. Compare the attitude of current union leaders with those twenty years ago when the Labour Party tried to introduce the document "In Place of Strife" which included many similar proposals being put forward now. It was dismissed by union barons as a threat to their power. At that time the law was seen as an enemy and a threat rather than the only way to maintain power, which is the position the unions now hold.

It is not only a loss of industrial power which has led reformist unions to this position. With the collapse of Marxist states in Eastern Europe and the discrediting of its milder form, nationalisation, unions have nowhere else to go other than seeing their role as sitting down with the State and bosses to create stable conditions so that the economy can supposedly flourish, the idea being that the grateful capitalists will then pass on a share of their increased profits to the workforce.

But, as we have already said, our analysis of the unions is still valid. It is the workplace where perhaps we should turn our attention. Though there is ample documentation to show that the unions have survived the ideologically-based onslaught it is far from certain as to what extent workplace organisations have survived. We should have no illusions as to the importance of workplace organisations. They have provided the backbone to workers' militancy in Britain, through the syndicalist movement to the wartime works committees to the shop stewards movement. Just as workplace organisation was so important in the past it is going to be as crucial in the future.

If Labour is elected the unions will become increasingly centralised. Locked into national structures which will determine pay and conditions, the unions are hardly going to encourage workplace organisations which will provide a counterpoint to their national position of power. There is every chance that they will seek even more to limit any grassroots democracy and we should have no illusions as to how far this will go. In Germany, for example, unions have little or no local organisation with many not even having local branches. The power unions have over workplace organisations has already been significantly increased under the Tory laws on ballots. The fact that workers have to ask unions for permission to ballot before strike action means they can delay, sabotage or simply refuse.

If the Tories retain power there are two possible scenarios. If the ideologically-based right-wing retain their prominence then we can expect the attacks on the unions to continue in which case the unions could well go into crisis as membership continues to fall. It's hardly far-fetched to predict the union movement splitting along ideological lines with a right-wing federation based on the EETPU and AEU and a 'left-wing' federation based on the T&G competing for members. If this happens there will be every chance of the emergence of a small anarchosyndicalist or at least independent, union movement. This is not dissimilar from southern Europe where union membership is much smaller and unions are ideologically-based.

Far more likely, however, is that the Tories will move back to their more traditional position which sees unions having a positive role (bearing in mind that a majority of Tories favour much closer ties with Europe which would mean accepting much of European social policy with a strong role for the unions). This would leave a similar position as under Labour with a mass TUC-led union movement based on providing services and seeking to co-operate with the government and bosses. In this case the road to independent anarchosyndicalists union will be much longer. With a Labour government there would also be an inevitable honeymoon period with workers taking some time to see through the illusion of so-called 'workers rights'.

Faced with these two scenarios network strategy will be different but either way the essential ingredient is going to be workplace organisation. What is the role of the DAM in building these workplace networks? It has become clear over the last two years that networks will not get off the ground without the DAM. What has also become clear is that though a militant anti-management stance will attract supporters it will be a hard core of anarchosyndicalists who will maintain the networks day to day.

The role of DAM in building an anarcho syndicalist presence in the workplace will be crucial. The fact that we are a national organisation is a major asset. We can both distribute information on networks to most areas of the country and channel information back to networks from most areas. It will be the DAM that will provide support to isolated contacts in industry and provide an anarchosyndicalist perspective which will enable activists to come together and launch networks. We reject the idea of ignoring DAM and building networks and also the idea that you can leave the DAM and build the networks as something separate. The building of DAM and the networks will go hand in hand and obviously there will be many workers attracted to the ideas of networks who will go on to play a full role in DAM. We see the discussion of when the DAM disappears or the role of the DAM in relation to a firmly established network movement as purely academic and at this stage of little use.

