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The
VOICE
of
SYNDICALISM

FOR
ABSOLUTE
DIRECT
WORKERS'
CONTROL

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Today our alleged freedom is being curbed to such an extent by the recent Wage Freeze and the anti Working Class legislation that Unionism in its present form is totally inept of dealing with current Political and Economic tendencies towards the Totalitarian Super State.

The Barons of the Trade Union Movement offer only verbal resistance to the increasing enroachment of Working Class freedom.

The answer we as Syndicalists contend rest not with the concept "We must have more and better leadership", but with the Rank and Filers themselves conscious of their goal and prepared to take direct action to achieve it. For to quote Herbert Read's book 'To Hell with Culture':-

What we Need, we are told every day, is more and better leadership but what this demand involves is a closer and closer approximation to Fascism.

For as Syndicalists we realise that the ability to lead is also the ability to mislead.

As members of the S.W.F. this does not imply that we as individuals are in any way an elite of the Working Class, but the ideas of Syndicalism can enable the worker to determine the direction of his own emancipation.

The corner stone of Syndicalist thought is the belief that any organisation and its administration must be controlled by the Rank and File rather than control them.

There is no easy way, workers can only rely upon themselves, they can only trust what they themselves control, they can only win their demands by their own economic unity and strength. We are but a part of the Working Class and serve only to awaken the Workers consciousness in his own strength inherent as a worker.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

To continue our work we dont want money, we need paper, stencils etc. and above all else ideas. The production team would like to thank all Syndicalists who have already contributed and ask that Comrades submitting further articles for future publication send us the typed stencil to alleviate the pressure of work upon our typists, in accordance with our principle of no personality cult - these articles should not be signed.

This spring let the grass roots sprout.

The address is:-
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DECLARATION OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS
FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

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AIMS AND PRINCIPLES.

Society as at present constituted in Great Britain is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. Land, Factories, Railways, etc.) by the Capitalist or Master Class, and the consequent enslavement of the Working Class, by whose labour wealth is produced.

Therefore in society there is an antagonism of interest manifesting itself in a class struggle, between those who possess and do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

The interests of the working class and the ruling class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found amongst millions of working people and the few who make up the Employing Class have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers throughout the world organise as a class, take possession of the earth and machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.

The Syndicalist Workers Federation is based upon the inevitable day to day struggle of the workers against those who own and control the means of distribution and production and will continue that struggle until common ownership and workers control are achieved.

This antagonism can only be abolished by the emancipation of the Working Class from the domination of the master class. By the conversion of the means of production and distribution into the common property of society the means of production and distribution under direct workers control.

We find the centering of management of Industry into fewer and fewer hands makes the Trade Unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the Employing Class.

The Trade Unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars.

Moreover the Trade Unions aid the Employing Class to mislead the workers into a belief that the working class and the employing class have interests in common.

These conditions can be changed and the interests of the workers upheld only by an organisation formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry or in all industries if necessary cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one the concern of all.

The emancipation of the Working Class must be the work of the workers themselves.

Victory in the fight against class domination can only be achieved by direct action of the workers themselves.

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The Syndicalist Workers Federation of Great Britain rejects all parliamentary and similar activity as deflecting the workers from the class struggle into paths of class collaboration.

Recognising that the machinery of government including the armed forces of the nations exist only to conserve the monopoly by the Capitalist Class of the wealth taken from the workers, and that the State in all its forms is the enemy of the workers and cannot exist in a classless society.

The Syndicalist Workers Federation does not therefore hope to use the State to achieve the emancipation of the Working Class, it does not seek to obtain seats in Senates or Parliaments, nor does it desire to build a new state on the ruins of the old.. Any attempt by allegedly Working Class parties to create a new state can only result in a new ruling class.

Therefore all political parties are rejected as the expression of class interests. The interests of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the Working Class in seeking the emancipation must be hostile to all political parties.

Instead of the Conservative motto "A fair dayswage for a fair days work" we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchwords "Abolition of the wage system".

As in order of social evolution the Working Class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the Working Class of Great Britain will involve the struggle for emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

It is the historic mission of the Working Class to do away with Capitalism. The army of production must be organised, not only for the every day struggle with capitalist society, but to carry on production and distribution when capitalism shall have been overthrown.

By organising Industrially we are forming the framework of the new society within the shell of the old.

To achieve these aims, the workers must organise, they must replace the craft and general trade unions by Syndicalist Industrial Unions.

As a immediate step to that end, the Syndicalist Workers Federation of Great Britain aids the formation of workers committees in all factories, mines, offices, shipyards, mills and other places of work and their development into Industrial Unions controlled from the bottom by the workers themselves. Federated to a National Federation of labour.

The Syndicalist Workers Federation of Great Britain affiliates itself as a section of the International Working Mens Association and pledges itself to stand firm for international working class solidarity.

The syndicalist Workers Federation of Great Britain seeks to establish a free society which will render impossible the growth of a privileged class and the exploitation of man by man.

INDUSTRY — the conversion of the raw stuff of nature into the things mankind wants — is the centre and foundation of our social life. Those who own and control the natural resources of the earth, and the industrial equipment necessary to transform these raw materials into finished products, form the much smaller of the two great classes in modern society.

The workers, who supply the labour which gathers these raw materials, and transforms them into usable goods, are the other, and much larger class. The interest of these two classes are opposed.

The entire social life of modern times is shaped by these facts.

