

THE

Syndicalist

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL

August 1952

Vol. 1 No. 4

Twopence

1 - Dagenham

2 - Locomotive Shed Men

3 - USDAW

Danger Signals

THERE have been three incidents during the last month which, put together, give an ominous indication of what lies ahead for workers.

First, the Dagenham strikes. At Briggs Bodies, the makers of car and commercial vehicle bodies for Ford's, the strike for an increase of 9d. an hour is, at the time of writing, well into its second month. The strike at Ford's, however, caused by dismissals through redundancy because the assembly line was not getting bodies from Briggs, soon collapsed under pressure from union leaders, management and press.

The latter, because strike committee chairmen at both Briggs and Fords were known communists, were able to raise the Red Bogey, which, together with lack of support from other factories, demoralised the strikers to the extent that at one point they are fighting among themselves. (Remember what we said in our first issue, last May, about the Communists being an embarrassment?)

But 25,000 workers were beaten back to work with nothing more than a promise to discuss the position between union and management.

THE RAILWAYMEN

The second significant incident was the defeat of the locomotive shed workers of the Western Region of British Railways.

They started a work-to-rule to back up their demand for an increase in their piece-work rates. Time rates have increased by about 16s. a week since 1947, but there has been no corresponding raise for piece work. The men at nine depots therefore stopped working overtime or by the piece, and the subsequent slowing down of the work began to hold up passenger and freight trains from Paddington and throughout the Western Region.

The management's answer was to declare their willingness to allow the men to continue at day-work, and began to engage more workers at existing rates to get the work done. Unfortunately, existing rates do not represent a living wage to-day; the men are compelled to work overtime or work hard at piece rates in order to make a decent living. So the men

had to give in and go back to piece work at the old rates. Defeat Number 2.

MONCKTON'S REFUSAL

The third warning signal was definitely a stop light. It is Minister of Labour Sir Walter Monckton's reference back of USDAW's wage increase claim for 1,500,000 workers in the distributive trades. And, whereas the unions have given no support to the Ford's workers or the railwaymen, in this instance they are highly indignant.

Here was a wage claim that has gone through all the constitutional channels. Starting off



"It's for your own good, of course!"

with a claim for an all-round increase of £1 a week, USDAW settled for 10s. for men and 7s. 6d. for women. This had been recommended by twelve properly constituted wages councils throughout the country. Under the Wages Councils Act of 1945, however, the Minister of Labour has to make an Order giving effect to the proposals. Sir Walter Monckton refused to do that, and referred the matter back to the Wages Councils for further consideration—i.e. either drastic reduction or withdrawal altogether.

Unfortunately for USDAW's indignation, it was that great Trade Unionist Ernest Bevin who framed the law, while he was Minister of Labour, and the unions have been accepting it ever since. If you accept a law you should accept it whether it works against you or for you, but the only previous occasion when it worked against a union was when George Isaacs—the good Labour man—was Minister of Labour and tried the same as Tory Monckton is doing to-day. Then, TUC indignation led to a protest to the Prime Minister, who gave way. But will Churchill give way, when it's only workers who will suffer?

OUR POSITION TO-DAY

These three events are indicative of the changing situation of the workers to-day. For some time it has been clear that a hardening

attitude on the part of the employers was to be expected. While the workers were in strength, however, they could not be attacked, but now there is the beginning of a pool of unemployed—and the bosses are not slow to take advantage of it.

Clearly the small scale and haphazard actions which have been sufficient to keep our heads above water during the past seven years will no longer fill the bill. More ruthless action by the bosses will have to be met by more determined action by the workers.

The weapons of direct action are many and varied; they must all be used as the circumstances demand. Most important of all, however, we must see a re-emergence of working class solidarity. Attacks will be made upon ones and twos here and there, but if the workers remember that "An injury to one is an injury to all", they will cease to put faith in laws that can be used against them, or in leaders whose real sympathies lie with the Government.

They will put faith in themselves, and in themselves they will find the strength to win the struggles that lie ahead.

Printing.....

The D. C. Thompson Farce

MANCHESTER

AT the time of writing, the D. C. Thomson dispute has (apparently) reached a new phase with the failure of the court injunction against the unions.

