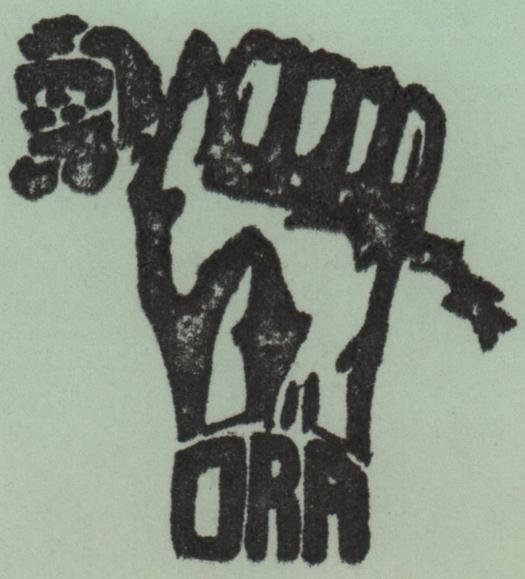




An Introduction to  
**revolutionary  
anarchism** by  
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The Libertarian Case

" The "free" world is not free; the "communist" world is not communist; we reject both; one is becoming totalitarian; the other is already so.

Their current power struggle leads inexorably to nuclear war & the probable destruction of the human race.

We charge that both systems engender servitude. Pseudo-freedom based on economic slavery is no better than pseudo-freedom based on political slavery.

The monopoly of power which is the state must be eliminated. Government itself, as well as its underlying institutions, perpetuates war, oppression, corruption, exploitation and misery.

We advocate a world-wide society of communities and councils based on co-operation and free agreement from the bottom (federalism) instead of coercion and domination from the top (centralism). Regimentation of people must be replaced by regulation of things.

Freedom without socialism is chaotic, but socialism without freedom is despotic. Libertarianism is free socialism. "

("What we stand for" - the statement of the New York Libertarian League.)

Nuclear and other wars of mass destruction put a question mark over the survival of the world and mankind. Therefore it is a mark of wisdom in man to consider if there be no cure.

Pollution of our environment puts a question mark over the survival of mankind as of other animal and vegetable species on Earth; therefore, again, it is a mark of wisdom in mankind to consider if there be no cure.

To consider the cure, one must consider the ailment; it therefore behoves mankind to consider why it is in the position in which it now is. Even more does it behove those who already have considered this, and think that they have found at least a partial answer, to share their theories with others and do their best to persuade their fellows to consider together and to act together.

It is therefore in no sense of elitist lecturing, in no sense that we "the enlightened" set out to teach lesser breeds without the law; that the Organization of Revolutionary Anarchists sets forth these principles and sets out to persuade others of their importance.

Nor do we suppose that we know everything of value & that we have nothing to learn from others. We are certain, however, that this statement contains much that is of value & has insights without which noone will get to the basis of the trouble or of the cure. That the interaction of ideas such as will be found herein, with other suggested meliorative policies can do nothing but benefit mankind, and such benefit is essential to survival.

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The "free" world is not free.

Look around you, those of you, who like ourselves, live in the West, you live do you

not in a society that pays lip service to freedom & the need to combat authoritarianism in other systems. Do you see no hindrances to that freedom in our own system?

Look around you, do you not see that files are kept on dissenters - militant workers, student rebels, opponents of racism, protestors at Ministry of Social Security treatment - in the name of preventing subversion? Do you not see that minorities - immigrants, hippies, Ulster Catholics, gypsies - are persecuted and integration refused to them? While others are forced against their will to assimilate totally, losing all elements of their native culture?

Do you not see the workers' freedom to fight for better conditions curtailed? do you not see the press owned by the great interests of financial power, & used to malign all who question the system? do you not see that press suppressing news?

Do you not see all sorts of issues settled by Ministerial diktat? with no attempt to consult the mass of the people affected; do you not see politicians elected on the basis of one set of promises, and turning round and pursuing policies directly contrary to them?

Do you not see governments keeping secrets from people under the guise of security (though often long after it has been known to be known to the presumed potential "enemy") and thereby preventing their subjects making informed decisions on a number of issues?

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The "communist" world is not communist.

And you who live in Soviet Russia, in China, in Cuba, in the satellites of Eastern Europe; what of your situation?

Has money been abolished in your countries? - No; the differentials between rich and poor in most of your countries are even wider than here in the West.

Have the workers control? - direct, full control? management and power to run industries in your countries. No, the worker is not even able to form free trade unions, such as exist here in the West.

Does each man get according to his needs? - and get according to his ability? No, Is production only for use and not for profit? No, again. Indeed Marx's dicta on these have been specifically changed in the Soviet Constitution, - so as to give the right of inheritance, and so as to say from "each according to his ability, to each according to his work" - a definition of capitalism.

Have capitalists been abolished in the "socialist" states? - indeed have private capitalists so been? No, their existence is guaranteed by the Chinese and Cuban states; in the former there was an organization called "millionaires for communism"; - the programme of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front guarantees the rights private capitalists to remain under any regime they may succeed in forming; and in North Vietnam at least there are now more class divisions than there were before the coming of communism. Reports tell of the reappearance of private capitalists & merchants in Russia.

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Economic freedom & servitude.

If one man has the power to deprive another of his livelihood how can it be said that both are free, and equal before the law? How can it be said that they both have equal democratic and constitutional rights?

If a man has to work for another in order to live, and has no control over his work, what he produces, why he produces it, how can he be said to be an whole man? If he spends his day putting the same screw into the same whole of an endless stream of products, how can his work be said to be ennobling?