We feel, however, there is a need to define our role in relation to rank and files and unions. Because of the fact that networks have taken far longer to get off the ground than we first thought some people have again turned to rank and files as an easy option. We feel the analysis on rank and files contained in the industrial strategy is correct though perhaps it needs to be emphasized that we do not rule out working in rank and files as individuals or even as networks. Again we must stress that few (if any) rank and files currently exist on a permanent basis and those that may emerge will be short-lived and based around a dispute or those on a broad left electoral machine approach.

As to the unions, again we feel that this has to be refined. It is no good just saying to workers 'the unions are rubbish and you'll have to wait for your problems to be solved when we have our revolutionary union'. We have little choice in many cases other than to try and utilise present union organisation, whether that be to make contacts, distribute propaganda, or to call for militant industrial action. We see our role on the one hand to demand that the unions defend our pay and conditions and on the other hand expose them when they fail to deliver the goods which they inevitably do.

We hope the above will re-ignite debate and discussion on network strategy.

NORTH-WEST INDEPENDENT EDUCATION NETWORK

P.O.BOX 29 S.W. P.D.O. MANCHESTER M15 5HW

DIRECT ACTION GETS THE GOODS

As more universities fall into the red, job stability decreases in proportion to the increase in low paid contracts and more Departments depend on younger members of staff on hourly payment, it is time to take stock of the situation.

DERISORY PAY OFFER, WORSENING CONDITIONS

With yet another pay 'offer' lecturers are told to 'produce' more research, cope with steadily worsening staff-student ratios. This is leading to increased demoralisation as greater numbers of our colleagues leave in despair to 'go into industry'. As for new young, highly qualified staff, we are hardly capable of attracting them; who can blame them from seeking a different job which pays twice as much?

Of course we are told to just get on with it; the University has no more money; think of the students. Staff and students are being asked to co-operate as departmental heads plead for the chance to implement their own cuts. In the meantime conditions and pay are eroded.

LINKS

This approach is akin to cutting off one limb after another to save the body. A short-term strategy that may work but a defeatist strategy that means there is little left in the end worth saving.

As free education comes ever more under attack, with student loans, opting out and privatisation, we may soon see the eclipse of any decent education system we once had. It is time to make links between all education producers and consumers.

THE UNIONS

This will not be accepted readily by the present education Unions; in these everyone is divided both according to institution, and the activity they perform within it. We need to build a new organisation that is unified, unifying and capable of arresting the decay in our education system.

POLITICS

This leaflet is written from a specific political standpoint. We believe in uniting all workers. We believe in involving all in decision making for a true democratic movement. We believe in creating some hope for the future.

We are a small organisation but we urge you to unite with us and fight for a decent education system.

NORTH-WEST INDEPENDENT EDUCATION NETWORK

P.O.BOX 29 S.W. P.D.O. MANCHESTER M15 5HW

LECTURERS SAY NO TO REDUNDANCIES

For the first time in months our NATFHE Branch has finally had a representative meeting (as it was held in works time) in which real issues that are affecting us were discussed: the possibility of cuts and redundancies have once again reared their heads.

In this meeting it was decided by an overwhelming majority to back a motion calling for outright opposition to any cuts in jobs. The motion was carried despite opposition of the Branch and Liaison Committee Officers. Members finally decided that they had had enough of years of promises that each cut would be the last and final one.

ACTION COMMITTEE

Although this was a great victory we cannot now lie back and let others make decisions for us. Even though an Action Committee was set up, no clear mandate was given to it and no clear programme for action against cuts was decided. We therefore support the Action Committee and must ensure that it is democratically accountable to members as a whole.

MOMENTUM

The problem that we face is that the views expressed by ordinary members are consolidated upon and carried out. The Summer break is almost upon us and it is no coincidence that management has unveiled these plans at a time when it expects scanty opposition. Only this week ten Adult Education workers received disestablishment notices. NATFHE members at a lobby in the Town Hall were told that they were not notices of disestablishment but only that they were likely to be disestablished and it was the Council's way of breaking the news gently to them. The final decision will be taken on July 16, once the Summer vacation has begun.

SUMMER TIME DANGER

With only a few weeks left till the end of term we urgently need an open meeting to determine a strategy of what form of industrial action we would need to take in the light of any such moves. A proper mandate to the Action Committee must be devised.