At the same time the farce is heightened at the shop floor level by the news that the pickets, in Manchester at least, are quite unpopular with the men on whose "behalf" they are "fighting"! They are being hustled out of the way and are told to "stop playing silly b—s" (reported as heard).

Thomson's workers don't want to leave Thomson's, even in Manchester where there is plenty of alternative employment. For one thing, Thomson has (for his own purposes, no doubt) provided a quite generous pension scheme. Incidentally, my informant, a member of the Manchester Guardian NATSOPA section, tells me he thinks the published figure of 70% union membership is grossly over-stated, and that unionists are in a definite minority.

This squares with the total lack of response by D.C.T. workers to the union's appeals, and with the fact that both union and employers have an interest in over-stating the figure; the first in claiming mass support and a democratic position, and the second to prove a danger from wilful-defiance-and-breach of contract by the workers. Apparently the only people anxious to make plain their lack of interest in the union are the workers concerned!

ERG.

The Miners.....

N.C.B. Reject the Miners' Claim

AS we go to press we read that the NCB has turned down flat the miners' claim for a 30s. a week increase.

The miners' delegation is to report back to the NUM Executive. Then the dispute will be referred to arbitration, then submitted to Sir Walter Monckton, who most likely will repeat his decision on the USDAW claim.

But the miners want that 30s. now. What are they going to do about it themselves?

The Syndicate and the Commune

A SYNDICATE can of course mean many things, from a collection of business tycoons to a number of people running a whip-pet. However, its constant meaning is always people grouped together for a particular purpose, and in revolutionary theory a syndicate is the term used for an organisation of workers which aims to do more than a trade union, namely, to take over the industry. Syndicalism is the only theory which believes that the workers can run industry through their syndicates. Some people get confused when they think for instance, of what the fascists spoke about—but they wanted workers' and employers' syndicates united together in the State. This is a far different thing. A syndicate can be used for many purposes, but we want to see unity not with the employers nor with the State, but against both.

The plain object of a workers' syndicate is therefore to do the job which trade unions claim they exist for, namely, defend the day-to-day interests of the workers, but also to be there for the express purpose of expropriation of the industry. This in times of stress can be done very easily. The industry can also be handed back very easily. That is why certain political socialists believe in supporting industrial action in spite of its contradiction to their theories—so that control will be handed to their party members. Syndicalism, however, is the idea that the workers should run the industry themselves, and is against all parties and all "ready-made" organisations.

There cannot possibly be any blue-print for the structure of a syndicate. It can only correspond to the working-class level of the day. Syndicalist movements could be composed of federated shop-committees, factory councils, shop-stewards' organisations, industrial unions or even (in a non-industrial country) trade unions, so long as by it could be achieved the control of industry by the workers themselves. The sort of movement they created now might

be one of revolutionary militants, i.e. an industrial union or federation of factory militants or committees. This delegation of the struggle to the conscious few is not something we shrink from participating in, but our constant aim is always the "100 per cent. committee", that is to say, all at the place of production, and a libertarian working class can create a really anarcho-syndicalist movement which does not need delegates because the men on the job know what they want and can get it, rising therefore even above industrial unionism.

We cannot say in advance how the syndicalist movement will arise, but we can put forward the principles that will animate it, and our aim is one industry—one union, so that each industry can be controlled by the workers in that industry when they are strong enough to take it over. Each place of work in that industry will thus be linked together to form the syndicate, while locally all the syndicates of whatsoever industry will unite in the com-

mune—in time of the present society a form of the trades hall, which might initiate such things as the Peckham Health Scheme, but which in a free society would be the commune that, containing as it would the whole local community, would be able to take over the functions of a town council.

We do not aim too high in thinking of the future role of the syndicate and the commune. We know full well that at the moment it is only a question of forming a few committees here and there in industry, and a few local groups. But if they are based on this conception of a future society in which economic control can be exercised by the workers through syndicates, and governmental authority can be dispensed with because of free local association through the commune, then "we are building the new society in the shell of the old" and in time of social stress and change we will be able to show the way to freedom.

A.M.

Interest • • • • •

Do We Need Change?