If it is worthwhile to produce shoddy goods - goods that will fall to pieces, so that the buyers will have to buy another next year, next week or whenever, and yet another soon thereafter - how can it be said that the production benefits mankind? But goods are so made, to maximize profits, when it is known that with the expenditure of little more effort now things could be produced to work better and last longer, to be more pleasing to the eye as to other senses; and when a firm has a reputation for meticulousness it is financially not viable.

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Their current power struggle.

If men are driven to enslave the peoples of other lands in the interests of gaining new markets, or new raw materials, is the material product that this enslavement may bring worthwhile? If this drive results in wars between rival exploiters is this worthwhile?

Look around you. You, - Man of the East and "communist" world, as well as Man of the West and "free" world - do you not see some if not all of this happening in your world? Do you not see the rush to arm? Do you not see the reckless pollution of the atmosphere, the land and the sea?

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Political freedom and servitude

Many men prate of freedom who are the last to grant it; Powell and his ilk talk of free enterprise, by which they mean the untrammelled right of the man with money to impose his will on those without.

Men talk of national freedom, and use this belief as an excuse to deprive others of citizenship. Here in Britain, men who for centuries have been subject to Britain, and whose labour has benefitted the British standard of living, are now debarred from coming here to share in that standard. In all countries in the name of national freedom men are conscripted into armies, where they lose their freedom, frequently their lives, and are conditioned to become common killers.

Men talk of the freedom of the press, - by which they mean the right of men with money to buy large printing works, launch papers, seek adverts from other men with money & run their papers in the interests of that class which has the money; - maligning all who dare resist those same monied men, whether at their places of work or elsewhere, by demonstrations on the streets, or even merely by petition, whether their protests have effect or no; - and to add hypocrisy or hypocrisy, when workers on such papers refuse to print the more nauseous lies, this is said to infringe the liberty of the press.

Look around you. You, man of the East and "communist" world, and You, man of the West and "free" world; do you not see, some, if not all of these, happen on your doorstep?

can a man whose livelihood depends on the whim of another, safely and openly defy that other when it comes to a political decision? Does not political freedom depend in part - in large part - on economic freedom?

can a man, who dare not join a party, trade union or any other group

of workers, with common aims, hope to be able to join those other workers in control of industry; until he can first win political freedom how can he attain economic freedom?

### The Third World

Unhappily the third world - as it is called is not third in the sense of being run on a system opposed to the other two. It is not opposed to or contrasted with them, but a compromise, a mixture, or melange of where they differ. And as at all their worst points the two major systems are all too alike, the third world shares these.

Uneasy compromises they may be in some ways, but like the first two the power of rulers is entrenched, freedoms both political and economic are withheld wherever these conflict with such power and allowed wherever it does not matter.

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### The Monopoly of power - its underlying institutions

We do not need now to labour the point that there is a basic class difference between those who own and control capital, those who manage industry & the civil service, those who give orders on the one hand and those - on the other - who do none of these things and are forced to work for a living; we are not particularly interested in arguing about the precise term which is best suited to this, in the jargon, in to what extent the capitalism that was described an hundred years ago by Marx survives or has been replaced by a new exploiting system; we know of a variety of good analyses of the situation, and some that though not particularly good, nevertheless have worthwhile insights.

We do however feel there is a need to insist that the fact that personal ownership of property is not the dominant system in the "communist" world does not mean that there is a classless society there; and the fact that it is alleged to be the dominant system here does not mean that there is any fundamental difference between the way our society is evolving and the way the communist one is.

But if one says there is no classless society in the soviet union, - as we do, - & - since Russia is palpably not what Marx described as capitalist and existing in his day - that it is a new form of exploitative society; then it follows that a new class system has arisen from the breakdown of capitalism and that socialism did not and will not automatically replace capitalism.

(Saying this we must mention - what appears to us - as a want of seriousness in the theory, still trotted out by Trotskyists, that Russia still remains a transitional system. Of course anyone with any knowledge of historical development is aware that all societies change, and are therefore in a sense transitional; but since the term is not used as mere tautology, it is to be assumed that when Trotsky used it he meant that it was transitional in a sense that capitalism is not transitional. Lenin described Russia, over fifty years ago, as being a "workers' dominated capitalist system, in transition to socialism, but with bureaucratic deformations" Such a length of transitional time is impermissible in serious analysis; Trotsky both in the Revolution Betrayed and - more definitely - in his Testament - "The USSR in War" stated that his theory should be adjudged correct if it stood the test of time and judged wrong if it did not, and in the latter he specified the necessary span of time, suggesting in the former it was a matter of a generation & specifying in the latter at the end of the war "now beginning." Trotsky posited a serious theory - one we believe to have been wrong - but one which he treated seriously and argued intelligently, his "disciples" persist in putting it long after his widow accepted that it was untenable.)

Government itself ... perpetuates war

" War is the health of the State "  
(Randolph Bourne.)

It does not strike us that any of the names produced for the class system, - state capitalism, bureaucratic collectivism, managerialism, new or managed capitalism, the dictatorship of the salariat, - is entirely satisfactory. Equally the semantic battle does not strike us as important, for we do not see that there is any necessary conflict, and since people holding each of these terms to be correct have coupled them to differing analyses, varying as much between those of the same name as those with different.

On the other hand it does strike us as important to say not only that there is a class society, with class divisions in every country of the world, and that for want of a better term its more economically developed forms may be described as one of the foregoing, or some such similar description; but that also the common factor in all these analyses is the greatly magnified role of the state in class exploitation vis a vis the society described by Karl Marx.

This reminds us that any of those who mouth slogans they believe to be derived from Marx, who have actually read that philosopher, will know two things;- (a) that it is most unMarxian to believe that an economic system and the class superstructure it upholds can survive intact and unmodified through all the technological innovations since his day, - he died before the conveyor belt, the car or wireless were invented - (b) that there are vast differences between the exploitative system of today and that he described.

