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MAR 19 1908  
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DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## INTRODUCTION

Workers are faced with a wage freeze.

This is imposed on top of the iniquitous Industrial Relations' Act.

Prices have soared, & "At a stroke" Heath has dishonestly blamed them on the unions - even while the freeze is on.

Rents have been forced up by the Tories, school children deprived of milk.

With the Common Market entrance this will continue unless there is massive resistance.

The Industrial Relations' Act was passed to prevent such resistance.

If unions strike their funds can be seized.

Workers must find means of resistance that are more effective than our existing trade unions.



Fortunately working class history shows that such more effective means can be found.

In the past significant workers' movements have refused to sign contracts with the bosses, have avoided the danger of state expropriation of funds by keeping unions as pure fighting organs vesting welfare & similar aspects of union work in other organizations.

This tradition has been most notable in Anarcho-Syndicalism.

So when blimpish Tory politicians accuse all strikers of being anarchist they really voice their sub-conscious fears - that the one way workers can now free themselves is by using tactics from the Anarcho-Syndicalist tradition.



ANARCHIST ARGUMENT 1

SYNDICALISM

(the case for industrial unionism as a tactic & libertarian revolution as a principle in the conditions of today.) 5p

pp. i - vii foreword  
3-- 18 reprint of The  
Bomb, Direct Action  
& The State.  
I - X postscript  
X & XI The Anarchist Case

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## ANARCHIST ARGUMENT 1

### SYNDICALISM

In the early days of the labour movement most socialist theories were based on the need for the workers - in order to abolish the extreme inequalities of wealth, the industrial revolution had created - to run the factories in which they worked.

In those days factories were small, & all workers knew the production process from start to to finish, so it was natural that all workers saw instinctively that the boss was not necessary.

Again the very fact that the worker was face to face with the boss meant that he could visualise an enemy when he thought of injustice.

He knew who the boss, who exploited him, was and knowing him, knowing moreover the sort of half crooked deals in which every business man is involved, really knew what he meant when saying that bosses rob their workers of the product of their labour.



In such circumstances belief in some form or other of socialism was instinctive.

The workers then very soon learnt that they were unwise to pose too much trust in leaders, that politicians once elected to power are apt to forget their earlier beliefs and just enjoy that power.

This deepening understanding led them to realise that politicians are anyway often powerless to make changes, that they are not to blame, but are purely puppets manipulated by the real holders of power.

They learnt that the state was the executive committee of the ruling class. (In those days of laissez-faire that just meant what it said, a body not itself sovereign which executes the will of the ruling class; today as laissez-faire gives way to planned capitalism this is no longer an adequate formulation.)

They therefore began to devise more radical variants of socialism & more militant plans of action against the bosses & the bosses' state

Notable among these were various forms of revolutionary industrial unionism or syndicalism.



## Social General Strike

Syndicalists emphasized that workers are forced by the very need to survive to form unions and struggle at work against the boss.

They emphasized that this struggle & formation of unions instilled solidarity - the ethic which must lie at the base of any socialist society.

They emphasized that it is in industry that the boss exercises his real power; and from that power in industry that he derives his power in the state.

They therefore said that the boss can only be fought and beaten by direct strike action at the point of production.

But they saw no reason why they should do so - having first demonstrated that the boss's wealth is derived from stealing the worker's product - acknowledge the boss's rights to factories.

So therefore many, many years before the U.C.S. workers occupied their yards syndicalists were advocating and practising stay-in strikes.

The syndicalist aim was & is a



stay in strike in all industries whereby the workers would take over the industries & run themselves in the interests of themselves and the community at large in a moneyless economy.

The bosses would be told that their services are no longer required.

In any industry one names to work to rule - that is the boss's rules is a form of striking. Which shows that all industries work purely because for most of the time workers obey common sense & not orders.

Syndicalists believe that that common sense running of industry would enable workers to control industry for the common good not the profit of a few capitalists.

For such a general strike obviously the workers would need unions more dedicated to socialism than the present ones.

Syndicalists advocated that unions should be rank & file controlled, that any union official must be elected for a limited period of time and then return to ordinary work & that such officials should be paid only the average of the workers they represent.



## Bureaucracy

Today, however, the possibility of a changed society is not as obvious. Industry has grown far larger since the invention of the conveyor belt, far more complex, & it is no longer immediately apparent that the worker could run the show & make the boss redundant.

Not that it is any the less true, but that many modern industrial processes deliberately mystify the employees.

Add to this there has been a very considerable growth of harmful production. (For details of this see "The Right to Work or the Fight to live" available from Francis McKenzie, 102 Newcastle St. Silverdale, ST5.6PL)

This change has been accompanied by a growth of state power & more especially military power; often the product of changes wrought by earlier "socialist" reforms.

(The change is not limited to this country & I will cover in a later pamphlet something of its working in "Communist" countries.)

This means that though real social change can still only be won at the place of work, the worker only



visualises a changed society as he looks at the system in toto.

The fact that management - especially with the aid of organization & method work studies is able to appear necessary; (control in large measure has passed from share holders to permanent officials;) & the sheer size of factories, with their extreme division of tasks so that workers do not know what is done elsewhere provides a spurious justification for managers.

While governments which now intervene in the economy to prevent slumps by taxation, subsidies, & by the Permanent Arms economy have done much to eliminate the more obvious causes of industrial revolt.

Today we see new evils arising from a society which not only does not produce goods for use but only in an unreal sense produces them for profit.

On all sides we see "production for scrap" "built in obsolescence", the making of goods in such a way that they cannot last & will have to be replaced soon; or the making of arms that it is earnestly hoped by the makers will never be used.

Such a society does not produce the instinctive rebellion in the producing worker that it once did.