GLASGOW

IF we take a really good look at things and use our observation properly we can recognise that nothing remains the same for all time, but in fact everything is in a state of change. What seemed good for us yesterday may be looked upon with disdain to-day; some ideas which we held yesterday may not be to our interests to-day, and so if we continue to hold on to these ideas it simply means that we have let our feelings overcome our better sense. Max Stirner (the German anarchist) would say "What the reasoning rejects, the heart often beats for". We can only get over this by using our observation and experience.

Many of us who find ourselves forced to sell our labour power in order to live believe that

this is a circumstance which should not be tolerated because our labour power is invariably sold below its true value and therefore the transaction is not in our interests. Thus we periodically demand greater value for our labour. But how have we conducted ourselves in these demands? Have we used our observation and experience properly?

To my mind this does not seem to be the case, for we have not made these demands directly ourselves, but have made them through the medium of others who have not similar interests to ourselves, but in fact have interests identical with those from whom we make our demands. If we are to act in our own interests and consider this reasonable, is it not unreasonable to expect others to act against their interests?

For some considerable time now (too long, in fact) we have expected officials whose salaries are maintained and can only continue as long as there is no strife in industry, to act against their own interests. Furthermore, if the hierarchy of the TU movement have capital invested in industry is it not absurd to expect them to be sympathetic towards action by the workers that will hinder profits emanating from industry? In fact if we use our observation we must recognise that the structure of the TU movement is incapable of acting in our interests. Why? Because the TU movement like everything else has changed.

When the trade unions were formed they grew out of the need of the workers to demand higher wages for the sale of their labour power, and this was at a time when capitalism was in its infancy. At this period they were able to bargain for wages and gain certain concessions in the immediate interests of those who prostituted their labour to the merchant class. Since then, however, the TU movement has undergone a change and the rank and file have failed to see it. They do not recognise, or they refuse to recognise, the co-relation of the change from private enterprise to State monopoly and the change from craft guilds to labour bureaucracy. Now that the tendency is for industries to be nationalised, we can see that the interests of employers, politicians and TU officials telescope into each other. It is this nationalisation, State monopoly and large-scale modern industry which in part make the craft unions unable to act in the interests of the worker.

I said before that everything was subject to change. Are the minds of the rank and file members of the unions exempt from this rule? When will they see that it is in their interests to create an organisation capable of managing industry in a fashion suitable to the needs of those who operate industry? Our observation and experience should show clearly that an organisation with a new type of structure is necessary for this aim. If officials with large salaries develop interests in contradiction with

Continued on p. 4

History • • • • •

Syndicalism in France

AT the time when British trade unionism was building up its movement on the basis of craft unionism and seeking to defend those gains by parliamentary action and labour representation, the French workers were building the first syndicalist movement.

Owing to the influence of anarchist ideas on the French industrial workers during the last part of the nineteenth century and the early part of this, the French working-class itself—no armchair professor or writer—began to formulate the principles on which syndicalism was founded.

Although owing to the development of French industry at that time, it was not possible for them to form industrial unions (in any case this is a later conception we will deal with in a further article, on the American

I.W.W.) the French syndicates kept very closely to the principle of workshop meetings forming the basis of the movement, and above all firmly adhered to the belief that it was not only necessary to organize to fight for wage increases and concessions from the employers, but that the organizations so created should be gradually taking the initiative in taking control of the places of work away from the employers and into the hands of the people working there.

In these early syndicalist struggles the workers used many tactics such as the work-to-rule, boycott, social strike and stay-in strike, that have passed into industrial practice, and which parliamentary socialists would like to see relegated to the past now they have got to the position of being part and parcel of the State machinery, against which the militant French workers rebelled forty years ago.

Owing to the patriotic fervour caused by preparation for war and finally war itself, revolutionary ideas dwindled among the French workers, and they began to trust the Socialist politicians, who gained control of the C.G.T. (former syndicalist movement), and step by step reduced it to an imitation of the English trade unions. Later the Communists took control, but made sure that where they were in control the workers' influence would be subordinated to the Party requirements.

However, for many years a minority movement has existed in France of revolutionary syndicalists. The anarcho-syndicalists before World War II worked in two ways: one through the Union Anarchiste which carried on inside the mass unions, two through the C.G.T.S.R. (Revolutionary Syndicalism C.G.T.) which was independent. Since the war (with the capture by the Stalinists of the C.G.T.) these have worked together as an independent body (C.N.T.)