Obviously we have not got a classless society. Obviously too the same industrial techniques and processes that have been pioneered in the East have been introduced in the West, and there is the same move to incorporate trade unions into the state machine as was found in both stalinism and fascism. Just as Lenin was not ashamed to borrow the last refinements of bourgeois cruelty for the benefit of his system, British defenders of capitalism, in order allegedly to stamp out communism in industry, are not ashamed to borrow from Soviet legislation on strikes.

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What is important is that the difference between "communist" & the "free" (or openly capitalist) systems is narrower than either would like to pretend.

is that whereas in Marx's day the state was relatively unimportant - a referee holding the ring, while the major contenders (rival capitalists) fought, - an executive committee putting into effect the decisions of a wider governing body, the capitalist class as a whole; - it has now become a major factor, it is now central to all decision making and the motivating factor in decision implementing and in much allegedly private capitalist exploitation.

This means that whereas in Marx's day there was a tenable case for believing there could be such a thing as a workers' state - however ill this accorded with Marx's own dicta, that all states reflect the class divisions within society, and that no ruling class has ever willingly given up power and that no government is possible unless it can find roots in the economic process - there is not now. Nowadays it is obvious, that since the state is central to the class system the one cannot be abolished without the other.

Equally war, prison, imperialism, psychological disorder were all (rightly then) seen as inevitable, but somewhat peripheral characteristics of the capitalist system; and by a non-sequitur dismissed therefore as unimportant issues.

Nowadays these factors are accepted as central, in some senses, and in others as at least part and parcel of the general conditioning process whereby people are persuaded to accept the system. Other evils which may well have been worse a hundred years ago - bad housing, authoritarian schooling, discrimination against women and racial minorities, for instance - were nevertheless seen as peripheral to class struggles, associated with the lumpen proletariat - permanently unemployed and unemployable, often through illness - whom Marx despised & against whom he warned as a source of governmental agents. Indeed they were such a source for when a man has lost all including self-respect and all hands are turned against him, he is none too choosy as to how to get a little to eat, and if that involves hitting the workers who despised him, however objectively they may have been his only hope of freedom, he wasn't likely to worry; but as Bakunin showed Marx's blanket dismissal was somewhat lacking in humanity and somewhat dogmatic in denying that such very poor could ever serve the cause of revolution, for history showed him to be wrong.

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In these circumstances there can be no short cuts. No seizure of power by a minority on behalf of the majority; no conscious leadership - leading an unconscious majority, no elitist movement can attain a society of equals & of freedom; - a society where economic and political injustice is abolished; - & it is for this reason that we argue that anarchism is the most relevant of all political philosophies. We do not claim - indeed it would be inconsistent with our anarchism if we did - that we or any other anarchists have all truth, and non-anarchists all error. We do claim that we have a central truth and a number of minor ones which will be essential if men are to make a serious effort to end oppression and preserve the human race.

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society of communities and councils

The anarchist aim is free socialism, the free association of men in cooperative enterprises, where industry and all other aspects of society are controlled by those who work therein or are otherwise most directly involved. Others have called this aim council communism, Marxist Humanism, Libertarian Collectivism; - again the label does not matter, the contents do.

Anarchists believe that only free men can freely cooperate; & that an anarchist society is only possible if the vast majority wants it - not just wants it marginally more than an alternative, which is what happens when people vote, but is prepared to make sacrifices to establish it & afterwards to struggle to preserve it against any attempt to impose a new class system or otherwise corrupt it.

So anarchism basically depends on a conscious act of will by the vast majority, as also on the assertion by each and every individual of the sovereignty of personal freedom.

Anarchism is very conscious that men are brain-washed in our existing society. That because of the irrationality of the system, coupled with the deliberately authoritarian factors and dehumanizing processes in schooling, medicine, conventional psychology; leads people to fear freedom.

Because of the present system's encouragement of competitiveness they tend to equate the healthy aim of looking after number one, with the unhealthy one of doing down all others. They fail to see that it is in the best interests of all to co-operate.

based on cooperation.

Kropotkin showed in Mutual Aid that those species in nature that were best able to cooperate internally survive. Survival of the fittest necessitates that within a species an high level of mutual help is necessary for the species to compete with other species. He showed that far from survival of the fittest dictating personal competition between men, mankind could only survive if adopts a non-competitive ethic. Long before the current wave of interest in ecology he was showing that even competition with other species should be within the limits that they do not damage our own, and this was developed by Heber and Goodman amongst other anarchists in the USA in this century.

Anarchists have from the inception of our philosophy been concerned to learn what insights psychology can give us on the condition of man, on the possibilities of a free society, and the hope of social change. Consequently though they started as Marxists, Freudians like Reich and Fromm have turned to anarchism after finding themselves rejected within the marxist tradition.

Though anarchists do not believe any penal reform - short of penal abolition to be adequate they have nevertheless felt it to be a basic matter compassion to interest themselves in the work of penologists; - which has again for the most part been dismissed as irrelevancy by the Marxists. In the fields of education, women's emancipation & associated forms of community relationships, there have always been anarchists prominently active, but until the last few years these have all been dismissed by Marxists as peripheral and insignificant areas of work.

So it is not possible to say that there is one and only one anarchist means of changing society; though it is possible to say that for most of this century syndicalism (and its near cousins - guild socialism, Council Communism, & De Leonist industrial unionism) has been the predominant form.

#### Syndicalism - classical and modern

In its original form syndicalism (indeed still syndicalism) foresaw the revolution happening by the social general strike, in which instead of the workers coming out of the factories they would stay there taking over the industry and telling the boss his services were no longer required.

