

let us organise towards a society that is based on mutual aid and solidarity, a society without bosses, government and exploiters. No more empty houses and homeless people. No more food mountains and starvation. No more division of humanity by lines on a map and no more wars.

This is anarchist-communism, and this is our ultimate aim.

## DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

In March 1979, a number of class-struggle anarchists (including members of the Syndicalist Workers Federation) came together to form the Direct Action Movement. DAM is an anarcho-syndicalist organisation affiliated to the IWA and has established a network of local groups. DAM members are active in the unions, in unemployed groups, womens groups, squatting groups etc.

### International Workers Association

The International Workers Association IWA, better known by its French and Spanish initials as the AIT, was founded in Berlin in December 1922. The IWA is the anarcho-syndicalist international, uniting workers world-wide. Today the IWA has sections in 15 countries.

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# WHAT IS

# ANARCHO —

# SYNDICALISM ?

Obviously there are two components to the ideology: anarchism and syndicalism. We are anarchists who see syndicalism as an effective means of action to bring about a free, Stateless, classless and equalitarian society. I will now define the two components seperately:

## ANARCHISM

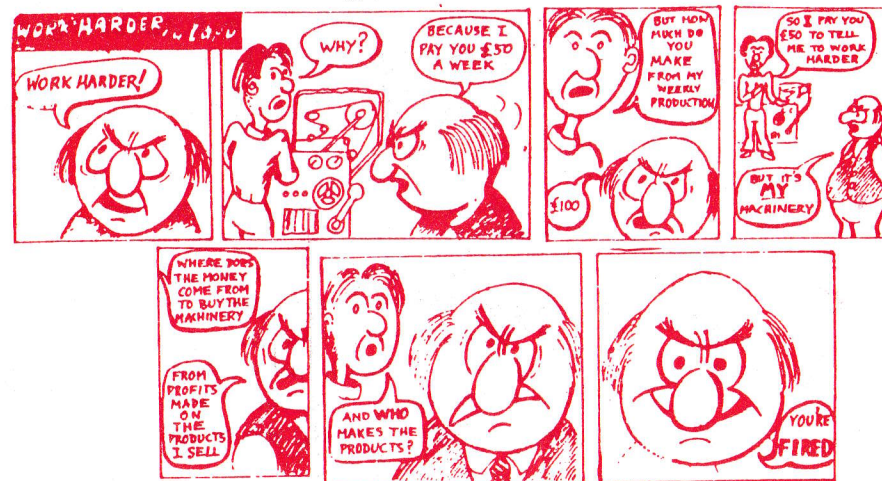
Anarchism is the political ideology that advocates that society should be organised without constituted authority, without government or rulers. It does not mean chaos, disorder, bombs, murder and robbery. That's what governments are all about. Nor does it mean a return to the Wild. Anarchists seek a form of social life in which nobody is in a position to oppress or exploit anyone else, and in which all the means to achieve maximum material and intellectual development are available to everyone equally. Order in such a society being obtained by free agreements concluded between various individuals, groups and organisations, geographical and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being.

Before this can be realised it is necessary that the means of production and distribution must be under direct, democratic workers' control. No longer owned by capitalists or State who run things in order to make profit to enrich the ruling class, but owned by society as a whole, collectively managed by the workers with production and distribution geared directly to the needs of society.

Obviously it is necessary to abolish the State and ensure that a new State does not take its place. This is because the State, whether it be a "Bourgeois State" or a so-called "Workers State" is the ultimate embodiment of coercive authority, the function of which is to control society to the advantage of a privileged minority - the ruling class.

## EXPLOITATION

Capitalism, which is the exploitation of workers by bosses by means of the accumulation of capital, can only be destroyed when the working class itself takes control of society in industry and the community. State ownership of the means of production and distribution (nationalisation) is no solution, it just means one set of bosses are replaced by another. You only have to look at the State-Capitalist (so-called Communist) countries to see that state ownership is just as exploitative as private ownership and offers nothing for the working class. In Britain we are well aware of how workers are treated in nationalised industries. Nothing short of workers self-management will do and the sooner this is brought about the better.