Reading.....

THE WILHELMSHAVEN REVOLT By "ICARUS"

Describes the revolt of the German sailors at Wilhelmshaven, and the Commune they set up, by one who participated in these events. It is a vital piece of working-class revolutionary history.

40 pages

6d.

SYNDICALISM—THE WORKERS' NEXT STEP

By PHILIP SANSOM

48 pages

One Shilling

FREEDOM PRESS

27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1

FOR many people control is too extral, do not know the special skills and necessary before on about. One has to almost, one could s

While recognising aggressive middle-of-the democracy in the

Do You Re and then F

WHEN we com May, we did s viewing our position appeared.

In these three m heavily financially, pected to begin with more than compens that the paper has that, thanks to the of our comrades ha SYNDICALIST has been engineers, railwayme had never heard of

One of our Scottis one pit where THE "the Gaffer came a reading by the light am told their work was nothing but argu of the paper all day"

And just that sm seems to us to make cost of publication. increase circulation f ing every possible e bring out THE SYND but still, in order to supporting, we must lation.

Those comrades w 50 to 200 are setting ously, not all our problems would be s how about readers w read it with approval it? Even in these l or two bought and p workmates won't bre to-day costs more SYNDICALIST.

The task of distri interested reader. I syndicalism we don't you do, it is in yo much as you possibly Newsagents are not to a twopenny mon even when they are message! There is it worth their while.

THE SYNDICALIST, to make profit. All t ial and corresponde tarily—so is the fold paper, setting, compi however, have to b only be done throug

All the signs are class struggle is begi a paper like THE SY ideas on how to d ahead. That is why

IF YOU LIKE

The S

The Co-Partnership Racket

LONDON.

FOR many people the idea of workers' control is too extreme. The workers, after all, do not know the problems of management; special skills and knowledge and aptitudes are necessary before one can order other people about. One has to be trained for leadership—almost, one could say, *born* for it.

While recognising this, however, your progressive middle-of-the-roader is aware that democracy in the political field has to be

matched by democracy in industrial life, and so all the schemes of joint consultation, worker participation in management, and so forth have come into being.

And as an extension of the output bonus idea, to give the workers a stake in the firm, has also developed the co-partnership and profit sharing scheme.

One of the largest organisations practising these ideas is the John Lewis Partnership, which, as the name implies, is not a company in the ordinary sense, but a *partnership* of all the employees. This group of retail stores, numbering over sixty throughout the country, has been operating co-partnership for 23 years under the leadership of Chairman John Spedan Lewis, and for those who think that this cosy little arrangement can operate to the benefit of the workers, we might examine its results over the past five years.

Then, when the retail trade was enjoying a seller's market, when there was still some of the gratuity left in the Post Office and "too much money was chasing too few goods", then, when shop assistants working on a commission basis might be expected to do fairly well, Mr. Lewis decided to abolish the commission system and put all his "partners" on a wage basis only.

Came the end of the seller's market—and with it the distinction for the partners of John Spedan Lewis of being the first to experience a wage cut! It seems they are to get the worst of both worlds. Those with incomes below £600 a year are to lose 5 per cent. and the wage cut increases until in the £2,000 a year class it means a reduction of 20 per cent.

Against this the Chairman points out that in the 23 years of partnership over £2 million has been distributed among the partners as their share of the profits—i.e. what is left after the shareholders have their fixed 4½ per cent. This large-sounding sum, however, works out at an average of less than £12 per year for each of the 10,500 members of this organisation, and since it is distributed according to the status of the "partner" in the firm, it follows that the lowest paid workers, who need it most, do not really benefit very much from the sharing of profits.

John Spedan Lewis obviously sees himself as a great and enlightened benefactor of his workers, and in the columns of the *Partnership Gazette* one reads references to "the use I have made of my whole life" and "the Partnership's supreme aim is the happiness of its members". Rather plaintively, though, he has to admit that "many Partners seem to have difficulty in understanding that they are in any real sense the owners of the Partnership's business" and it is significant that any worker writing in to the *Gazette* (a well produced weekly house organ with 4,000 circulation) who is at all critical of the way things are being run in his own business is careful to think up a pen-name to hide his identity. Mr. Lewis (who regards criticism as "mud-slinging") pats himself on the back for even publishing such letters, but does not stop to ask why they are always anonymous.