(A good measure of the difference between modern and classical syndicalism here is the number of industries which now exist which serve no useful productive purpose, - advertizing's growth for one, and organizations which exist only to service money, whether banking or things like Securicor - workers' control of the making of atom bombs hardly solves the main problem which is not the conditions under which they are made but the fact that they are made at all. Built in obsolescence is an indication of unnecessary production. Anarcho-syndicalists would argue that if workers had reached the level of consciousness necessary to take over society, they would also have the consciousness necessary to insist on the abolition of harmful industries. But it will be clear that this means spelling out points that were left unexpressed in the past.)

So the syndicalist stay-in-strike is pre-eminently a way in which the workers will take over industry to run it in the interests of the community. It presupposes a very high degree of fraternal feeling and social responsibility in the striking workers, but this is common to all anarchist revolutionary theories.

To organize for this - to gain the consciousness necessary, as also the cooperation and feelings of solidarity the syndicalists both now in the past argue for the concept of industrial unionism. But in the past, when trade unions were weaker than now it was possible to think in terms of forming them as rivals

to those that were then the general run. Syndicalists argued for unions based not on craft divisions but on places of work, unions which met in the boss's time and at the place of work - so as to ensure maximum possible attendance, & also that union branch members would have the same problems; rather than meeting on the basis of people's crafts and where they live, - which generally insures that union branch members have little in common.

Syndicalists worked for revolutionary unions based on industry-wide connections; with councils of all the workers in a particular factory - or part of a factory - as the basis, the prime unit. Such unions would not seek sectional interests of particular crafts; industrial unions would be federated to unite the whole working class; and beneath the federation of all workers in an industry there would be other liasons to ensure that all workers working for the same boss were directly linked, - whatever their trades, - united in face of their common enemy.

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Then it was a question of building rival unions as the existing unions were hopelessly reformist and divided on a craft basis. Now partly because of the pressure of those early syndicalists the problem is slightly different.

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Pressure from syndicalists and other advocates of industrial unionism (notably the followers of the American Marxist, Daniel De Leon, whom Lenin was later to call the only man to have added anything of significance to Marx;) caused the formation of the shop stewards' movement and the trades' councils; caused campaigns which converted many of the old unions at least to paying lip service to the industrial union idea, and brought millions of previously unorganized workers into the unions. While in other countries - notably France and the USA the present reformist unions were not only created under industrial unionist pressure but were for significant periods revolutionary industrial unionist movements. (A point which, fairly enough, is instanced by opponents of syndicalism as evidence that there is no guarantee that even the best syndicalist movement will not degenerate.)

Few syndicalists today would believe that the old pattern - greatly though it served the movement in the past, wonderful though the record of much syndicalist struggle has been, - can be by itself sufficient now. This is why syndicalism tends to be an element - the most important element, but nevertheless not the only one - in revolutionary anarchist thinking.

But nevertheless - having made all the necessary qualifications - syndicalists can claim one major point over all other socialists. Syndicalism was grounded in the spontaneous and instinctive desire of workers for unity at their place of work in the face of the boss. Time and again they have formed rank and file movements there, time and again these have been diverted and workers have been told to join this or that party or this or that craft union organized away from his place of work. (At least there was an excuse for the earliest craft unions - formed in the days of the combination acts when unions were illegal, men met together, wherever they could do so safely; formed at a time when industrial processes were being changed to force workers from one job to another they were formed to defend the entrenched priveleges of skilled workers; in changed days their organization had outlived its usefulness.)

Syndicalism reflected the spontaneous actions of large sections of the working class, it combatted corruptions of that activity and it provided the activity with an hope and a theory on the basis of which to transcend pure defensive action and to go on to revolutionary action.

industrial unions.

When anarchists pose the aim of the social general strike, this is an aim, something for which to work - we don't think it will come tomorrow - but we do not underestimate what is involved in that work. For it means that the mass of the working class must want a revolution.

The importance of the industrial unions was in large part just this. With a large measure of justification the early syndicalists held that first the most likely way people would come to anarchism was through their experience in industrial action; and they held that therefore anarchists should work in such a way as encourage that experience. Add to which the industrial unions brought workers into contact with other workers thinking out the same problems and made it easier for them to share their experiences.

Anarchists insisted that such unions should be rigorously libertarian; that all power was concentrated in the rank and file, in groups of all the workers, organized at the point of production; that all liaison committees representing such groups should comprise mandated delegates, subject to recall;

that any official found necessary on a full time basis should be paid the average wage of those he represented, should be appointed only for a limited period of time and not then be eligible for re-election until he had served again in his ordinary work as a rank and file member of the union; (lest even without higher pay they develop their own bureaucratic interests distinct from those of the mass of the membership;

as the unions were based on industry not craft and federated nationally and internationally one did not get divisive inter-union, demarcation disputes, and did not get racism raising its ugly head, where elsewhere it is used as a device to split the workers.

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We have remarked that in those days only a minority of the workers were in any unions; that it was therefore reasonable to set up revolutionary unions in opposition to reformist ones and hope to win the workers to them. Today such dual unions would isolate the most active and militant workers from the mass of their fellows, and syndicalists for the most part are opposed to continuing this policy.

We have said too that in this country both the shop stewards' movement and the trades' councils owed much at their foundation to industrial unionist pressure - whether syndicalist or De Leonist - and this suggests the pattern of future development.