The business, or capitalist class which controls industry is anxious to keep that control and the privileges that go with it. To make that control secure, it seeks to gain or keep control of all social institutions. It wants to write and administer the laws. It wants the schools to teach respect and obedience to the privileged few. It wants the press and movies to shape our thoughts and feelings to serve its interests. If it cannot get rid of the organisations labour has built, it wants to control them too.

These top business men are threatened with the loss of their control by two outstanding facts:

- 1) Modern industrial development has made their activity unnecessary;
- 2) The working class is now able, once it so desires, to take control of industry and thus establish a much more efficient and satisfactory society.

The original job of the capitalist was to furnish funds and management. Today management is the job of a specially trained section of the class of hired hands, and funds are amply provided out of the various reserves taken from profits. The system of the system of industrialized society which has evolved has reached a point of social development which makes the Capitalist superfluous.

The business class have become dominant in society as the result of long struggles against kings and feudal land-owners who ran the world before them. They won—with the help of the common folk who did the fighting—because new inventions, procedures and discoveries had put the feudal regime out of date. The parliamentary bodies that had been created to raise funds for the old order had also established a more efficient system of government and had made kings and lords as obsolete as capitalists are today. The great voyages and discoveries, the improvements in navigation, and the new factory system had all made the ownership of warehouses, ships and equipment more important than the ownership of land. The basis of society had shifted from the farm to the factory, and the control of society had shifted to those who controlled industry.

Revolutionary Progress

For although the conservatives of those days warned that this would be the end of civilisation, it was a great step forward. Whatever of the old order was serviceable to the new was kept and cultivated. What was destroyed was the feudal grab and rule that obstructed progress. Invention and industry flourished as never before. Our ways of producing and living have changed faster in the last 200 years than in the previous two thousand.

Industrial action is the answer.

The original freeze was for a 90 day period and Mr. Heath stated that it would require an entire new act that would go before both houses of parliament before the freeze could be extended beyond this period.

The new bill was presented before the 90 days and the government with its majority easily got it through without serious obstructions, officials of the T.U.C. offering only verbal resistance.

The government has thrown off the velvet glove, Trade Union leaders have rucked but on the whole have offered little or no resistance, resistance has only come from the rank and filers and the act has become law.

We have to face it, only industrial action can blow this lot back into Heath's lap.

One obvious factor is, that if anything at all is going to be done, it will have to be done by the rank and file, looking to leaders never has been and never will be of the slightest use.

Looking back on any gains made by any section of workers, the impetus and struggle has always come from the rank and file. The leadership then takes over and the process of compromise begins; "negotiation" is the official jargon.

Take any industry in which there is any organisation at all, the basic rate negotiated by the union is peanuts, shop floor organisation is responsible for raising earnings and improving conditions and on many occasions it has been despite the official union leadership, not with it.

A wage freeze is the only solution any government can offer when faced with a financial crisis, dont let's be fooled that a "communist" government would act any different. Many Russian workers have known a wage freeze all their lives, the only difference being that for them it was for the Glory of the Fatherland, for us it is to make Britain Great.

The only common-sense way to attack the wage freeze is by industrial action - and not necessarily by a complete withdrawal of labour. Working to rule, any agreements that dont suit break: if it's good enough for leaders to break agreements it's good enough for us.

Remember Wilson and his wage freeze? The organised workers fought like hell, and **they** will have to do it again, maybe piecemeal at first, guerilla tactics, strike here and away, strike there and so on.

Rank and file liaison committees between workers in different industries and unions, must be set up on the basis of the industrial struggle. No doubt many politicians will want to climb on the bandwagon offering leadership. If politicians are allowed to take over the fight, then the fight is lost.

Without getting emotional about the whole affair, the challenge has been made. If it is not taken up seriously, the future for the working people of this country is very bleak indeed.

We cannot say we dont know the score.

STRIKE - AND STRIKE HARD

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Any failure to press home one's advantage at such a moment all too often turns victory into defeat. When time and apathy is all the employer needs, the trade union official says "First start work, then we'll negotiate". A return to work, negotiations month after month, some grow hopeless, some forget and the golden opportunity is lost.

The basis of successful strike action is the rapid concentration and organisation of our strength, the selection of the right moment for action, the throwing of our greatest strength at the weakest point of the enemy's defence, and swift and rapidly increasing action at that weak point. The following through without hesitation until the objective is won. These are the ingredients of success.

The accusation of being "unofficial", which is expected to make us shake in our boots, leaves us cold. There is no virtue in anything merely because it is official. In any case, the workers themselves should decide whether or not to strike—and they should decide what is to be official and what is to be unofficial, if such labels are to have any virtue.

The official business is the trade union boss's trump card, with which he supports his pontifical: "I am the Law" attitude. IT NEEDS DEBUNKING.

Unfortunately, the visiting trade union organiser is usually allowed too big a say at strike meetings. If he is allowed to speak at all—and sometimes we doubt the wisdom of allowing officials to take part in unofficial gatherings—he should not be allowed to direct or dominate the meeting and should be followed by an efficient speaker, capable of putting the strikers' case in a straight-forward manner, cutting through the verbiage of the union-employer agreement lawyers.

Some say our first task in an unofficial strike should be to make it official. Certainly that may be one task. We cannot ignore the possibility of strike benefit and other trade union advantages.