Perhaps the attitude of such a management can be best summed up in its own words: "If you want your team to work in the spirit of owners, you must give them the feeling of owners." And the whole facade of democracy welfare and the rest which has been built up by John Spedan Lewis is calculated to give the feeling—but not the reality—of ownership.

And the facade is particularly thin when one gathers that the management employ a system for getting information on their salesmen and women "to stop them damaging their own and their partner's business".

To be charitable one must assume that Mr. Lewis is sincere in his attempt to form a new kind of commercial organisation. So sincere that to describe it as a "constitutional monarchy with a written constitution" appears to him to be a recommendation. But the fact is that he is running a vast commercial concern on capitalist lines, and because what profits are left after the shareholders (including Mr. Lewis and family) have had their guaranteed share are distributed among the workers instead of going to the State in tax, does not alter the authoritarian and exploitative nature of the concern.

Under capitalism there can be no equality; between management and managed, no partnership that does not operate to the benefit of the management. P.S.

He Should Know

"MAN has learnt to rely on a beneficent State which hands out everything to him. He is becoming more and more like cattle in lush grass" said the Dean of Manchester at a thanksgiving service for the Manchester Royal Infirmary recently.

The dignitaries of the Church "reap not, neither do they sow" but have always had everything handed out to them by those who do the work. As for the lush grass, probably the good Dean would rather see it as in the words of the old Wobbly song; "Work all day, Live on hay, You'll get pie in the sky—When you die!"

Read:.....

FREEDOM

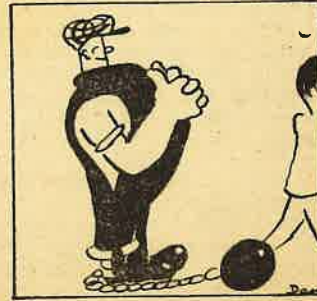
The Anarchist Weekly, 3d.
From: *Freedom Press*, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

PORTWORKERS' CLARION

Organ of the Merseyside Portworkers' Committee, 2d. monthly.
From: Bill Murphy, 25 Harding Ave., Bidston, Birkenhead, Cheshire.
Freedom Bookshop, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

SCISSOR BILL

Co-Partnership



IF YOU LIKE

The Syndicalist

DISTRIBUTE IT!

WHEN we commenced publication last May, we did so with the intention of reviewing our position after three issues had appeared.

In these three months we have lost quite heavily financially, but that was to be expected to begin with, anyway. This has been more than compensated for by the approval that the paper has won from its readers, and that, thanks to the energy with which some of our comrades have been distributing, THE SYNDICALIST has been reaching miners, dockers, engineers, railwaymen and many others who had never heard of our ideas before.

One of our Scottish comrades writes that in one pit where THE SYNDICALIST is distributed, "the Gaffer came across six of the miners reading by the light from their pit lamps. I am told their work suffered that day as there was nothing but arguments about the contents of the paper all day".

And just that small incident, on its own, seems to us to make worth while the effort and cost of publication. Nevertheless, the need to increase circulation is very great. By practising every possible economy, we are able to bring out THE SYNDICALIST extremely cheaply, but still, in order to become financially self-supporting, we must double the existing circulation.

Those comrades who take bundles of from 50 to 200 are setting an example which, obviously, not all our readers can follow (our problems would be solved if they could!) But how about readers who buy one copy a month, read it with approval, and then forget all about it? Even in these hard times an extra copy or two bought and given away to friends and workmates won't break anyone. One cigarette to-day costs more than a copy of THE SYNDICALIST.

The task of distribution is the task of the interested reader. If you don't agree with syndicalism we don't expect you to help. If you do, it is in your own interests to do as much as you possibly can to spread *your* ideas. Newsagents are not interested in giving space to a twopenny monthly with a limited sale—even when they are not unsympathetic to our message! There is not enough profit to make it worth their while.