## LENINIST TYRANNY

The problem is how to achieve this revolutionary aim. The Marxist-Leninist left are always telling us to place our faith in the revolutionary vanguardist party that will seize State power on our behalf. They must think we are stupid, why should we let them become our new rulers? Once in power they will start implementing their policies of complete State ownership (and therefore control), centralisation, regimentation and militarisation of labour, individual management by party bureaucrats (as opposed to collective management by the workers), introduction of a secret police force etc. Any talk of workers self-management or freedom will be dismissed as "petit-bourgeois mentality". We need to guard against this kind of thing happening; the formation of the new State is the counter-revolution.

As the aim of any political party is the conquest of power, then it is hardly surprising that, as anarchists, we are totally opposed to forming our own party. We wish neither to govern nor be governed, we want to destroy political power not seize it. So obviously we reject the idea of political parties as being tools to bring about an anarchist society.

## ORGANISATION

Although we reject political parties that does not mean we reject the need to organise towards social transformation. We feel that a successful revolution requires a great deal of organisation and preparation. Spontaneous revolt is not good enough, we need to be pre-

pared for the constructive process of reorganising society. Unless we, the working class, are well organised and prepared for the running and collective management of society as a whole, then what will happen is that the largest "revolutionary" (Trot?) party will take control, that is if the revolution has not been destroyed by reactionary forces. This is where the relevance of syndicalism comes in.

## SYNDICALISM

Syndicalism, originally used by the French as meaning trade-unionism, is a form of revolutionary industrial unionism. It differs from ordinary trade-unionism in many ways. For a start it is organised by industry rather than by trade, so unlike trade unionism it cuts across the barriers of trade sectionalism, thereby helping to unite all the workers in a given industry. Syndicalism also differs in that it aims not only at the gaining of improvements within capitalism (in terms of wages and conditions), but also at the overthrow of capitalism by a social revolution based on the economic direct action of the workers. This is not to say that it ignores the day-to-day struggle, but its members recognise that only by a complete destruction of the idea of private property (ie by capitalists or the State) and authority can justice and security ever be attained by the working class.

Syndicalism also differs in its method of organisation. The ordinary trade union follows the pattern of governmental society in that it has a centralised form, with authority at the top and a permanent bureaucracy who, like any other bureaucracy, rapidly gain privilege and power and rise into a class with an economic position considerably higher than that of the workers who pay



A MORE REALISTIC WAY TO ORGANISE  
SOCIETY?

them and whom they are supposed to represent. In fact, ordinary reformist trade unionism serves the interests of the ruling class more than it does the working class. This is because it contains and dilutes working class militancy and always seeks to compromise with the bosses.

The syndicate, on the other hand, is based on the organisation of the workers by industry at the place of work. The syndicate serves to coordinate the actions of workers in different work-places. It has a federal organisational structure with no permanent bureaucracy and the few unpaid and voluntary officials are chosen on a short term basis, have no privileges that raise their standard of living above that of other workers, are subject to immediate recall and wield no authority of any kind.

## WORKERS CONTROL

The central principle of syndicalist organisations is that workers organisations must be controlled by workers and organised from the bottom up - workers control, not controlled workers. The syndicalist attitude towards leadership is not that we should have better and stronger (more left wing?) leaders, but that all workers should be politically conscious of their goal, and be prepared to take direct action to achieve it. Only a movement controlled by the working class can lead to a society that is controlled by the workers themselves. We do not need union leaders; they have their own interests to look after - increasing their own power and privilege.

Syndicalists reject the use of parliament and all political parties and instead recognise that we, as a class, must start relying on our own

collective strength through the use of direct action.

## GENERAL STRIKE

By organising industrially the workers will be building a new society within the shell of the old. Syndicalism aims at effective industrial organisation so as to enable workers to manage the industrial system themselves once they have seized it. The revolution would be initiated by the social general strike which would cripple capitalism and signal a complete break with the old political /economic system. The syndicates would then co-ordinate the process of expropriation, ie the takeover of the workplaces by the workers. They would then play a vital role in the coordination of industries, transport and services and then the restructuring of society in accordance with anarchist principles.

Some people have described syndicalism as the industrial manifestation of anarchism, but as ANARCHO-syndicalists we emphasise the revolutionary aspirations of anarchism and we would like to stress that we are not interested solely in industrial struggles, but all other struggles that are necessary to achieve a truly free and equalitarian society. Therefore we oppose racism, sexism, nationalism, militarism and all other attitudes and practices that stand in the way of equality and serve the interests of the ruling class by keeping us divided.

We aim at the common ownership and democratic control of the means of life by, and in the interests of the whole community, abolition of the wage system and class system and in its place the organisation of work on the basis of "from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs". So