The strike weapon is one of the most important developments of all time. Without it, without the right to withdraw his labour power, man is a slave. It should be obvious to the meanest intelligence that if we lost the right to strike, our employer, State or private, could pay us what he liked. We are certain that would be very little. Without the ability to strike, in one form or another, injustice and indignity would be heaped upon us.

Because the strike weapon is so potent and essential, we must use it with care and thought. It is possible to develop the art of strike action with the least suffering to the workers and the greatest possible damage to the enemy, so that the mere threat of it would wrest immediate gains hitherto undreamed of from them. The indiscreet and too frequent use of strike action, however, would waste our efforts, bring the technique into disrepute and cause our strike power to melt away like a snowman in the sun.

A strike, to be successful, must be on an issue which the working class understand and feel strongly. Such issues are not, of course, limited to wage questions—though they must be the concern of the workers—not of party politics.

Next, the strike should be decided by the will of the workers. Obviously this means a majority of the workers, for no strike has ever had the support of all taking part in it. The support of a good, substantial majority is essential-and they must understand what they are supporting. It is the workers concerned, by ballot or in meeting assembled, not anybody else, even a shop stewards' committee who should decide on strike action. This is not only a good principle of itself, it is sound commonsense, for if a strike does not have the understanding and support of the workers it will fail. They and their families must suffer the privation caused by loss of wages, and, if they do not care for the strike, it will not last long and, in the defeat which follows, the second state is worse than the first.

Thirdly, we must guard against entering a strike frivolously. A strike, to be justified, must have a chance of success. It is for us to study and devise ways of making it successful. So far we have examined three conditions which are necessary to successful strike action: a working class issue; decision by the workers themselves and a serious, thoughtful attitude towards the problem.

To many, a strike means stopping work, leaving the factory and staying away for an indefinite period. It may mean that, of course, but there are other ways too. Practice has developed techniques such as work-to-rule, go-slow and the good-work strike which have not lost a worker one hour of wages, yet have been wonderfully successful when scientifically applied.

Since 1926, more than 90% of strikes have been denounced as "unofficial". Even before 1926, the year of the General Strike, the majority of strikes were so labelled, so our main study must be of this class of dispute.

When workers in a coal mine, factory or bus depot take, of their own will, strike action, the management usually at once sends for a trade union official who, though you may not have seen him for years, addressed you all as brother, denounces your strike action and declares: "We have an agreement with the employers, a sacred agreement, and you are breaking it. Go back to work! We must not break agreements".

The worker on the shop floor alone must decide the conditions under which he will labour.

Industrial direct action is the weapon to be used in the final overthrow of Capitalism for not only shall the army of production be organised for the every day struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organising industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Every factory organised is a fort wrenched from the Capitalists, held and manned by the army of production.



Political action as a method of obtaining control of the machinery of production seems peculiarly unconvincing. Only the most naive of politically-minded revolutionists believe that the ballot or constitutional amendments will induce the Vested Interests to give over control and title to the privately owned machinery of production. It is manifestly absurd to expect the class which has stained the pages of history red in countless labour struggles to give over complete control because the electorate (whom they despise) have seen fit to demand it. The parasite class of Britain can be relied upon not to relinquish their sacrosanct rights to 'property' until they are confronted with a power greater than that which they have at their command. Anything less will be scoffed at.

What is more probable, in the light of past experience, than their capitulation is that the right of suffrage will be revoked or curtailed the moment it threatens to be used for any purpose other than the customary horse-swapping. Even with the menace of the ever-present potential fascist dictatorship removed there is little reason to believe that the rich will ever hand over their property to the poor just because the poor have decided to vote for it.

The programme of armed insurrection is open to as many angles of criticism as that of political action. First of all the workers as a whole are not only unarmed, but they are untrained on the use of arms.

One Nuclear rocket can destroy a city and it is quite unlikely that a city full of armed workers could defend itself against this type of technology. The technique of modern warfare has made the rifle and side-arm and even grenades and machine guns obsolete in the face of Bacterial Warfare and nuclear weapons. The advocacy of armed insurrection is fatally misleading because it induces workers to believe that what was done in a backward country can be duplicated in a thoroughly modern one. In Britain the chances of mobs defeating highly trained troops are anything but even. Then there is the danger of premature revolution precipitated by fanatics or stool-pigeons.

The advocacy of armed insurrection is misleading also because most of its protagonists, being politically minded and politically trained, are more determined to capture State power than to capture the industries. The politician is utterly incapable of thinking in terms of industry. He is incompetent either to control or to direct industrial processes. In a country like Britain—the problem is almost hopelessly complicated. At the worst an attempt at armed uprising would result in a series of unprecedented massacres, at best in an overtowering and very stupid bureaucracy or an equally stupid and far more cruel dictatorship of politicians.

It is far more probable that neither the ballots of the politicians nor the bullets of the insurrectionists will ever have an opportunity to 'get to first base'. With the final struggle impending it is very probable that all weapons save that of economic action will have been taken out of their hands. For this reason it is more necessary for the Working Class to study and prepare itself for the takeover than to trust its fortunes to either ballots or bullets as a sole means of effecting its deliverance from the toils of wage slavery.

LET US KILL THE MYTH

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It is frequently said that the militant Trade Unionist is placing himself above the law and that his action is endangering Democracy; let us be clear on this matter of law; throughout the whole of human history, men have for various reasons struggled against existing law, Sophocles in the Antigone tells how Antigone opposed the law of the Greek City State, risking her life to obey the law of her conscience. In the Middle Ages there are innumerable instances of men and women who oppose laws of either State or Church in order to rid themselves of a social injustice.