THE SYNDICALIST, however, is not produced to make profit. All the writing, drawing, editorial and correspondence work is done voluntarily—so is the folding and despatching. The paper, setting, comping, machining and blocks, however, have to be paid for—and that can only be done through increased sales.

All the signs are that a period of intense class struggle is beginning. The workers need a paper like THE SYNDICALIST to circulate their ideas on how to deal with the tough times ahead. That is why we say:—

Blood on the Coal

RADSTOCK

NOT a day goes by without it being possible to read in the daily paper of the death of and serious injury to another half a dozen or so miners somewhere in the British coal-fields. A couple of weeks ago it was the Point of Ayr Colliery in Scotland, with the failure of vital machinery causing death by asphyxiation and drowning of several miners who were employed at sinking a new shaft. Since then the daily toll from falls of roof, explosions and haulage accidents have kept up the average of about 10 miners' lives per week.

With the most recent pit disaster (at the time of writing to-morrow's news excepted) at the Greenside Colliery in Westmorland, the reading public may once again add another few lives to the grisly cost of raising coal.

For the moment, John Citizen, forgetting the slaty-coal jibes of last winter, silently resolves not to be a miner under any circumstances, even if offered £20 a week for doing the job which carries the princely wage of £7 "odds" for five shifts.

But the really gruesome cost of coal is not to be found in these occasional paragraphs in the daily papers, but rather in the statistics of the "Pneumo" Boards and the reports of coroners' inquests in mining areas. According to the recently published findings of a Government safety research organisation the greatest danger to life and limb in the pits is dust. Coal dust at the conveyor points and ends which cause explosions and Silica dust that kills just as surely as a fall of roof. Silica dust that is so fine that it is perpetually air-borne, that settles in the lungs, that makes the hearts of the victims of its dread disease, pound at the least exertion, that visibly reduces giants of men to mere hulks in a matter of a couple of years.

Those of us who live and work in the mining communities did not need the ponderous pronouncements of research-men to know the difference between the swift but often passing anguish of a bad "pat" or accident, and the slow but inevitably fatal agony of a pneumo sufferer. We daily witness the losing battle against the inroads made on the health of affected miners. The successive bouts of alleged bronchitis before ultimate diagnosis of "pneumo". The slowing of gait and hollowing of face, the clutching of stick and support, the fight for breath during these hot airless nights. We record the gradual sinking into poverty, the struggle to exist on the pittance doled out with grandiose gestures by the State and all the thousand and one things which go to make up the lot of those stricken by the greatest death-dealer of the pits.

The twin evils of accidents and disease will always be present in this ghastly industry, evils which the application of scientific skill can only minimise but never abolish. The British miners, however, will be doomed to disappointment if they expect the partial success of the National Coal Board in lowering the accident rate and the treating of the dust menace, to continue indefinitely. The economy of this country is moving, fast moving into a period when the unceasing drive to show a continuing profit in spite of a shrinking market must limit the amount which will be expended on safety measures and research. Moreover, as the demand for more miners slackens so will the urgency of keeping the existing miners safe.

Solution of these problems of pit-work can only come when the industry is freed from the bondage of paying yearly toll to ex-owners and the overall concern of profit and loss; controlled and managed by those actively employed in the industry; with the utilization of the wealth created at so great a cost and effort by

miners, to raise working conditions and the standard of living. Hours of work must be lowered and the promotion of intensive research into ways and means of combatting the ever-present threat to the safety of our miners. Finally every effort must be made to rapidly develop alternative sources of heat and power and so end for all time, this archaic situation which condemns the miner to scratch away for coal deep in the earth's bowels, under conditions of extreme physical hardship, not to mention danger, for one quarter of his entire life, in order to satisfy the demands of modern industrial society.

JOHNNIE MINER.

LETTERS.....

The Boss's Nark

SEEKING criticism of THE SYNDICALIST, I find the majority of the workers desire to be left alone to deal with their problems, yet fear the economic consequences of appearing unorthodox to the busybodies who come along and force conditions upon them.

Then there are the representatives and delegates of so-called working class organisations who oppose (?) exploitation and war yet, with financial support, agree to the legal punishment of those who do not conform with the requirements of exploitation and war, using such means as conscription, 1305 and discipline tribunals.