Recognising the fact that the management might take the step of sending notices over the Summer Holidays, we must return to a Branch meeting in the first week of term and that a ballot is taken and agreed action is implemented. This should not be cancelled as it was last year by Branch officials.

INTO OUR OWN HANDS

If NATFHE reneges we must be prepared to take any action that will defend our jobs and the services we provide. Together we can oppose management's plans but this must be done by us. We cannot rely on Branch officers to do it for us.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

1. This organisation is open to all those involved in education, whether they are cleaners, lab technicians, catering staff, lecturers, students, porters etc.
2. We oppose the divisions created by the reformist Trade Union movement and we encourage all to unite across all trade union barriers and divisions according to occupation.
3. This organisation is opposed to hierarchy, ruling committees and bureaucracies. We want a participatory, democratic, non-hierarchical organisation where the members decide through regular meetings, which are sovereign.
4. All posts held in this organisation are not positions of power or authority, but have purely administrative or co-ordinating functions. All delegates, decided upon in general meetings, are instantly recallable and are held accountable to the organisation as a whole.
5. It is clear that real change must come from below, the trade union leaders and bureaucrats are only interested in themselves and not in the emancipation of the working class. We oppose all leaders and will not fight to get "more left wing leaders" at the top. What we want is **no top, no hierarchy**.
6. This organisation is based on anarcho-syndicalist principles, such as direct action and solidarity, whose aim is the creation of a free, classless, stateless society with education being self managed by workers and the community to suit **our** needs with the producers and consumers of education being in total harmony.
7. We work in conjunction with other anarcho-syndicalist organisations both nationally and internationally.
8. The statutes of this organisation can only be changed by the members.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE
WRITE TO:

THE SECRETARY
NWIEN
P.O. BOX 29
SW PDO
MANCHESTER
M15 5HW

CRIMINAL INJUSTICE

Clause 25 of the Criminal Justice Bill is the latest of a long line of attacks on the rights of lesbians and gays to express their sexuality. It lumps homosexual activities alongside rape and child abuse as a threat to society. In actual fact **heterosexual** men are responsible for 96% of reported child sexual abuse, much of which takes place in the traditional (heterosexual) family framework. Including homosexual acts in this Bill is an attack on everyone's right to free sexual expression. This comes hot on the heels of Paragraph 16 of the fostering guidelines of the Children's Act (1990) which aims to exclude lesbians and gay men from fostering children. Again this is an attack on lesbians and gay men and their right to live their lives as fully as they desire.

CAPITALISM AND POWER

We all know that these attacks derive their strength from a society built on the power of one race over another, one sex over another, one form of sexuality over another and one class over another.

Capitalism uses such prejudice and bigotry to keep people divided and the power of one class over us intact. This is enforced by institutions and culture at every level. So-called family values, much encouraged by the capitalist press, mean conforming to rigid sex roles hampering our ability to discover and grow into our natural selves, thereby fuelling sexism, racism and homophobia.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

Anarcho-syndicalists believe in a society without the domination of one class over the vast majority of the population, a society in which men and women can develop to their full potential. The Direct Action Movement is the British Section of the International Workers' Association, the Anarcho-syndicalist International. We firmly believe that to change society for the better we must organise to end economic domination by the ruling class and it is in the workplace, where capitalism needs us most, that this struggle must begin.

To this end the DAM-IWA has established Industrial Networks based on the principles of anarcho-syndicalism. These are the first step towards the creation of revolutionary Unions. Networks already exist in Education, Health, Transport and Local Government. Networks and revolutionary Unions are not merely concerned with economic power. We firmly believe that Networks and revolutionary Unions have a political role to play not least in combatting reactionary ideas within the working class, such as homophobia, sexism and racism, which serve to keep us divided and weak.

Produced by Manchester Direct Action Movement-International Workers' Association.