It does however make inevitable the pollution of sea & soil, & does create permanent threat of war - war which now would destroy all mankind.

It does in fact put a question mark over the survival of mankind.

So though the worker has to look outside the factory to see the need for fundamental social change he will see it there, & seeing it he will find that it remains true that that social change can only come from challenging the boss where it hurts, where the boss derives his power in industry.

So the lessons the syndicalists derived from experience in the past are still useful guides for socialists today.

As people come to reject the values of contemporary society they will need to find a strategy for making their opposition tell.

As - in recent years - the first such revolt was characterised by CND the campaign to abolish the Atom Bomb unilaterally; so the first modern restatement of syndicalism was "The Bomb, Direct Action & the State" reproduced here, with this foreword and a postscript to fit it to today's conditions.



## The Bomb—an isolated issue ?

**T**HERE are three main currents of Unilateralist thinking. First, those who see the Bomb as evil and a danger, but do not consider any other factors and visualise a society very much as now, but with the threat of extinction removed by banning the Bomb. Second, those who believe the Bomb to be a mere symptom of class society—and are apt to deplore concentration on it as detracting from the real issues, or to use the Campaign merely as a recruiting ground for their own groups. And third, those who see the Bomb as a supreme symbol of violent and oppressive systems and, while approving CND's concentration on this one issue, do not see Unilateralism as a cure for the Bomb in isolation, but the essential pre-condition for any further social advance. Let us look at these three tendencies more closely.

Some of the first of the above groupings are Right-wing, or wish to return to a time when injustice and conflict abounded, but warfare was less completely destructive. One of these, Andrew Fountaine, chairman of the British National Party, stood for Parliament in Norfolk in 1959 and attempted to get CND support. He received none, for even those campaigners who have little or no political knowledge realised that fascism, with its race hatred and genocide, was as undesirable as nuclear genocide.

These tend to be people with ideals and, if they support one of the major political parties, they either ignore the contradictions between their party's policy and Unilateralism, or consider that supporting this policy will some day mean Parliamentary votes for Unilateralism.

The development of such people's thought, as their strongly-held conviction of the horror of nuclear war is faced with the progressively worsening arms race, leads to far wider understanding of the other factors involved in the world. ~~As the strength~~ of their arguments and the growth of support encouraged them to think that Governments would accept the idea of Unilateralism willingly, but now the failure to change Government policy and the long series of abortive peace conferences has led to disillusionment and, finally, deeper insight.

As these people's ideas mature they can join the hard core of the attempt to avert catastrophe. As more people and converts to Unilateralism come along, this process of disillusionment can go on continuously.



## Symptom of political needs?

The second of the three currents are apt to deplore concentration on the Bomb as detracting from the issues of class-warfare, or use the CND for tactical reasons, such as recruiting, propaganda and as a means of weakening a capitalist government. This, besides being a complete over-simplification (as we shall show later), leads to many contradictions. Ritchie Calder, for instance, says:

"They cannot 'sack' CND as easily as they can a Labour Youth Group. Nor can anyone else. If the National Executive of the CND resigned tomorrow, the movement would still go on. If we disbanded the headquarters staff and removed the strong hand of Peggy Duff, the groups would still function, but without the moderation of a politically-responsible, constitutionally minded executive (a moderation which provoked Direct Action and the impatience of the Committee of 100). The supporters would 'take to the maquis'. The greatest spontaneous political movement in this country since the days of the Spanish Civil War, with a head-force of decent concern about the biggest human and social issue of today, would break the dam. **It shall not happen, but if it did it would carry with it the debris of the Labour Party.**"

Donald Soper attacks CND supporters who will not support Labour candidates whose platform is against Unilateralism. The Trotskyist movement and the social-democratic weekly *Tribune* set up a howl of protest against INDEC, which aims to put up Unilateralist Parliamentary candidates. Stalinists claim to be Unilateralist under capitalism, but in favour of a 'People's Bomb' should Britain become a socialist State. Even the Anarchist weekly *Freedom*, because it looked on the Bomb as an isolated issue, carried a front-page article in the issue sold on the 1961 Aldermaston March, in which it said that if the Campaign progressed further it would split the Labour Party and that this would be no gain.

**In the political field, most of the roles advocated for CND are unrealistic.**

When, at the end of the last century, the basis of the existing Labour Party was being laid, radicals had the choice of turning to the workers and saying that if they wanted a better society, the only way to get it was by mass action to bring in socialism—mass action that would, in the process, involve considerable hardship and never be easy, but which held infinite promise—or of saying "elect us and by piecemeal reforms we can improve your conditions."



The majority took the easy way, as did the working class generally. Obviously they have made some marginal gains as a result, though it should be remembered that many of these, such as the National Health Service, were advocated by 19th Century Liberals for the more efficient running of capitalism.

But against this it was the Labour Party that formed that sanctioned Hiroshima, it was the Labour Party that made Britain's Uranium Bomb and prepared to make the H Bomb, while it formed the Government from 1945-51.\*

The Labour Party of today is certainly well to the right of that of 1945 and it is absurd to suppose that it can advance the aims of CND. But hope springs eternal for some and it is necessary to examine further the arguments of those who tell us that the only way to achieve Nuclear Disarmament is through the Labour Party.

Ever since Herbert Morrison left the Social Democratic Federation, in order to convert the original ILP to socialism, socialists have been going into the Labour Party. All they have ever changed is themselves.

The Party exists to take power and therefore its whole nature is such that, in order to gain the widest possible suffrage, it will shape its policies to popular opinion, rather than try to win popular opinion for socialism. It has, therefore, steadily moved rightwards; each turn to the right and each entry in order to convert gives rise to a new bunch of rebels. But, since these are also playing the political game, they, too, must shape their demands to what the market will take and they, too, end up on the Front Bench, shorn of their socialist pretensions, or leave the Party.