Only a boss's nark can outnark a copper's nark. The workers are the victims of both.

Huddersfield.

A.L.

The Real Issue

Talking about those people who "want the benefits of trade unionism without paying for them" reminds me of one case where I worked when a Jehovah's Witness declined to join the union. Of course the management put pressure on the Bible-puncher to do so (what a wonderful commentary this is on what Trade Unionism has become—it used to be a fighting organisation, at least in theory, and now the employer makes you join it!) However, he would not give way despite the fact that a trade union official tried desperately to talk him round, insisting on the fact that the Lord said it was wrong to be "unlawfully yoked with the heathen". "It's not a question of being unlawfully yoked," said the labour fakir. "It's only a question of paying one-and-ninepence a week." Which when you come to think of it is as true a description as any.

London.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST.

The Anarcho-Syndicalist point of view can be heard in:

GLASGOW—

Maxwell St. (Argyll St.), Sundays at 7 p.m.

LONDON—

Hyde Park, Sundays at 4.30 p.m.

Manette St. (Char. X Rd.), Saturdays at 6 p.m.

Tower Hill, Fridays at 12.30 p.m.

The Syndicalist

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL

Monthly Twopence

84a Whitechapel High Street, London, E.1

Tel: B1Shopsgate 3015

Subscription Rates:

Single copy: 3/6 for 12 issues

Two copies: 5/6 for 12 issues

post free

P.O.'s and cheques should be made out to "The Syndicalist"

Printed by Philip Sansom and Published by the Anarcho-Syndicalist Committee at 84a Whitechapel High Street, London, E.1.

Unionism • • • • •

The Good Union Man

EDINBURGH.

FROM time to time we read in the national Press, in the form of "Letters to the Editor", condemnation of any and every action taken by the workers which doesn't meet with the approval of some "Good Union Man". This in itself is an indication of what the trade unions have degenerated into, but as is often the case, when trade unionists follow this up by demanding that all "unofficial" action be made illegal, it is time we had a closer look at the "Good Union Man".

There are many workers who would claim that title on the grounds that they had paid into a union for thirty years or so, others again that they attended all the Branch Meetings, etc. To really get at what a "Good Union Man" is nowadays however, a little "unofficial" action is necessary to drag him into the open.

When "unofficial" action has been decided upon the "Good Union Man" takes part but from the very start he is out to sabotage it. He can always be relied upon to magnify any difficulties the workers come up against. He refuses to take part in any activity designed to help the strikers, is continually criticising and his stock phrase is "I don't know why we came out". This is kept up until the workers who are of course feeling the pinch, begin to weaken, with this the line changes to, "Look at the money we're losing".

From there on it is plain sailing for the "Good Union Man" and the workers go down in defeat. He hasn't finished yet however. Should the union hold an inquiry into the strike he finds himself invited to appear along with a few workers whom the union intends to expel, this gives, or is intended to give, a democratic appearance to the "purge". In any case, in due course a number of workers are expelled from the union whether or not they attend the "purge" and a report of the inquiry is circulated to the membership. (and no doubt the management). Our "Good Union Man" is "earning his stars".

This has worked quite well in the past but with wage claims being rejected by the dozen and union leaders "advising" us against "unofficial" action, the choice is clear. We can accept the wage freeze, work harder and become "Good Union Men" or we can alternatively reject the "freeze", work harder to wreck the capitalist system and become syndicalists. The future will be what we want only if we ourselves decide now what it is that we want and take the necessary steps.

R. LYNN.

T. O'M.

Need We Change?

Continued from p. 2

our own, then let's have no salaried officials. If craft unions within a particular industry tend to divide the workers in that industry then let us create a union which will embrace all the workers in that industry so that their interests become identified with each other's. If we are sceptical about any administrative forces outside of industry, let's see that any administrators (who may be necessary to co-ordinate our efforts with others in different industries pursuing similar interests and aims) just receive the same wages as those working in industry, to ensure an identity of interest, and let's ensure that we keep our administrative force subject to recall at any given time.

For if our administrators are going to change, then let's see that we play a part in changing them constantly in our interests. This in a word means new principles; it means an organisation with a decentralised control; it means an organism created for the benefit of each and everyone comprising it.