In fact the Democracy to which so much lip service is given was born in sedition and every freedom has in the course of history been wrested from the law at that time. In recent times those that put Jews in the gas chambers in Nazi Germany were during their trials condemned in the name of humanity for their passive compliance with the law, their defence was "I was only carrying out orders". So much for the sanctity of law.

The law is nothing more than the instrument of organized force whereby whoever is the ruling power can ensure compliance under threat of punishment with the social policy which they desire to impose upon a people.

Throughout history it has been a moral duty of humane men and women to say 'NO!', to resist even unto death, to such illegal elements in society we are deeply indebted for all that makes life better today than it was for our forebearers.

Law is the enforcement of the interests of the few, done in the name of the many. Democracy is a medium whereby the interests of the many - the people - can be expressed in social life. The two concepts are poles apart.

Certainly law stabilizes a society - Nay, it stagnates it, resisting all progress, before one bows down and pays primitive homage to this Moloch one must first ask what kind of society is this organized force designed to perpetuate in its Status Quo? For it may well be the social duty of every thinking man and woman to disobey the law. Let us be quite clear on this point, the stability of a society which we call social order is identical with the stable growth of a plant or any other living creature; this stability arises from the healthy relationship of its cells not from constrictures to its growth imposed by one group of cells at the expense of the whole organic body. Law and order are anything but the same, the increase in law is directly proportional to the increase in disorder whereas Social order arising from a healthy social body makes organised force superfluous, for men and women do not have to be forced to express their interests once they understand that those interests and society is structured to facilitate their expression.

In a society structured only to permit the expression of the interests of those who rule it, its creativeness can only be expressed if in commercial accordance with the dominant interests, hence its growth is impared and distorted.

Now to return to the charge against the militant Trade Unionist;

The Trade Union movement like our other liberties was born out of sedition, the opposing of the law costing six Dorsetshire labourers transportation to the Australian Penal Colon, the movement arose out of a recognition of the antagonism of interests that exists between employers and employed, those who possess and do not produce and those who produce and do not possess. 10

During the struggles of the Chartist movement in the last century, struggle not for direct action but for universal suffrage, struggle to participate in the parliamentary machine, these Chartists had a chant:-

"The Law locks up the Man or Woman
who steals a goose from off the common,
But leaves the greater thief loose
he who steels the common from the goose."

They were wrong - not that "impartial" law left the greater thief loose, but that law was designed to perpetuate his ability to remain the thief of the common, authorised by the very State institution in which they wanted to have participation, there are two kinds of robbery, legal and illegal.

As Syndicalists we assert "The working class and the Employing Class have nothing in common", that "Their interests are diametrically opposed". To us Capitalism is a system of society based upon robbery under legality, the legal machinery is necessary to protect the conditions under which the Working Class can be robbed of the fruits of their labour.

This being the nature of the State as such, regardless of whether it calls itself National Socialist, Socialist, Workers Democracy or Democracy, as a State it can never in any way function to emancipate the Working Class, it can only change one set of dominators for another set of dominators who will become the new ruling class and thereby empowered to now become the privileged robbers of the workers, living on their labour maybe this time in their name. Alas the position of the worker remains unchanged, except perhaps for the worst, for these new rulers often have learnt their revolutionary tactics well, so as now to be more efficiently oppressive than their forebearers.

..... Cont'd from page 3.

The Syndicalist Workers Federation of Great Britain therefore advocates the establishment of a system of Society based upon the common ownership of the means of production and distribution (i.e. Land, Industry, Etc.) on the basis of voluntary co-operation, for and in the interest of the whole community.

In such a society the wage system, finance and money shall be abolished and goods produced and distributed not for profit but according to human need.

Any major advance by organised labour can be achieved only by escaping from the bonds of the wages system, and that means a radical change in the social order—a change from private to common ownership and the designing of production for men's needs, instead of for their their fluctuating purchasing power.

But it is just here, in the contemplation of an alternative to Capitalism, that the trade union stops dead. Negotiate an extra threepence an hour or question the redundancy of some machinists, yes.... but a new society? That is like asking a fish to move on dry land.

A society such as we desire, based on the economic and emotional needs of all, and not of a ruling class, must have an economic and not a political foundation. As Jim Connolly so often quoted:

"There is not a socialist in the world today who can indicate with any degree of clearness how we can bring about the co-operative commonwealth except along the lines suggested by industrial organisation of the workers.

"Political institutions are not adapted to the administration of the co-operative commonwealth that we are working for. Only the industrial form of organisation offers us even a theoretical constructive socialist programme. There is no constructive socialism except on the industrial field."

Syndicalism, distinct from orthodox trade unionism, regards wage struggles not as principle ends, but as secondary aim and means to a greater end—the abolition of the wages system and the creation of a new society. The organisation of Syndicalism, in industrial unions, is in harmony with this end. The strike strategy of Syndicalism, leading to the social stay-in strike, is true to the ideal of a society of free men.

While its aim in every wage struggle is to win that limited fight, at the same time it uses the struggle to enlighten and raise the confidence and fighting ability of the workers for the greatest struggle of all, when we shall demand, not the half-loaf which is said to be better than no bread, but the whole bakehouse.