Such "Leftists" will claim that the only way to change the Labour Party is for CND to get into it and work within it. All this would achieve is to deliver up the Campaign, bound hand and foot, to the Transport House bureaucrats. For, if the Campaign were in the LP, it would be forced to water down its policies at the risk of expulsion. In fact, Gaitskell was able to reverse the 1960 Scarborough Conference decision purely and simply by pointing to the number of Multilateralist Lib-Lab votes the Party would lose if it went Unilateralist.

He will be able to continue this, with no fear of again being beaten, until such time as large-scale Unilateralist abstentions at the polls make it quite plain that a multilateralist Labour Party stands no chance of being returned. As it is, the Labour leadership is in clover. The Liberal revival will put Gaitskell in power, possibly as a minority Government, but since Grimond is margin-

\* c.f. Direct Action pamphlets "How Labour Governed, 1945-1951" and "Nationalisation and the New Boss Class".



ally to the Left of Gaitskelli (as Macleod is only marginally to the Right), such a minority Government would not face the insecurity of the 1924 and 1929 Labour administrations.

Anxious at all events to remain within the LP, these "Left" social-democrats seldom, when pushed to the pitch, actually vote for their beliefs. In opposition to the resumption of Tests by the West, when in theory the Unilateralists represented official Party policy, less than 30 MP's found the issue sufficiently important to turn up and vote. During the previous year, when Scarborough had not yet been reversed, only seven MP's voted against the Defence Estimates. Some years earlier, when German rearmament was the issue, Fenner Brockway wrote an article in *Peace News*, underlining the necessity for the Labour Party to oppose it—and the day the article was published, failed to be numbered among the six MP's who voted against, when German rearmament was the subject of a division.

Parallel to the cowardice of the social-democrats is the chameleon nature of the Stalinists, whether open card-holders in the Communist Party, fellow travellers or those who, ashamed to admit their Stalinism, pay lip-service to Trotskyism in the Socialist Labour League.

The fact that, at the end of 1959, CP members who had been attacking Unilateralism switched to its advocacy and the similar speed with which the SLL suddenly decided that it supported Russia's possession of the Bomb ("the Workers' Bomb"), immediately after it had been selling Peter Fryer's pamphlet attacking Soviet nuclear arms as seriously detracting from international solidarity, show that Unilateralism for these Bolsheviks is merely an opportunist gimmick that, at best, goes skin deep. The record of similar past twists is too long to recount, but a prime instance is that of contrasting Communist reaction to testing by East and West.

Besides the "Leftist" social-democrats, various groups, Trotskyist and otherwise, advocate work within the Labour Party, while at the same time agreeing with Libertarians that the Bomb can be abolished only by a revolutionary change in society and not as part of piecemeal reform. These usually have two entirely conflicting conceptions of the role of their work in the Labour Party. At one moment they will say that they hope to create a revolutionary party within the reformist one and that their presence in the Labour Party is merely to make converts and enlist others; at the next they put forward a series of left-reformist demands that they agree do not, even in sum, add up to socialism, and campaign to make these Party policy.

As a result of the latter tactic, such groups frequently move well to the Right. Once started in the game of power politics,



the revolutionary is as likely as anyone to become corrupt and seek power for himself rather than socialism, and so waters down the reformist demand to get wider support. Alternatively, having put forward such a "transitional" policy, the group then attracts recruits on a basis of those who equate the transition with the aim and, in turn, wish to put forward new transitional demands. Either way, those who remain true to the original aims are apt to find themselves forced out of the group—and, like the amoeba, start the process anew.

Those "revolutionaries" whose aim is to permeate the Labour Party with their ideas are, in fact, little different to "Left" social-democrats. If precedent is any guide, they are apt to be less courageous in the face of the Transport House whip, when it comes to the push. When *Socialist Outlook* was suppressed, a group who were expelled from the LP in Camberwell put out a leaflet protesting at their expulsion, stressing what loyal Party members they had been, that they had made no serious opposition to the Right Wing leadership—and that they had helped expel those members of their constituency Party who attended the Vienna Peace Conference.

Those, on the other hand, who are in the LP only to raid it, have a better case, whatever one may think of the morality of their actions and however much one may question if socialism can be built by capitalist ethics. Nevertheless, such groups, as they grow, often turn to permeation as the first step to reformism. What is more, if they grow without losing their revolutionary nature, they will sooner or later have to leave the LP anyway. It is then that they will have to answer how a revolutionary movement should act—and it is then that one will find many who have not forgotten their Bolshevism (like the Bourbons, they forget nothing of their past glories and learn nothing from their mistakes).

For, should the revolutionary movement that is built set itself up as a leadership body, it will, if successful, of its very nature lead directly to a new class society. Such groups already exist outside the Labour Party and it is, perhaps, not surprising that one recently published an editorial justifying the fact that TU bureaucrats are highly paid, with the usual claptrap about getting the best men for the job.

There is, after all, little difference between the Leninist conception of the elite party of socialism and ordinary capitalist values.

Their present conspiratorial organisation can hardly, in a large group, lead to inner democracy and libertarian values. But some



entrists may, as the movement grows, be able to free themselves of leadership and vanguardist complexes and turn to libertarian organisations outside the Labour Party and it is, therefore, a mistake to ignore them.

One other fallacy in the argument for working from within must be mentioned. It is alleged that, by doing so, one can use the LP as a recruiting ground for Unilateralism. In fact, attendance at Constituency and TU branches is less than 3 per cent of the Party—and it is fair to assume that those who do attend meetings are either already Unilateralist, or dyed-in-the-wool Gaitskellites. In Norfolk, Direct Action Committee canvassers, after a very short time, found they knew more Party members than did the local Party secretaries, and more union members than did the secretaries of the local branches. Any active CND branch should be able to say the same.