"Suggests" for it would be contrary to the whole ethic of libertarianism to try and push the workers into a preconceived pattern. Spontaneous workers' activity led to the formation of unions and anarchists saw in this an hope and pressed so that the best characteristics of the unions should be emphasized. Similar spontaneous activity created the desire to organize at the point of production and to form shop stewards' committees and other organizations and anarchists (and other industrial unionists) pressed to push this too, with success. We will not attempt to create organizational forms, unnaturally and before the demand comes from the working class; but in the interim we attempt to encourage cross-industry links, and links within different sections of the same industries between militant workers and to render all aid we can to workers in dispute.

For there has always been an argument raised in anarchist and revolutionary marxist circles urging that industrial unionism constitutes a blueprint; that a blueprint puts limits on the freedom of the workers' control syndicalists advocate - for it is obvious that if one said that workers should control industry provided that

in a manner and according to a pattern one has previously determined, one is not in any real sense advocating workers' control.

On the other hand to say that one wants to change society but to give no picture of what that changed society would be like is suspiciously like the careerist politicians with their vote for me, but it is not your business to ask what I am going to do now, if you elect me, you will pay me to make decisions on your behalf, to use my brains so doing, not to implement your decisions.

When anarchists suggest syndicalism both as a means of struggle and as a possible basis for the reorganization of society thereafter, they do not mean that any other pattern is out of the running; they mean that as they can see it, as they can judge from past history, from the records of workers' upsurges - indeed from personal memories of these in many cases - that certain forms of action appear to be instinctive to workers in revolt and to have great possibilities; that it is worth learning from both the mistakes and the successes of the past, and that on the basis of such knowledge they think it will be organized on a syndicalist pattern when the workers again decide to act. If the workers choose some other form of organization, and this is libertarian, obviously anarchists will support it.

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It is this perspective - of a temporary visualization of how anarchism would work - that lies at the basis of the ORA's vision of syndicalism.

It is well to sum up the lessons of the past so as to see their application to the future.

Workers were organized first and foremost at the point of production.

They were organized in councils of all the workers in a factory - (this was before the introduction of the conveyor belt) - or later in such smaller parts of a factory as would allow all workers to take an active part in the decision making meetings. (Today all the workers of a major factor could hardly get into a mass rally, let alone a deliberative and executive committee meeting. So in such a large organization there would be a danger that an "elite" would arise as the ruling committee. By and large no meeting of more than about an hundred allows the full expression of every member's views.)

Workers' councils would federate - a modern factory might well be so large as to need a federation of federations of councils for it to be run by workers - and such federations would in turn federate, with mandated delegates taking to the federal council the decisions of the rank and files, and reporting back on the debates in the federal councils and so getting the final decisions taken at rank and file level always.

All concerns in an industry would be linked as the workers would have similar problems in federations;

All concerns with the same or connected employer would be linked as the workers would have the same boss & the same need to fight him to better their conditions within the existing society and the same desire to expropriate him eventually.

There would be federations of all factory councils in an area, with room for consumer representation, representation from councils of people resident in the area and therefore affected by the factory, and from councils of workers in industries servicing the area and the factories therein.

Such area federations would be duplicated on regional scales, and finally nationally & internationally.

There would be cross-patterning with councils of workers with similar sporting, cultural, philosophic outlooks - which would be represented on area, regional and national federal councils.

All these have happened in the past, though in each syndicalist movement there was its

own particular identity, and therefore as the characteristics varied, so in each one or other aspect of the total syndicalist pattern might be lacking or less stressed.

All officials were elected for short fixed periods.

All were elected subject to recall, and all had to allow a comparable period to that they had held office elapse before standing for re-election.

All were paid the average of the workers they represented.

Syndicalist unions moreover refused to enter into any binding contracts with employers or governments, regarding themselves as being permanently engaged in a class war with the employing class, with whom there might be a truce but never a peace. (This factor of course is gaining a new relevance today and with the Industrial Reform Bill going through it may well be that even reformist unions will resort to this.)

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As we have said in the conditions of Britain it would be folly to set up revolutionary unions in rivalry with the reformist ones.

This would isolate revolutionary workers from the mass membership of the bureaucratic unions.

We do not therefore set out to encourage workers to form breakaway unions, though if the initiative spontaneously arises from amongst the workers themselves we would be against discouraging them - a revolutionary must all the time stand with the most militant and humane workers against the bureaucracy and against injustice; always painting a more revolutionary perspective.

We do however try to encourage and supply liasons between militant workers in differing enterprises, and attempt to aid - with what meagre resources we have - workers in dispute where we come in contact with them.

We do expect that as more and more workers come to revolutionary ideas they will set up new liason organizations within the framework of the existing shop stewards' organization structure - or at times outside that framework - and that they will build these, devote more time to these, so that they become the main focus of activity rather than the bureaucratic trade, craft and general unions - or even the existing so-called industrial unions (which all too often are only industry wide alliances of craft unions united only at permanent official level.)

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Our belief in the social general strike as the pre-eminent revolutionary strategy may make it surprising that at the Fairfield Hall car park, on the TUC March, as on the AUEF and the Liason Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions ones the anarchists present were not among those chanting "General Strike now; get the Tories Out."

Apart from the fact that getting the Tories out, merely to replace them with Labour does not seem to us a worthwhile endeavour; we also do not see any point in courting a repetition of the betrayals of 1926. (Since most of those who were so chanting would call themselves Trotskyists, we would refer them to Trotsky's comments on the C.P. policy towards Purcell and other TU leftist bureaucrats at the time of the "General Strike".)

We cannot insist too strongly that the anarcho-syndicalist conception of the social

general strike is that consciously socialist workers will not come out of their factories, on strike, leaving those factories in the control of the bosses, but will stay in them, will tell the bosses to get lost, will take over the running of such factories as produce goods of benefit to society as an whole, and will convert - what can be converted of what remains into socially-beneficial production and destroy what cannot be used for the good of mankind as an whole, if this is liable to be used to enslave man, or if it is not so liable deliver it to the nearest appropriate museum. (there may well be many factories whose best future purpose is as museums, and there is a gasworks at the end of Whitehall ideally suited to the same purpose.)