So long as labour is a commodity—something for sale on a labour market—subject to a variable economic climate, the worker will remain a slave. Not a slave serving one particular master, but the slave of a master class. At the best of times his living will be determined by his commodity basis and limited by the "cost of living". At the worst, it will sink, in a world of plenty. Atomic power and space travel will still find him trudging the streets seeking work, or sitting by a fireless grate. The worker can become master of his fate only when he has become master of the machine.

But it is obvious that private ownership of the means of production cannot be spread over millions of persons. Private ownership of factories, mines and modern transport systems is possible only for the few. When the many control the means whereby they live, they will do so by abolishing private ownership and establishing common ownership of the means of production, with workers' control of industry.

This is not to be confused with nationalisation and state control, which has been well described as "the government of the people, by the State, in the interest of Capitalism".

Where ownership is, in theory, said to be vested in the people, but control is in the hands of a small class of bureaucrats, as we have seen, common ownership does not exist, but the labour market and wage labour go on, the worker remaining a wage slave to State capitalism.

Common ownership demands common control. This is possible only in a condition of industrial democracy by workers' control. ...Contd.

The framework of the Syndicalist organisations of struggle are easily adaptable to the supreme task of taking over industry, and can evolve into the complex and refined system of control necessary for modern industry.

Miners would control the mines on behalf of society as a whole, textile workers the mills, railmen the railways. the factory would control affairs of that industry in its own area.

What had been the Syndicalist Industrial Unions, the grand army of workers welded together in the struggle against capitalism, would become the Economic Council of Labour - a delegate body to co-ordinate the work of the various economic syndicates.

Production would be for human needs and not for the profit of a few. The wage system would be abolished and, with a rise in techniques, there would come, not the present fear of redundancy and privation, but a full and free life, such as we wage slaves have dreamed about but never yet tasted.

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WE HAVE FED YOU ALL FOR A THOUSAND YEARS

We have fed you all for a thousand years
And you hail us still unfed,
Though there's never a dollar of all your wealth
But marks the workers' dead.
We have yielded our best to give you rest
And you lie on crimson wool.
Then if blood be the price of all your wealth,
Good God! We have paid it in full.

There is never a mine blown skyward now
But were buried alive for you,
There's never a wreck drifts shoreward now
But we are its ghastly crew.
Go reckon our dead by the forges red
And the factories where we spin.
If blood be the price of your cursed wealth
Good God! We have paid it in.

We have fed you all for a thousand years—
For that was our doom you know,
From the days when you chained us in your fields
To the strike a week ago.
You have taken our lives, and our babies and wives,
And were told it's your legal share
But if blood be the price of your lawful wealth
Good God! We have bought it fair.

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Ethics deals with what is right or wrong in anything a man does which may affect his fellow-beings. As work is an important human activity which absorbs the best of many people's time and energies, and as this activity takes place today under a whole set of conditions which are of man's making, work must need be an object of ethical concern.

Opinions on right and wrong may vary according to each particular case, and according to the parties involved in each case, but there is a fairly general agreement on some basic principles such as "Do not unto others what you would not like to be done unto you", "Man is an end, and not a means", and "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander". There is also a practical test for the sincerity of ethical opinions. Let him who says it is right to fight and die for this or that cause go himself to do the fighting and the dying, and let him who says it is right for a factory worker to be stuck at a lathe year in year out for eight hours a day go and take that worker's place.