Outside the Labour Party are various groups that, while opposing it, share its reformist nature. Often they oppose unconstitutional action, alleging that it leaves the door open to fascism. In fact, of course, where fascism has come, there has been a strong reformist movement, capable of frightening the Right, but so bound to constitutionalism that it had no answer to fascist violence.

In this category come INDEC, most of the Fellowship Party and the right wing of the ILP. With them, too, must be coupled the SPGB which, though not reformist, has no answer to how it would meet a putsch by the Establishment, in the unlikely event of its being returned as a Parliamentary majority. Like the reformists, the SPGB insists on the ballot box and thus attempts to delude the workers into thinking that Parliament is the real seat of power, instead of a facade, which is at times ignored by the real rulers—as, for instance, in 1950-51, when Richard Acland was told Parliament had no power to debate the Atom Bomb.

The degree of Parliamentary control over nuclear weapons is shown by the fact that even the Cabinet was not consulted by Attlee about the decision to make the first British Bomb. This is verified by one of Attlee's Labour Government colleagues, Emmanuel Shinwell. The *Sunday Times* (18.9.60) published the following statement by Shinwell, under the heading "A-BOMB SECRECY":

"I was Minister of Defence in 1950, but knew nothing of how the decision to manufacture the atom bomb was reached. Only recently, as a result of my investigations, did I discover that the decision to undertake research and development was taken in 1947, in consultation with a few of my Government colleagues. So far as I am aware the subject was never mentioned at any of



the Cabinet meetings. And apart from the Minister of Defence, in 1947, A. V. Alexander, none of the other Service Ministers was taken into confidence. In his own book, Basil Artee omits any reference to the subject and gives no details of how this momentous decision came to be made."

## The Bomb—symbol of a rotten society

Sometimes those who think of the Bomb as a mere symptom refuse to join CND, saying that you do not cure measles by scraping the spots and that you do not cure war merely by giving up the worst weapons. The fact is, however, that while a doctor may well be able to diagnose measles before the spots appear, the layman usually goes to the doctor only when he sees the spots.

But to look on the Bomb as merely a symptom is to ignore the tremendous change society has undergone in this century. It is no less divided along class lines than 100 years ago, but the ruling class has largely changed its manner of rule. Not only in the Sino-Soviet bloc has robber-baron type competitive capitalism given way to State, or giant corporation managerialist capitalism.

The State, formerly merely the executive committee of the ruling class, has now become central to class rule. With the vast growth in power of the State has come an increase in violence and interference with civil liberties.

In the past, competing groups of capitalists, struggling for markets, pushed their countries to war, or discriminated against minorities in order to produce a cheap labour pool which would undercut the workers' wages. Now the State, to divert attention from the evils of its rule, or to control the economy and eliminate the boom-slump cycle, deliberately uses these evils. While wars, bureaucratic interference and racial segregation were evils incidental to capitalism 100 years ago, they are now integral to it.

The Bomb, then, is one of many evils integral to the existing nature of capitalism, but in Britain it is the one most obvious and most pressing. It is thus not a mere symptom of the greater evil, but a symbol thereof. The evil is common throughout the world, whether in allegedly democratic State, or the allegedly socialist ones, though it is manifested in different ways: the Bomb, Segregation, Concentration Camps, the Ulbricht Wall, the need for 750,000 Chinese to seek refuge, Vorkuta, Hola, the Budapest massacre, an Algerian war.

Years ago Marx described such inherent evils as contradic-



tions of capitalism, specifying the boom-slump cycle as chief of these. Today class society has different contradictions and it is probable that State Capitalism can eliminate the boom-slump cycle, though as yet State interference merely cushions the economy.

It is curious that many who hesitate to throw their full weight behind the Campaign against nuclear weapons see no contradiction in Marx's concentration on the evils of unemployment, as a means of convincing people of the need to change society. They endlessly justify their half-hearted attitudes on the Bomb and their ceaseless compromises, by claiming them to be in the best interests of the movement as a whole, basing this claim on the assumption that the Labour Party is in some way socialist and therefore more important than the Campaign.

## The Bomb and direct action

But while Unilateralism that is not socialist is incomplete, socialism that is not Unilateralist is a contradiction in terms. The position is even clearer when it comes to Civil Disobedience. For some curious reason the Trotskyists and other "revolutionary" groups attack non-violent resistance as a weapon that ignores the basic evil, arguing that it ignores the social class war. Where this is honest criticism, it is foolish, but such verbiage is more often a cover for moral and physical cowardice.

If one takes it as logical that an evil should be opposed by its opposite good, then bureaucracy should be met by Direct Action, the evils of conformity and violence should be met by Civil Disobedience, the evil of elitist rule should be met by the greatest possible involvement of the whole people in running their own lives. At all times, the actions of those who work for a better society, even while they remain a minority, should symbolise the society they wish to build.

The aim, therefore, should be mass action, industrial or otherwise, but whereas small elitist groups have often in the past gone to workers and said "you should strike for such and such an issue," nuclear disarmers have rightly used Direct Action themselves, saying to other workers: "We are doing this, what will you do?"

Insofar as it takes the anti-war case in dramatised form to workers, non-violent action is a most important weapon. The original concept of the DAC (as later of Polaris Action), was that the most important people to approach about the evils of the Bomb were those directly involved in making, servicing and stor-



ing it—and that one should spread out from there. They held that such workers are hardly likely to be greatly impressed by choral and rhythmic chants of "Ban the Bomb" and "Black the Bases", sung several miles away by "revolutionary" groups on marches, many of whose members have no conception of the hardship possibly involved by so doing—and most of whom would provide dialectical justification for not undertaking that hardship themselves.