This occupation will face the bosses with the prospect that if they send in troops to remove the occupying workers they will be forced in so doing to destroy their own machinery and other plant - perhaps buildings too - and so they will be damaging their own standing as capitalists.

Such a revolutionary general strike would be manifest in many ways other than the purely industrial. There would be determined efforts to subvert the armed forces for quite some time before the strike was finally launched, so that the state's coercive organs would be hampered in all attempts to counter the effects of the strike, there would be squatting on a vastly larger scale than now with the occupation of luxury flats - of things like Buckingham Palace - by people who have no homes and therefore have greater needs than those now with three or four; there would be...

The whole coupled with the formation of workers' councils in the factories to run them - if such councils did not previously exist, linked in industrial unions - and the formations of people's councils in communities to run them and take them out of the hands of the existing bureaucratic and elitist municipal councils.

In other words - we repeat - a general strike is a revolutionary act. And workers who are ready to make a revolution will not aim for such limited demands as getting rid of the Tories, will not be interested in putting Labour into power.

Nor does one call a revolution by passing a motion at a conference, still less by petitioning others to pass such a resolution at a TUC Congress -(however vociferous one's means of petitioning)- so that the top bureaucrats in the TUC launch the strike and lead a revolution. They won't anyway, but even if they were revolutionary they would have enough sense to know that if their membership has only reached the petitioning-motion-passing stage, it isn't ready for the sacrifices involved in a revolution.

When, in 1926, chance pushed the TUC leadership into a "General Strike" -(a general strike which in fact involved less than a quarter of all workers, even allowing for the many who came out contrary to orders, and a general strike which was accompanied by instructions not to sabotage the railways which were carrying strike breakers and troops)- the TUC General Council repented rapidly of even this much half-hearted action, and sold it out after only nine days.

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But then of course it is no accident that those most used to chanting "revolution", have not the slightest concept of what it involves.

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Means are ends in Embryo

One major argument for industrial unionism, culled both from earlier anarchist sources and through De Leon from Marx, was in its early days that every new society is born within the womb of the old and displaces it rather than overthrows it in revolution, and then only when it is ready to emerge and the old society is no longer dynamic.

The industrial unions expressing the class aspirations of the workers in organizational form, the class needs for solidarity in the face of exploitation, were seen as the embryonic form of the society that must negate classical capitalism and displace it. This was over-optimistic perhaps, since classical capitalism was modified here and displaced elsewhere to produce a new exploitative system.

Syndicalism in our present situation similarly has to mirror the aspirations of those who spontaneously have risen in revolt against the present system.

Yesterday: - unions: - (that form of organisation to which the workers came spontaneously, the form of organisation that most adequately mirrored the instinctive groping for solidarity which is inherent in the nature of the working class, & the nature of its conditioning and exploitation). - unions formed the basis of the syndicalist movement, designed as a means of fighting the boss here & now, designed as a means of propaganda for the values of socialism, and designed as the basis for a free and egalitarian society.

- but after the unionism, the most distinctive aspect of syndicalism was direct action, its insistence on Marx's dictum "The self-liberation of the working class is the task of the working class itself" and its consequent refusal to interest itself in any form of power politics, or submit to any "elite" purporting to lead it to revolution and wishing to set up a "workers' state".

Today: - there has been enough change for the two to have reversed precedence; the distinctive factor is direct action, - all sorts of politicians support unionism and even the Tories would like to see what goes for industrial unionism in the TUC become more widespread as it would rationalise their negotiating procedures; all sorts of Leninists and others claim to be ready to lead the workers to socialism, but the distinctive factor of syndicalism is direct action, the insistence that the workers can only free themselves through their own actions, the insistence that the best means of propaganda is through direct action illustrative of our ends.

- Again the direct action is a means of fighting, a means of propaganda, and in that what we want is the direct intervention of workers in the running of their own lives, - it is the basis of the new society.

- (When we say it is the distinctive aspect of syndicalism, we do not of course claim that no one who does not call himself a syndicalist advocates direct action, but that it is fundamental to our philosophy in a way that it is fundamental to no other, & that wherever people use direct action in order to abolish exploitation and oppression of man by man their actions are compatible with ours and whether they know it or not we are allies - at least in this.)

- Unions remain of importance, as direct action was then already of importance, it is just the precedence that has changed.

The argument that the industrial union movement is the new society in embryonic form still applies. It can be seen - (simply from the contrast between the syndic-

alist conception of how unions should be, and the observable facts of how unions are today) - that syndicalism offers a perspective for rank and file organization in industry, within but not of the union framework. Not by position-mongering, trying to get "revolutionaries" elected to positions of power in their unions, (invariably the price for such election is that he keeps quiet about his revolutionary views so as not to lose the confidence of his more conservative members,) not by resolution-mongering in conferences but by building liasons between groups of workers in dispute, recently enough in dispute or soon enough to so be, to have caused them to come together on a militant basis; and to attempt to make those liasons permanent and get those militant workers to see the implications of their own actions and those of the forces that stand against them.

But the stage of building revolutionary unions as such is because of the mass of reformist-union-members at several removes now, and lies only just before the revolution. In the past the aim was to build small revolutionary unions as embryonic revolutions. Now the revolutionary foetus must be formed in other ways; and the revolutionary unions will only emerge in the period immediately preceding the social general strike. The fact that the workers reach the necessary consciousness to abandon reformist unionism and build revolutionary syndicalism - in the sort of numbers that this of necessity would now involve - would of itself mean that the mass of the workers had reached a revolutionary consciousness and were preparing for the final showdown. Therefore since no one deliberately signals his punches in this way, even then the formation of revolutionary unions will not be on the classical pattern.