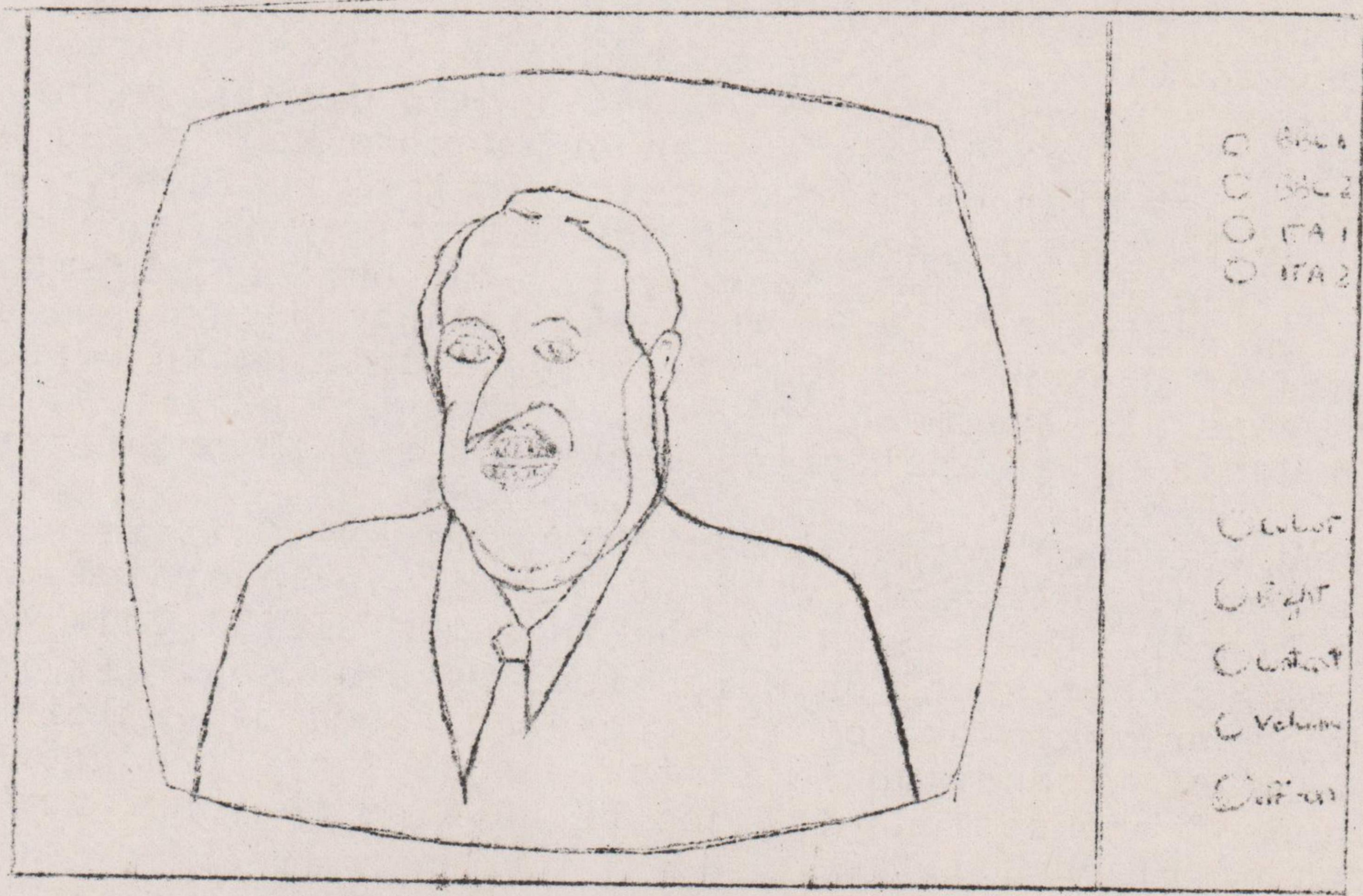
So much has been said, hashed and rehashed about exploitation and the worker's condition that it may be worth our while to look at it from a new angle. What happens in a factory exactly? Well, there are in a factory some men called workers who use some things called machines. Now, if the workers do not own the machines, it is reasonable to assume that the machines have been loaned to the workers, and that for this loan they may reasonably be assumed to pay a certain sum, though they cannot reasonably be expected to pay many times the price of the machines and still not own them. But if, as it happens, machines and industrial premises in general are not a loan made to the workers, then we conclude that the workers are loaning themselves to the machines. We say designedly "to the machines" because, though it is the capitalist who pays for the loan, he does so with money which he gets thanks to the machine, and because it is the machines, and not the capitalist, that needs the workers' labour in order to function. This subordination of men to machines, and the fact that men are used as means to ends they are not supposed to question or even to know makes work under the capitalist dispensation a most unethical business. He who agrees with us on this point must also agree that man is debased in the person of the worker under any system but one of self-management. He must in particular agree that man is debased under a system where the owner of machines is a State which, claiming to represent all workers owns all the machines and, lacking competition, has a free hand in deciding at what price each worker will prostitute himself.

Self-management or workers' control is right if it is not just a formula but is in reality what it says it is: a system where men are not loaning themselves to machines to fulfill ends which are not of their choice and on which they have no say. It is right because it prevents one of the grossest forms of exploitation: if each means of production is in the hands of the producers who use it, the means of production will not be used, as they are now, for purposes of blackmail.

Land will not feed any one if nobody tills it; the least that can be granted a tiller therefore is that he should have first authority upon the land he tills. Without one term of each pair there is no production. For this reason production has a human quality which can only be respected if the autonomy and authority of the tiller or worker is constantly acknowledged and never usurped.

Self-management is ethical because it is the only logical and possible application of the basic ethical principle of authority of interest. Authority of interest means that in any decision to be taken the first and last say goes to the person whom the decision is going most directly to effect. In matters of production consumers have their rights; since also production is a source of wealth derived from raw materials and sources of power which by right belong to no one, self-managing producers contract a debt with the community which allows them access to raw materials and sources of energy; yet producers are still the prime authority in matters of production because they alone have their own person, their time and energy involved in it directly.

If the producer has authority upon production he will not become its slave. That is another ethical aspect of workers' control: that while guaranteeing that society has what is necessary to satisfy its needs, it yet will not dehumanize the producer. Each man is a man before he is a producer or anything else, and his humanity is distorted if he becomes a producer at the expense of everything else. It is hoped that under self-management, by setting their own times and their own rhythms, workers will be in a better state of mind to engage in forms of activity other than production, it is hoped they will live a fuller and more satisfactory life. But, for a start, they will not under self-management be barred, as they are now, from the exercise of some faculties which, however thwarted, are in them as they are in most human beings. We mean the faculty, not only to do things, but to decide upon them, to administer them, to plan them, and to care about their end-result. We mean the faculty and right to play an active role in society, and to have "some freedom, some creative participation" in the shaping of their individual fate, which now is a privilege of the few, the better indulged and enjoyed the less one is a worker.



And may I say to these Godless Syndicalists,
that we will preserve our democracy,
even if we have to jail every man, woman, and child
to do so!

The Anarchist influence on Syndicalism has been profound, and we feel that it would be enlightening to workers to read answers to questions on these issues which fundamentally affect the worker. We shall therefore undertake to publish in each issue an answer from this standpoint on questions which frequently occur.

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WHAT ABOUT THE MAN WHO WILL NOT WORK?