For more information contact:

DAM-IWA

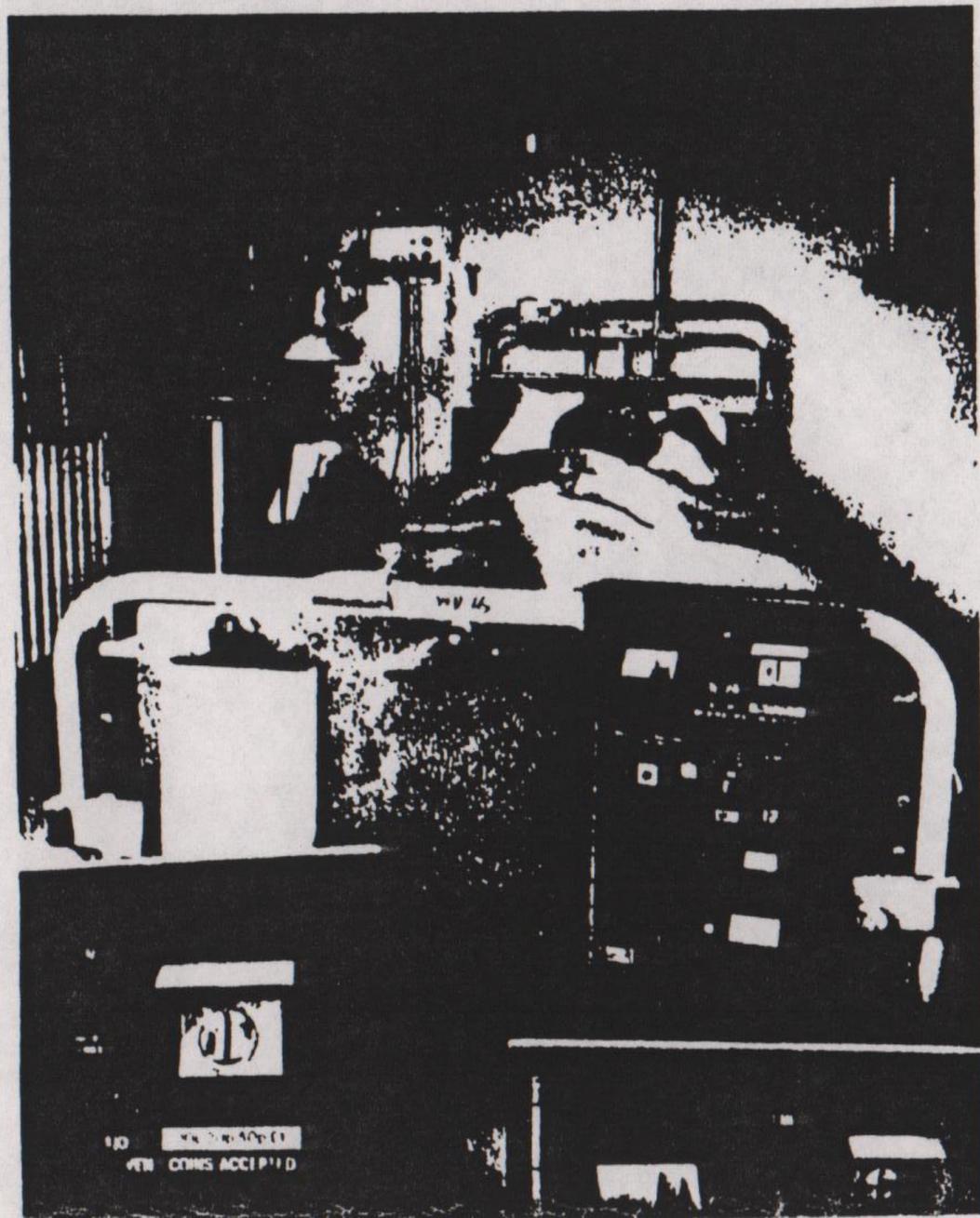
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Manchester M15 5HW

NHS trusts: what do they mean for you?