Moreover, if one merely approaches such workers with leaflets or verbal persuasion, asking them to take action which may well cause them to be blacklisted for other jobs, they will not unnaturally say "That's all very nice, mate, but I've got a wife and kids to keep."

For this reason, Direct Actionists felt a need to use a form of action that symbolised the cause for which they worked and which caused them to risk hardship, whether commensurate or not (an art teacher who took part in the first Pickenham-Swaffham demonstration nearly lost his sight through getting concrete mud in his eyes).

This form of action loses much of its impact, however, if instead of going to those who work on the Bomb, its use is limited to large Squares. Again, since many have only recently begun to think in terms of Civil Disobedience, there is a danger that too much will be left to leadership. This tendency must be avoided, not only because in the long run it saps energy from the movement and makes it less efficient, but also because it conflicts with the underlying aims of the Campaign.

**The Bomb can be permanently abandoned only if we take from the State the power to remake it. And this can be done only by winning a society of brotherhood, with neither rulers nor ruled.**

When considering the role of Civil Disobedience, it must be remembered that three distinct forms are possible. There is the Direct Action just described, used as a method of conversion, which must be coupled with other methods of persuasion (leaflets, canvassing, etc.) and must be done in a spirit of empathy to be effective. Secondly there is obstruction for the sake of obstruction, with no attempt to convert. And thirdly, action that is neither coercive, nor liable to convert, but which draws attention to an evil, or illustrates a good in order to publicise one's case.

Given a hostile Press, that will always distort one's intentions (if given the chance), the third form is only really effective, if it fully demonstrates one's arguments—if only that it is possible to resist tyranny without resorting to the alternate tyranny of militarism. This form of action is, however, best used for action on



civil liberties, or protesting against evils whose horror is not, in Britain, a matter of controversy. In face of the distortions the *Guardian* and *Observer* have since published about the Committee of 100, it is amusing to recall how laudatory they were to those of us who sat down outside the South African High Commission after Sharpeville.

Obstruction for obstruction's sake is obviously the form of action most suited to a mass movement. If ever the day comes when we achieve large-scale industrial action against the Bomb, it could well be reinforced by large-scale sit-downs across roads, to prevent blackleg transport operating. But there is a danger that, when used by a minority as a means of coercing the majority, it could well lead away from libertarian objectives. It is a healthy reaction when seeing an evil, even a popular one, to wish to obstruct. Obviously, if one saw racists lynching someone, one would not stop to consider which had the majority on its side before intervening. But, remembering that war can be permanently abolished only by a libertarian change in society, the methods of bolshevism, even when used by non-Leninists and where the users repudiate violence, still lead naturally to elitism.

At this stage, therefore, non violent resistance should ideally be aimed at that conversion necessary to build a mass movement—and preferably it should be used where workers are assembled. In other words, it should be Direct Action.

If it is agreed that the most potent weapon against the Bomb is Civil Disobedience, if it is further agreed that only a society with neither rulers nor ruled can prevent war, then, in the old phrase, the liberation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves.

In other words, action against the Bomb, which should symbolise actions on a wider social front, must be Direct Action.

Then only those political groups whose theories are compatible with Direct Action have any right to claim Unilateralist support. That is, only the Libertarian groups, the Left of the ILP, a very few Radical Pacifists and the De Leonists. And to each of these non-Libertarian groups, the Libertarian asks: if Direct Action is the way to get rid of the Bomb and to change society, what need is there of your political party? If you do not intend to form a government, but rely on the mass action of the workers themselves for their self-liberation, what purpose does your Party serve?

Holding the most healthy trend in the Campaign to be the Civil Disobedience wing, and holding, as the Committee of 100 and its predecessors have always done that, if it is to achieve its



ends, it must give rise to large-scale industrial action, the existing industrial sub-committees of the Committee of 100, while admirable beginnings in the field of involving industrial militants, cannot, in their present form, be adequate when the movement becomes a mass one. It will then be necessary to find an organisational form consistent with the aims and methods of Unilateralism and Civil Disobedience, suitable for a mass movement that does not permit of bureaucracy. It is here that we believe Syndicalism to be relevant.

## Direct Action—basis of Syndicalism

Having come to the point where we reject political parties and politicians, where we are striving to realise our aims by Direct Action, we do not, whatever the original intention, try to isolate nuclear disarmament from the general social problem. We are not striving to build an organisation such as the NSPCC or the RSPCA, however commendable such bodies may be. From the earliest days of development of the CND, in Direct Action, Polaris Action and the Committee of 100, nuclear disarmers have been faced by other aspects of the social problem and have not turned away.

Of course, many already had such an interest, but the Campaign has brought in thousands who started off without it and are now seeking to broaden their outlook and activity and to find a form of social thought and action in harmony with their present ideals and methods.

Many of these are examining industrial organisation ~~and~~ they have not fully turned to Syndicalism is due to general lack of knowledge of that movement, its ideas, its methods and its tradition.

Perhaps the greatest appeal of the recent campaigns has been the call to Direct Action. To a people who ~~have not taken~~ in the words and works of politicians, strength ~~is~~ ~~found~~ when they look to themselves and self-confidence grows. Yet the very phrase Direct Action is the creation and watchword of Syndicalism and generations of Syndicalists have found it as effective and sweet-sounding as those who now launch themselves against the forces of the State.

Direct Action is the action of the people themselves, seeking to influence social direction. Political action is "Indirect Action", seeking to influence rulers, trusting in princes, hoping that those whose interests are not those of the people may respond to our



ideas and interests which they have, by their very lives, already rejected.

Syndicalism has been able, in many lands and in many different circumstances, to create organisations often from the dust of social conflict, which have given form to that great popular force.