All social theories must obviously be based on the assumption that men are social: that is, that they will live and work together naturally, because by doing so they can individually better enjoy their lives. Therefore all such difficulties, which are really based on the supposition that men are not social, can be raised not against Anarchism alone, but against any system of society that one chooses to suggest.

Opponents will realise how futile they are if we use a similar kind of argument against their system of government. Suppose we argued that having sent representatives into the House of Commons they will not sit down and legislate, and perhaps, vote themselves comfortable incomes, instead of looking after your welfare. It will be answered to this that they are sent there to legislate, and that in all human probability they will do so. Quite so; but we may still say, "Yes, but suppose they dont?", and whatever arguments are brought forward in favour of government they can always, by simply supposing, be rendered quite useless, since those who oppose us would never be able to actually guarantee that our governors would govern. Such an argument would be absurd, it is quite true; for though it may happen that occasionally legislators will sit down and vote themselves incomes instead of attending to the affairs of the nation, yet we could not use this as a logical argument against the government system.

Similarly, when we are putting forward our ideas of free co-operation or Anarchism, it is not good enough to argue, "Yes, but suppose your co-operators will not co-operate?".

It is because we claim to be able to show that it is wrong in principle that we, as Anarchists, are against government. In the same way, then, those who oppose Anarchism ought not to do so by simply supposing that a man will do this, or wont do that, but they ought to set themselves to show that Anarchism is in principle opposed to the welfare of mankind.

The second interesting point to notice about the question is that it is generally asked by a Socialist. Behind the question there is obviously the implication that he who asks it has in his mind some way of forcing men to work. Now the most obvious of all those who will not work is the man who is on strike, and if you have a method dealing with the man who will not work it simply means that you are going to organise a system of society where the government will be so all-powerful that the rebel and the striker will be completely crushed out. You will have a government class dictating to a working class the conditions under which it must labour, which is exactly what both Anarchists and Socialists are supposed to be struggling against today.

In a free society the man who will not work, if he should exist at all, is at least brought on equal terms with the man who will. He is not placed in a position of privilage so that he need not work, but on the contrary that argument which is so often used against Anarchism comes very neatly into play here in its favour.

It is often urged that it is necessary to organise in order to live. Quite so, and for this reason the struggle for life compels us to organise, and there is no need for any further compulsion of the part of the government. Since to organise in society is really to work in society, it is the law of life which constantly tends to make men work, whilst it is the artificial laws of privilege which put men in such a position that they need not work. Anarchism would do away with these artificial laws, and thus it is the only system which constantly tends to eliminate the man who will not work.

We might perhaps here quote John Stuart Mill's answer to this objection:-

"The objection ordinarily made to a system of community of property and equal distribution of produce—that each person would be incessantly occupied in evading his share of the work—is, I think, in general, considerably overstated.....Neither in a rude nor in a civilized society has the supposed difficulty been experienced. In no community has idleness ever been a cause of failure".

— J.S. Mill, "Political Economy," Vol. 1., p.251.

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BOOK REVIEW BOOK REVIEW BOOK REVIEW BOOK REVIEW BOOK REVIEW

The Political Philosophy of Michael Bakunin.
Compiled and edited by G.P. Maximoff. Free Press

This book is a must for any individual concerned with understanding the profound influence Bakunin had upon the Anarcho-Syndicalist thought. With introductions written by Libertarian Revolutionaries Max Nettlau and Rudolf Rocker, we are furnished with an extremely deep and penetrating explanation into the life of this 'Perrenial Revolutionist'.

This book is divided into four parts, dealing with Philosophy, Criticisms of existing society, The System of Anarchism and Tactics and methods of realization; each sector is subdivided into chapters with each paragraph having a subtitle. In this way Maximoff, who assiduously compiled and edited this book has supplied us with a lucid and concise collection of Bakunin's most important writings.

Unfortunately the writings of this great Anarchist thinker are few, with only a modicum translated into English. This was because Bakunin was not only an individual who payed lip service to the Anarchist philosophy but lived it also as a committed activist.

Other Books and Pamphlets by Bakunin in print

God and the State		obtainable from	Freedom Press
The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State	"	"	" "
Criticisms of State Socialism	"	"	Black Flag
Essays on Revolution	"	"	Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists

SYNDICALISM AND THE TRADE UNIONS

IN STUDYING the history of syndicalism and the development of industrial Unionism we must go back to the period just before World War I. This period between the years 1910 and 1914 is referred to in the textbooks of history as the period of 'Labour Unrest'. Perhaps the most outstanding figure of this time was Tom Mann, who more than anyone else was to have a profound influence on the subsequent development of the Labour movement and trade unionism in this country. Newspapers at this time carried articles headed 'A threat to the State' and in his memoirs J.R. Clyne wrote of the period that 'Civil war seems at times to be very near'.

At this time labour unrest was paralleled by militancy of the suffragette and the Irish question. In 1911 a massive dock strike took place which spread very rapidly culminating in confrontations at Hull, Liverpool and other places. The loss of working days in 1909 due to strike action had been 2½ million, this rose rapidly in the years that followed up to 41 million. Mass strikes occurred in all industries throughout the country, yet of these only 20% were fought on wage issues.

It was at this time due much to the efforts of the Syndicalists that the National Union of Railwaymen was formed and we see the beginning of the Transport Workers' Federation, the Amalgamated Engineers Union, etc. There was a general movement towards amalgamation and consolidation of what had hitherto existed as small isolated craft unions. It was a period of massive union growth, in 1910 2½ million workers were organised by 1920 over 8 million workers were union members.