NHS
meant
priority at
the expense of
other services.
Opting out
means that
the health
service will
be run for
profit rather
than for the
benefit of
patients.



As part of the government changes to the NHS, hospitals and other units can opt out of local health authority control to become NHS trusts. 57 NHS units became trusts on 1 April this year in the so-called "first wave" of applications. Now your unit has put in an application to become a trust from April 1992. What will this mean for the service and for you as an NHS employee?

Fragmenting the service: avoiding the issue

Opting out will lead to the fragmentation of the health service. Trusts, which will be run by a board of directors, will be outside of local health authority control. As they have to make a profit, trusts will be competing for work and, so, increasingly concentrate on "profitable" services rather than attempt to meet local health needs. NHS trusts are a dogmatic and irrelevant answer to the real needs facing the NHS: extra resources and policies to prevent illness.

Losing national pay and conditions

When the unit you work in opts out, the new trust becomes your employer. Although you will transfer on your existing contract trusts have the power to employ staff on "such terms and conditions as they think fit". You could end up with a new contract and your pay and conditions set locally. Whilst some staff may benefit, this is going to be at the expense of other groups. Any short-term gain is going to be paid for by a long-term loss in overall pay and conditions. As trusts have to make a profit, the pressure will be on to keep pay as low as possible.

Already there are examples of staff losing out as they move away from the protection of nationally negotiated pay and conditions. Guy's and Lewisham Trust are axing 600 jobs, Bradford Hospitals Trust a further 300 jobs. In the Lincolnshire Ambulance Service new non-emergency staff have had their pay cut by almost 29% — a cut of £2400 to £6200. At Manchester's Christie Hospital management have said they won't recognise a regrading agreed last year for medical secretaries. No

hint of this was given in last year's consultation

Local representation

Trusts do not have to recognise your trade union. Some trusts want only to allow unions to represent staff on individual cases but not to negotiate about pay rises or conditions

What can be done?

There will be a three month consultation period on each opt out proposal. Make sure your voice, as a member of the NHS staff and a user of the service, is heard. Join in your local campaign and send your views to the regional health authority who are responsible for carrying out consultation

COHSE, NALGO, NUPE: working together

COHSE, NALGO and NUPE have long been campaigning to protect the NHS and improve NHS employees' pay and conditions. Together we are a force to be reckoned with in the NHS. We will be working together in the campaign against opting out for the sake of patients, staff and the NHS.

Throw out opt out

COHSE NALGO NUPE
working
together

design Peter Browne photography Michael Bennett styling Stephen

Many millions of pounds are owed to health service staff. The existence of National Health Service Injury Benefits - payable to all NHS workers whose earnings fall (either temporarily or permanently) as a result of an occupational accident or disease - is the NHS's best kept secret.

The NHS's best kept secret

Kay Morton-NHS nurse

Kay was 38 years old when she injured her back at Sheffield's Lodge Moor Hospital. 'It was 14 March 1988. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a patient falling from a chair. I twisted the upper part of my body and managed to catch her in mid-air.' Kay immediately felt a searing pain. 'I screamed like a stuck pig. A pain like a red hot poker shot up my back and into my head. Later I found out that two discs had burst. I paid privately to see a specialist because the NHS waiting list was a year and the pain was so great. The idea of going private disgusted me but what could I do?'

The specialist says that Kay's nursing days are over. 'First they dropped my wages and then they stopped them completely. No one ever mentioned that the NHS Injury Benefits Scheme should have been making up my lost wages - all I received was DSS Invalidity Benefit.'

In October 1990 Kay met a worker from Sheffield Occupational Health Project in her GP's waiting room. 'If I hadn't met him I would have received nothing. Now I'm on 85% of what I received before the accident.'