Syndicalism is not the invention of some aspiring philosopher or the pet theory of a small sect. It is the proper union of well-thought-out principle and method with a social struggle, from which any might learn or be proud.

## Syndicalism in practice

In Spain, 1936, it was the chief force in the only stand made against aggressive fascism, but even in those difficult circumstances it was not only "anti". At the height of conflict and amid the poverty of workers and small peasants, began the construction of a new society in Spain. Farms were collectivised, where peasants wished to join their neighbours, with remarkable increase in harvests. Industries were socialised and managed, on behalf of society, by the workers in them. An outstanding example was the railways and local transport systems. Barcelona transport, British owned, was taken over by the workers. When Franco returned ownership to the British company in 1939, its chairman in his annual report said that the company's plant and rolling stock had been greatly improved.

In Italy, Syndicalist propaganda inspired the stay-in strikes of 1920, which gave bloodless victory to the factory workers. In France, this Syndicalist thought was responsible for the completely victorious stay-in strikes of 1936, when industrial, office and shop workers won wage rises, holidays with pay and a shorter working week.

In the USA, the Syndicalist idea finds expression in the IWW, which has nearly 60 years of struggle behind it for social justice, economic demands, free speech and against conscription and war. This is a record which no political party anywhere can equal and which won the respect, sometimes grudging, of politicians and social historians throughout the world.

In Australia, too, the IWW carried on the same struggle. In England, what labour historians such as Professor G. D. H. Cole have called the "Syndicalist tendency", the theory and practice of Syndicalism, lifted the dockers, the gas workers, the road transport men and others from the bottom of the wages ladder and the



worst conditions of labour to a position comparable with the average, if not the best.

The most significant of all labour trends in our lifetime has been the shop steward movement, again the child of Syndicalist propaganda and action, and a movement which, with development and correct practice, can open new avenues to the solution of the social problem.

While Syndicalism is quite rightly associated with industry and forms, often novel forms, of strike action, it is not limited to large-scale industry.

Syndicalism is ideally suited to the needs of workers in big factories, steelworks, railways and so on, but it has often taken root where industry was little more than small workshop production and its red and black flag has flown over countless peasant revolts. Workers, to the Syndicalist, are not only fitters, miners and bricklayers, they are schoolteachers, doctors, clerks, nurses, and anyone who belongs to that vast majority who look to work for a living and whose labour is socially necessary. After all, Spain had Syndicates of education, health, public entertainment and many others not usually thought of as industries.

Above all, while Syndicalism has always called for workers' solidarity, it is realised that there is something even greater, human solidarity. Syndicalism does not confine itself to the limits, however broad, of the class war which is forced upon us.

Let us examine the basis of Syndicalist organisation. It starts where we work and live, the machine shop or office, the village green, our street or city square.

In the workshop, the workers gather together, discuss their problems, make decisions and, if necessary, elect delegates either for a single purpose, as a delegation, or as a committee.

It must here be understood that such elected persons are delegates, not representatives or leaders, and are subject to recall by those who elect them.

Obviously such a method is quite different to the parliamentary way. In Parliament are men who, after giving vague or no promises, are sent to rule us for three or five years. Once there, they cannot be recalled, they may break their promises or change their party, even within a few weeks, but only death or the House of Lords may remove them before the next General Election.

The irreconcilability of these two principles has been shown in the Labour Party by conflict between the leadership and the



anti-nuclear majority. The majority vote at the 1960 Labour Party Conference was for unilateral nuclear disarmament. This the Shadow Cabinet and majority in the Parliamentary Labour Party rejected and left no doubt that, given high office, they would oppose the decision of conference.

Now the Labour Party is a parliamentary party and, according to the Party's jurists, no body can be above or in authority over parliament. This view was backed by the shadowy figure of Earl Attlee, who certainly never bothered about what Conference thought when it came to making or dropping atom bombs.

The majority in Conference sought to uphold the principle of delegation and said, "What is the use of sending delegates to the Conference if they cannot make viable decisions?" Unfortunately, the majority was already pledged to the parliamentary principle and condemned to continue in it.

Let us return to our workshop. Maybe we work in a large factory with thousands of others, groups of whom have particular work problems as well as the general problem. In such a case the machine shop would meet to discuss its particular problems, likewise the moulders, maintenance men, office workers, canteen workers and others, but all would assemble to discuss and decide on problems common to all shops, or to give solidarity action for a particular branch.

In the city or district there might be several such factories and we would soon find it necessary to make contact with them. The way is simple: delegates are sent from each kindred factory to the District Engineering Syndicate, the delegates being subject to recall.

From each district would go delegates to the National Syndicate of Engineering, etc. From these would come the delegates to the National Confederation of Labour, embracing all industries.

Always the structure is federal, giving the greatest possible autonomy and encouraging local initiative. Control is from below, from the rank and file.

We speak of National Federations, like the CNT, of revolutionary Spain, only because nations and national barriers are thrust upon us, but the Syndicalist Workers' Federation looks beyond frontiers to the International, our International Working Men's Association, the symbol of a world without nations and without war.

For the greater part of its existence, during several hundred thousand years, mankind lived without the State, without the Nation, without political government. When primitive society was overthrown, torn by the birth of private property or social classes within, or conquered by an outside force, society was divided.



social war was born. The rulers found it necessary to develop a special force to keep in subjection the slaves. Political government, the State was born.

While the State took over certain functions of primitive society, such as the regulation of human relations—as when the law establishing the death penalty replaced ostracism or banishment as the penalty for murder—its main function remained the suppression of the slaves and the protection of the interests of the ruling class.

## A World without the Bomb

Political society is best suited to governing men according to where they live, but modern society, to be set free from its self-created restrictions, fears and destruction, needs to pass from the government of men to the administration of things.