In 1898 there had been the formation of the Workers' Union, Organising mainly unskilled and semi-skilled workers, this organization was later to merge into the Transport and General Workers' Union. This was a time when there was constant failure of wages to keep pace with prices, mass poverty existed regardless of the boom of British industry and its exports. At this time a large number of workers were disillusioned with parliamentary labourism. There arose a new concept of the role of trade unions, new ideas had been introduced into this country from France and the United States.

In this country the Socialist Labour Party had split from the Social Democratic Federation but had been ineffectual in alleviating the social conditions of the working class. Tom Mann in the development of his Industrial Syndicalist ideas had been influenced by James Connolly who spent some years in America and had brought back the ideas of the Industrial Workers of the World which was at that time fighting some of the greatest labour battles in American history. Such men as Eugene Debs and Daniel de Leon had a profound effect on Mann. Industrial Unionism became an integral part of the policy of the Socialist Labour Party and a movement was launched called "The Advocates of Industrial Unionism". It adopted the principles from the preamble of the IWW beginning "The working class and employing class have nothing in common ..."

DETROIT AND CHICAGO

In America a split occurred in the IWW between the De Leonist group based on Detroit and the majority of the IWW bases in Chicago. The split was fundamentally on the issue of whether the means to workers' emancipation was to be political and industrial or solely an industrial approach.

In 1909 the Industrial Workers of Great Britain was formed but as an organisation was not very successful. At this time revolutionary Industrial Unionist ideas were being propagated through a newspaper called "The Socialist".

The failure of the Industrial Workers of Great Britain had been partly due to its sectarian attitude and attacks on craft unionism which alienated many of their militant members.

Tom Mann had returned from Australia where he had been active as a Labour organiser, he was already known in this country as a Labour leader and prior to his return there had been articles in the Socialist Labour Party press denouncing him. While in Australia he had become very critical of Australian Labourism and on his return declared his policy for Industrial Syndicalism. The French CGT was at this time actively engaged in industrial insurrectionist activity. It had two structures, there was a federation of craft unions and the industrial federations organised as Labour Exchanges and known as "Bourses du Travail". The movement in this country was working through the Trades Councils and was encouraging union amalgamation. It was pointing out that craft unions though useful at an earlier stage of capitalist development were outmoded in a modern industrial society and were unable to combat the ever-growing concentration of capital.

A choice of action had to be made between a policy known as boring from within, that is infiltrating the existing union structure and diffusing it with Syndicalism or dual unionism, a policy of rebuilding Industrial Unions separate from existing unions. Mann wrote to Eugene Debs on this issue and decided on the former policy. In 1910 he helped to organise what was to be known as the Industrial Syndicalist Education League, which believed that fundamental changes would come by infusing the rank and file of the trade union movement with Syndicalist ideas. This organisation had a five-level membership all of which were engaged in propagandist activity of one sort or another. In the development of British Syndicalism there was thus a marked difference from the IWW who had totally rejected the craft unionism of the American Federation of Labour and had built a parallel structure on an industrial basis. Eugene Debs had advised working within the existing union framework and Tom Mann saw the danger of alienating workers by forming separate unions. It was on this issue that later, in America, one of the Labour leaders, broke away from the IWW with a group of Communists.

While Mann was serving a sentence in Strangeways Prison for his activities, his wife wrote an article to the "Daily Herald" in answer to a criticism of her husband's point of view. She pointed out that there was no difference between Syndicalism and Socialism in essence and aim of emancipating the working class from the bondage of capitalism, and that the Syndicalist concept was for each industry to be self-governing, each Industrial Union building a State within the State.

After Tom Mann's release from prison, he became more anti-parliamentarian than he had been before, convinced that the road to emancipation could not be achieved through the State machine. In 1912 there was a conference called for the amalgamation committees in which Mining, Transport, Engineering and Railways were represented. It was during this time that the Syndicalists in South Wales published "The Miners' Next Step".

1914 brought the outbreak of World War 1 after which, due to subsequent developments of the Russian Revolution in 1917, workers were fragmented into various leftist political parties and Syndicalism as a mass movement declined. It had nevertheless left its imprint on the British Labour movement culminating in the militancy of the 1926 General Strike.

I am of the exploited:
 Of exploited Mankind;
 I am of those who suffer and sweat,
 Who toil and create the wealth of the Earth:
 For I am of those who are robbed -
 Whose stomachs are plundered
 By worms with wolves heads.

I am of the order-takers:
 Of order-taking Mankind;
 I am of those who are regimented,
 Who are the pawns of the Manipulators:
 For I am of those with a number and not a name -
 Whose lives are not their own,
 And are imprisoned at birth.

But I am also of those who revolt:
 Of Revolutionary Mankind;
 I am of those who will not be subjugated,
 Who will not stay on their knees:
 For I am of those who struggle -
 Whose sinews and vision will soon prevail,
 And we the People will be the Masters.

Michael Tobin.

Michael Tobin, a Libertarian Humanist comrade is now serving a 2 year imprisonment sentence for Incitement to Disaffection.

JOURNALS ON WORKERS CONTROL

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13 Russell Road, Manchester 16.

LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE

29 Cardigan Road, Leeds.

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10 Gilbert Place,
 London WC1

FREEDOM

84B Whitechapel High Street,
 London W1

SOLIDARITY

27 Sandringham Road,
 London NW11.

INDUSTRIAL WORKER

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