Mary Doyal - NHS Kitchen assistant

Mary is employed across the city, at the Northern General Hospital. She has severe, disfiguring dermatitis caused by an allergic reaction to cobalt and nickel chemicals that dissolve out of the stainless steel surfaces found everywhere in hospital kitchens. Stainless steel dermatitis is one of the most common work related diseases, yet Mary was never told and never received any health and safety training. '26 years old and hands like this It

embarrasses you. My skin is scaly and very sore. It's just like raw flesh. Once my hands were so bad I sat down and cried. I told the boss and he said "It's alright. My wife's hands were like that and it went after seven years." He sent me back to cook chill - I was rolling pastry but my hands were blistered and I could feel the blisters bursting.' Like Kay, Mary went months on reduced pay. She now receives NHS Injury Benefit.

HOW MANY?

Nobody knows how many health service workers have to retire each year because of work related health problems, although the total will run into thousands. 10% of all trained nurses, for example, leave the NHS every year. One survey concluded that 40% of these - or 20,000 annually - did so because of back pain or injury. Neither the Department of Social Security nor the Department of Health could provide figures on the number of NHS employees receiving temporary NHS injury benefit. The Department of Health (which administers the scheme after a worker has been finished due to work related ill-health) receives over 1,000 applications for the permanent benefit every year, but can't say how many of these are approved.

Kay Morton has some sobering advice for prospective health workers. 'Don't ever go into the bloody health service - it is the most uncaring employer to its own. Ask any nurse - once you get beyond ward level they don't give a monkeys. If they've got two nurses to do ten nurses' work then they don't care. But if a patient is dropped and you were lifting on your own, then god help you. It's catch 22

'You devote your life to nursing and what do you get? Nothing.'

DON'T LET MANAGEMENT FINISH YOU BECAUSE OF WORK-RELATED ILL-HEALTH

Do everything possible to avoid finishing work (or being finished) because of work related ill-health. If you can't do your regular job anymore, there are probably others you could take on. The union should fight for your redeployment within the NHS or restructuring of your old job - this may entail retraining, working shorter hours, or negotiating aids or adaptations. If your wages drop, the NHS benefit can make up some of the shortfall. Once management get you off the books, your injury may make it difficult for you to get work elsewhere. And while you have a paper entitlement to NHS Injury Benefit if you stop work, the Department of Health is very reluctant to pay up at all.

THE NHS INJURY BENEFITS SCHEME Who can claim?

All NHS employees, whether or not they pay into the superannuation scheme. Eligibility starts on day one of a worker's employment. To claim you have to have been:

- injured at work
- or have contracted a disease because of your NHS employment and this results in your earning ability being permanently reduced (you have to pack in work or take a lower paid job),
- or you are on sick leave as a result of the work injury or sickness and receiving a reduced level of pay or you die as a result of the injury or disease (payable to 'widows and certain dependants')

WHAT CAN YOU CLAIM?

If earning ability is permanently reduced:

- 1) a lifetime guaranteed income
- 2) a lump sum of up to 50% of one year's pay (if you have to finish)

If on sick leave with reduced pay:

Tops up any wages and benefits to 85% of your previous pay

HOW TO CLAIM

Go through the employing authority superannuation division

You or your union rep need to make sure that:

- you report the injury/disease to both your union and your supervisor, telling them that your ill-health is caused by your job;
- if you've had an accident at work, see that it's recorded in the accident book (if possible countersigned by witnesses), keep a record of it yourself, or get your union branch to keep an accident book as well;
- management have been told by your supervisor that you're not just off sick, but off with a work-related health problem.

INFORMATION

- 1) National Health Service Injury Benefits Scheme Leaflet SB1B
- 2) NHS pension scheme A guide booklet. Both available free from Dept of Health, Health Services Superannuation Branch, Hesketh House, 200/220 Broadway, Fleetwood, Lancs, FY7 8LG tel: 0253 856123
- 3) Injured at work. COHSE legal services Glen House, High Street Banstead, Surrey
- 4) Nurses at risk, A Guide to Health and Safety at Work Heinemann, Nursing £7.95 (not much on benefits good on hazards)
- 5) Hazards in the Health Service GME Thorne House Ruxley Ridge Claygate, Esher, Surrey £8.00. free to members. Excellent TU guide to hazards in the NHS