In such circumstances it is not the industrial union as the embryonic socialist society, whose construction is now on the agenda, but the order of the day is to build a direct actionist movement, on a predominantly anarchist basis, as the foetus of that syndicalism.

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We have said that it is the nature of class society that it changes as the mode of production changes, that it reflects the level of production which maintains at the time - though generally the political ideology of the ruling class and that of the exploited class reflects an earlier mode of production.

For this reason in every age there are different aspects of exploitation which most openly conflict with the more liberal and humane professions of the ruling class, and the readiness to accept exploitation on the part of the workers.

Where workers experience in their daily lives the evils of the system in a way that they are not already conditioned to accept it, have not been convinced in their upbringing that this is a rule of nature, act of god, the way the cookie always crumbles, or whatever, he will be more likely to put up a fight.

So these obvious flaws - contradictions - (which frequently tend to be new aspects of the exploitative system) can easily lead people to look more deeply at the system in general; and because of this they are weak points of the system's conditioning and propaganda processes. At these points the worker is likely to see for himself immediately with but little thought that something is wrong, from this discovery he can easily decide to look more deeply at the system and if approached at his consciousness of these contradictions he is more receptive to radical ideas.

In Marx's day, the major weakness - and a comparatively new one - was the boom-slump cycle. The leopard has by no means changed his spots, but some spots are now more noticeable, and some less.

The major evils, today, of society are apt to be ones of the growth of the threat of war, the vastly greater scale of weapons, the growth of state bureaucracy and managerial power in state and business-executive fields, in the pollution of the enviro-

onment & other such issues which are all part of the changed pattern of class society and all produce a different pattern of contradictions, by which token a different pattern of radical action is needed to challenge it and a different revolutionary organization.

Anarchism is pluralist or it is nothing

It is obvious that a political philosophy that lays the stress that anarchists do on the necessity for freedom for workers to build such co-operative organizations as they feel fit; that pluralism, that diversity of form of organization is of the very essence of the whole movement.

The society we want will allow for enormous diversity, therefore since we believe that means shape ends the organizations that work for such society must reflect that diversity.

It is not therefore possible that anarchism can be attained by a single uniform organization, built on the pattern of political parties; it is essential that there be a number of groupings, - preferably, though not essentially, loosely connected in a larger federation, - working in its own way.

Any group, claiming to have a monopoly of anarchist truth, demanding that all other anarchists be subordinated to it, is by definition diluting its anarchism. But obviously one can only propagate those views in which one believes, - one may describe others, - (indeed I intend to describe some other varieties of anarchist thought later in this pamphlet) but one cannot hope to do justice to their arguments. Even more where particular groups have developed the same philosophy to reach different conclusions, they will not be able to do justice to each other's arguments.

There are other reasons why anarchist organization tends to be dual. Groups wishing to come to gether on the basis of a common interpretation of anarchism, and yet not wishing to sever their contacts with other groups entirely. One has only for instance to envisage the composition of any council of all the workers in a factory, to see that of necessity it would reflect a large divergence of opinion, and that when the mass movement has become revolutionary it will still so do - unless the growth of revolution is of the Stalinist variety, where all workers blindly follow a leadership and do not think for themselves, and that does not in the anarchist book constitute a revolutionary consciousness.

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When the Russian workers formed councils - soviets - they were not limited to revolutionary workers. If they had been, they would not have attracted the mass support they did and would not therefore have been able to make the revolution.

So while consciousness is necessary for a revolution on the part of the workers, paradoxically it is also necessary that the workers' organizations be formed on a basis of only partial consciousness.

The existence of the workers' councils - made up as they were - of reformists, - brought workers together to discuss common problems and thereby made them aware that they had common problems and that therefore they common problems with other members of their class - and by presumption - other members of their class whom they had never met.

One worker may see the need for revolution but if he does not know that other workers

are thinking on similar lines he is apt to hide his beliefs.

Then, since he would not long remain sane, not daring to do anything and yet wanting revolution, he is liable - if only as a psychological means of self-defence - to forget his revolutionary aspirations altogether & dismiss them as youthful & impractical follies.

It is a different matter when he is in daily contact with other workers who because of the objective situation are expressing similar aspirations, then he knows he may live to see revolution, and knowing this is ready to work for it.

One sees the same pattern in the formation of any classical syndicalist movement, the workers who founded them did so because temporary conditions brought them together, they were not all by any means previously revolutionary, and the workers who made up the mass of the early syndicates had previously been influenced by any number of reformist or downright conservative philosophies. Under the impact of events they took an interest in what revolutionary anarchists had to say and then generally combined their own earlier ideas with some parts of the anarchist argument. Thereby incidentally greatly enriching anarchism, as well as producing new converts to it.

The first members of the early French syndicates included Blancists, who long before the Fabians were advocating gradualist and somewhat authoritarian parliamentary measures to bring socialism;

included Blanquiists, who long before Lenin advocated an elite revolutionary party to lead the "benighted" workers to socialism;

included people influenced in his later years by Proudhon, - who though he had been in his earlier years one of the founders of the anarchist movement, in his later ones opposed strikes, called on Louis Napoleon to impose socialism for capitalist reasons, and generally pushed policies that were the antithesis of the earlier Proudhon;

and of course they included several varieties of Marxist, some more and some less opposed to anarchism, but all believing in the necessity to capture the state, whether gradually or suddenly.