**“The State began with the crack of the slavedriver’s whip”. It may end in the annihilation of the Hydrogen Bomb. Only the State could produce such monstrous weapons; only the State, haggard by greed and fear, has need of them.**

The people’s need is to learn to produce enough. Remember that the majority of mankind suffer continuous starvation, remember the millions of homeless, the numberless blind, the children condemned to an early death.

We need to learn to live and work together; we can best do that when the fear that nationalism breeds is banished, for, as the Epicurean said, “The greatest evil is fear.”

Our movement against the Bomb (we here speak of the wider movement) is already finding the path of Direct Action. ~~May~~ it also find the way to throw down the walls and frontiers that separate us from our fellows, so that we can join hands with them.

Life is not divided into hermetic compartments, social problems are not contained in stoppered bottles. When we tackle one social problem, we discover others, until we are confronted by the general social problem, class society and the State.

**As we practice Direct Action, as we learn mutual and self confidence, as we learn to throw off the infantile trust in leaders and great men and develop new techniques of social struggle, we shall learn to build a society that is controlled from below, not governed from above, a society without fear, a world without the Bomb.**



# SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION

BRITISH SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

## AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

**THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION** seeks to establish a free society, which will render impossible the growth of a privileged class and the exploitation of man by man. The S.W.F. therefore advocates common ownership and workers' control of the land, industry and all means of production and distribution, on the basis of voluntary co-operation. 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 needs.

**CLASS STRUGGLE.** The interests of the working class and the ruling class are directly opposed. The S.W.F. is based upon the inevitable day-to-day struggle of the workers against those who own and control the means of production and distribution, and will continue that struggle until common ownership and workers' control are achieved.

**DIRECT ACTION.** Victory in the fight against class domination can only be achieved by the direct action of the workers themselves. The S.W.F. rejects all parliamentary and similar activity as deflecting the workers from the class struggle into paths of class collaboration.

**THE STATE.** The State in all its forms is the enemy of the workers, and cannot exist within a classless society. The S.W.F. does not, therefore, hope to use the State to achieve the emancipation of the working class; it does not seek to obtain seats in the Cabinet or Parliament. Nor does it desire to build a new State on the ruins of the old. Any attempt, by an allegedly working class party, to create a new State, can only result in a new ruling class.

**ORGANISATION.** To achieve these aims, the workers must organise. They must replace the hundreds of craft and general trade unions by syndicalist industrial unions. As an immediate step to that end, the S.W.F. aids the formation of workers' committees in all factories, mines, offices, shipyards, mills and other places of work, and their development into industrial unions, federated to an all-national Federation of Labour.

**INTERNATIONALISM.** The S.W.F., as a section of the International Working Men's Association, stands firm for international working class solidarity.



## POSTSCRIPT

The Bomb, Direct Action & the State was written in 1962, (as it happens I wrote the first draft of the first half,) our predictions as to the possibility of Labour abolishing nuclear weapons was amply vindicated. Though naturally we did not foresee Gaitskell's death & Wilson's inheritance.

But in writing it we overestimated the honesty and sincerity of other CND members in that we assumed that when a Labour Government was elected CND would continue in existence, & after a time Labour unilateralists would shed their illusions & become more militant.

Again while we warned of the dangerous elitism of Leninist groups, we warned that these are apt to change their position over night, we underestimated their influence.

Believing that nearly all rank & file campaigners sincerely worked for the cause they professed we expected them to turn from Leninism when this was seen to pursue other conflicting aims.

In fact the Committee of 100 has died, CND can only now march to bury its own bones at Aldermaston with less people on a national march



than a local group could once assemble.

Even the very rapid (proportionately) growth of the SWF - the group that published TE, DA, TS was short-lived & it has since declined.

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So that though the predictions we made have been more than vindicated the results have been very different.

Consequently this new situation needs a new perspective in the short term.

But to get this it is well to compare the situation today with that of 1962.

Far fewer people now have illusions in the Labour Party, even those few people who remaining within it can still be considered socialist have become defensive about it.

They know the Wilson regime laid the ground base for the anti-working class policies of the present government.

They know there is no evidence to suggest - and much to deny - that a Labour Party Conference can combat the betrayals of the party in office.

Similarly the suppression of the Czechs, the quiescence of the French



Communist Party in May 68, the Moscow-Peking split & other similar developments have all contributed to growing disillusion with the C.P.

Though in the SWF's paper, Direct Action we had considered the then nascent split between Khrushchev & Mao, & predicted separate Maoist parties we did not consider these in TB, DA, TS.

As it has turned out this has been a lack for the major factor in the four years that followed the pamphlet's publication was the emergence of a number of Maoist, Maoist-influenced & half Trotskyist half Maoist groups.

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In The Bomb, Direct Action & The State when discussing non-violent direct action we contrasted the actions of groups at rocket bases with large and pointless sit-downs in London squares.

We stressed that non-violent DA was useful as a means of propaganda to the extent that it was used seeking out workers most directly involved in an evil (in that instance the Bomb.)

There was even then a tendency



to emasculate direct action, while professing very revolutionary opinions by keeping it isolated from workers under the pretext of political relevance.

But even the most stupid "leader" of the Committee of 100 never proposed that the major sphere of our activities should be in a square outside an embassy on a day when it was closed.

Put this became the norm for demonstrations against the Vietnam War.

It was no use to mention to those organizers who in the heat of the hour captured the imaginations of most demonstrators that while this building was empty there was an American military mess round the corner that was not.

(The fact that the police arrested more people from a thirty-strong demonstration at the Mess than a 30,000 strong one at the embassy, shows the relative significance the authorities put on the two places.)