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With any embryonic revolutionary movement one must avoid two evils;

- one must not confine the organization to revolutionaries, which merely isolates them, for then that organization by excluding others abrogates the responsibility of converting them;

- the organization must not be so weighed down by reformists that they act as a brake on the activity of the revolutionaries, for this would prevent the experience of the membership developing and their consciousness maturing.

In the case of a purely propagandist movement of course the first does not apply, and the second should be irrelevant. For a propagandist group - that is a group pushing a common revolutionary policy, hoping to win others to it, (but while Leninists envisage revolutions coming about through the almost uncomprehending support mass action would give to a propagandist elite, no anarchist group thinks in such terms)- has to do a quite different job, and in no sense duplicates the role of a mass revolutionary organization.

However, of course, a propagandist group that is totally isolated is not doing anything and so a propagandist group has to seek a milieu wherein it can work effectively. Which can neither be a milieu too small to allow them to reach new potential converts nor too largely reformist wherein a bureaucracy has arisen

and is able to force out of the movement all honest militants and which hopes that it, the bureaucracy, or its allies, will form the basis of a new government-  
alist elite.

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So for purely syndicalist reasons I must hear enumerate various other forms of anarchism. I may believe these to be relevant only in particular ways, but by definition no one person can appreciate the importance that others may find in a particular philosophy, and so the relevance of non-syndicalist anarchist writers must be even from an anarcho-syndicalist viewpoint greater than any one anarcho-syndicalist appreciates.

Any anarchistic critique of the state and society as it exists must if properly propagated add to the awareness of the hearer that society needs change, must add to the likelihood that they will inquire on their own behalf and think of the necessary change.

So the fact that long before women's liberation, long indeed before the suffragettes Emma Goldman was fighting with her paper *Mother Earth* for feminine emancipation; (and that she combined a passionate individualism - based on the concepts Ibsen portrays in his *Dr Stockman* (*Enemy of the People*) with involvement in the American labour-battles, centring round the Wobblies, in the early work of the Russian Soviets - after she had been deported from America, and in the Spanish syndicalist fight for workers' control; ) is not relevant only to those who see the women's liberation struggle as all important, but to all those others, who agreeing that it is important nevertheless think it only one aspect of a wider movement.

The fact that before Homer Lane and A.S. Neill had developed their theories and were introducing progressive ideas on education, Sebastien Ferrier had started to pioneer libertarian experimentation in the field again has a wider relevance than that purely of the educational field. For by combatting authoritarian teaching, he combatted the conditioning of Spanish workers and contributed to the growth of syndicalism there.

Tolstói and Thoreau did not only contribute to the teaching of Ghandi, which certainly has its more than authoritarian aspects, but engendered thought on the inevitable link between the state and the military machine and the need for radicals to make a personal stand in many circumstances rather than wait for a mass movement to rally round, for if the personal stand is not taken the argument is not aired, the authorities will once again explain away the issue and the mass movement will never arise.

Stirner's rephrasing of the Benthamite doctrines of enlightened self-interest were designed to show that the really conscious egoist will find its own interests to work for the common good and free socialism; unfortunately all too many people have used Stirner's egoism as an excuse for plain, old-fashioned, unconscious and capitalistic egoism.

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Given that the points of revolt are today different, the youth revolt, women's liberation, disgust with the arms' race, fear of pollution of the environment, - that in industry the revolt is often because of the soul-destroying nature of work, or the authoritarianism of boss or union official rather than in purely economic terms - housing protests, squatters and homeless families, opposition to racialism..... the emergent mass movement will when it crystallizes be very different from the general image of syndicalism, though it is a fallacy to supp-

ose that the early syndicalists did not interest themselves in such issues.

It is therefore with some truth that a member of the *Frei Arbeiter Stimme* (The Jewish language group of mainly Russian exiles which maintained an anarchist tradition in the East End of London for half a century and more) remarked that originally the anarchists had helped in the formation of a mass syndicalist movement and now perhaps it was a case of the syndicalists working for the formation of a large anarchist one.

Traditionally the anarchist group has worked within the syndicalist movement - and it may be that the position will one day be reversed - and this has allowed full scope for the revolutionary message within the wider direct actionist movement.

However there is a danger; and the lesson of Spain shows it to be a real danger, for there the anarchist federation was formed after the syndicalist unions, and formed from the most active members of the latter.

In result its members tended to be people frequently elected to positions within the syndicalist movement and it proceeded to act very much like a Leninist party. Conceiving it to be its duty to stamp out reformist tendencies it started by imposing a revolutionary line on the mass membership and ended by combatting leftist critics of the "leadership"; - the pattern one normally associates with the practice of a Leninist party in a "workers' state".

It is obviously essential to prevent a recurrence of this. An obvious way would be to exclude from membership of the smaller propagandist group all who held elected office in the larger organization of mass struggle, and also all immediately associated with such elected officials.

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Owing to the regrettably long-winded nature of the author, this work, which was intended to be a personal letter has become a pamphlet.

As a letter it was sent to a more or less like minded friend - when the anarchist federation of Britain was discussing drafts for a basic statement - recommending the Libertarian League "What we stand For" (given at the beginning) for this.

That was the first part, and most of the next two; most of the remainder was written separately as an article following the TUC special congress on March 18, (the rest has appeared in another publication,) and it was only when it was near completion that the author thought of putting the two together.

While the latter was being written the friend & other contacts who had intended trying to persuade the anarchist federation of Britain to give more thought to direction and to publish more, decided (partly as the result of an earlier letter-cum-pamphlet from this author,) to launch ORA as a grouping within the AFB.

That explains it and this pamphlet, as this author was asked to rewrite his letter as it. The name ORA perhaps leaves something to be desired, but it is a group within the AFB.