Moreover they showed supreme disinterest when told that British firms produced computers, electronic & radar equipment, & CS gasses for the Vietnam War. Anything that was not a direct



attack on the USA was seen as irrelevant.

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Despite, & not because of, the "revolutionary" political theories that proliferated in the last ten years there have been very significant upsurges of radicalism:-

women's liberation, student & school student protests, free psychology, squatters, gypsy actions, complainants' unions, Commune Movement, folk song boom, Black Power, Northern Irish Civil Rights; -  
not all of which have of course been socialist.

Despite the fact that Unilateralism, (the one demand posed by a mass movement since the War, which directly challenged the power of the state,) has been abandoned;

Despite the revival of vanguardist-elitist political theories whose promoters view themselves as Marx-ordained "saviours from on high" (they overlook the "no") for the benighted workers;

Despite the purblindness which leads so many to assume that all social evils in this world stem only from the USA, that capitalists, fascists & militarists elsewhere are not capable of skullduggery on their own behalf;



There has been a widespread growth of desire to have a say in the running of one's own life; coupled with a refusal on the part of super-exploited or deprived groups to accept their poverty.

Certainly they have not necessarily been socialist movements, students are often trainees for privileged positions, & Black Power groups have been known to be used by rising ruling elites as ladders to power.

Rightly, therefore, there have been socialist warnings that some such movements divide the workers & can lead away from socialism. But this is apt to be overstressed & ignores the dialectic of developing consciousness.

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Often in the past under the slogan of unity & integration minorities have been expected to be assimilated into the majority & abandon their own distinctive culture & aspirations.

This is accepted as the error of the Liberals within society at large but is not as widely acknowledged as that of many in the labour movement, demanding that sectional interests, even more oppressed interests, subordinate themselves to the interests of the movement as a whole.



In the final analysis, in that only class action can change society this perspective has much to recommend it though it ignores the degree to which such minorities joining the socialist camp en bloc invigorate it.

But in the short-term people can only play a role in the struggle for human justice & brotherhood to the extent that they have self-respect & struggles such as Black Power serve the vital purpose of building this self-confidence & esteem.

While demands on free schooling and psychology serve to combat the state indoctrination of workers. (AS has also the folk song boom & even much of the drop out culture.)

By combatting indoctrination this development prepares the way for further future struggles.

Indeed the movements of the last ten years have even served to raise the consciousness of people already socialist; many who had become revolutionary despite their schooling had not appreciated the full extent to which it instilled subservience until they saw their younger comrades victimised for protesting.

So though the struggles of the last ten years have not taken the syndicalist form for which we had hoped they did prepare the ground for it in the future.



In this respect it is relevant that Tribune has produced a pamphlet supporting moves to give the Labour Party rank & file control over the party leadership.

(This is of course no new move, but it has come out with more support & in a more detailed form than formerly. That fact that it has been given a cautious welcome by Wilson & others who in office showed no respect for the rank & file's wishes could be the kiss of death.)

One way & another it will be supported by many constituency Labour parties, trade unions, & on a smaller scale one will see 'revolutionary' vanguardist groups, - while criticising Tribune for half-heartedness - talking as if this desirable objective can be achieved by the means proposed.

It should be noted that none of these, - CLPs, trade unions, or Leninist parties - is noted for its own internal democracy, & for the ease with which rank & file workers control it.

But unless the workers can control unions, constituency parties & bolshevist groups they cannot use these to control the mass party. These therefore cannot contribute to workers' control of the labour movement.



Moreover if these organisations were susceptible to rank & file control they would be very different. Each now has full time officials who pay scant attention to the wishes of their members & each expels dissidents and those who ask awkward questions.

To re-organise them to provide rank & file control it would be necessary to borrow from anarchism, to have local community direct action groups, industrial syndicates & libertarian propagandist federations.

For only when the workers have attained socialist consciousness & are ready to organise themselves to make the revolution will the mass movement claiming to represent them see its leaders ready to yield their power.

So there is no short term substitute for anarchist consciousness. Syndicalism which was in the past a good road to this consciousness is now a method of struggle and a corrective to a tendency among many revolutionaries to retreat from mass involvement.



To an anarchist actions here & now are valid or invalid to the extent that they help raise consciousness - that is that they are good or bad propoganda to this end - & in that the concept of freedom & cooperation can only be propogated by those whose lives embody that cooperation and respect for others' freedom coupled with assertion of one's own. In the last analysis basic anarchist propoganda lies in the way the anarchist himself lives and how anarchist groups organize themselves.

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

Pollution, nuclear & other wars of mass destruction, put a question mark over the survival of the world ~ mankind, as a product of their ('free', 'communist') power struggle & disregard of human values.

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. Govern-  
ment itself - as well as the un-  
derlying institutions - perpet-  
uates war, oppression, corruption,  
exploitation & misery.

We advocate a worldwide society of  
communities & councils based on co-  
operation & free agreement from the  
bottom (federalism) instead of co-  
ercion & domination from the top  
(centralism). Regimentation of  
people must be replaced by reg-  
ulation of things.

Freedom without socialism is  
chaotic, but socialism without  
freedom is despotism. Anarchism  
is free socialism.

Free socialism can only be achiev-  
ed by the direct action of the  
vast majority of the workers.

This direct action must be under  
their own control not that of a  
leadership, whether parliamentary  
or allegedly revolutionary.



Faced with vicious anti-worker legislation which will increase as modern managerialist capitalism - which brought the Common Market into existence - develops, the trade unions are handicapped in their fight.

Anarcho-Syndicalists have always warned that the state will alter the rules if the worker looks like making gains by normal means; have always warned that the reformist unions accommodate to the system & handicap struggle.

Workers would be wise to look again at the anarcho-syndicalist case. This pamphlet is intended as an introduction to the topic.