



THE

Syndicalist

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL

January 1953

Vol. I No. 9

Twopence

A Living Wage For a Five-Day Week - First

Miners Must Fight Back!

WITHIN the next few weeks, the miners of Britain will have a golden opportunity to give their employers, the National Coal Board, a grim warning that the miners' demand for a substantial wage increase for all "day-wage" men, must be met forthwith.

On April 30th next, the existing "voluntary" Saturday shift working agreement comes up for renewal and some time before that date, miners will indicate their attitude to the proposal to continue the agreement for a further year. To renew the Saturday working agreement without the wage increase, in the face of a rising cost of living, is to tamely accept a wage cut.

Since the last wage increase of over a year ago, the rising cost of living has virtually reduced the present minimum underground day wage of £7 0s. 6d. per week to a mere £6 12s.—a loss of 11s. 6d. in purchasing power, to offset which the N.C.B. insults the miner by offering a miserly 1s. per day increase to only a minority of the lower-paid mine workers.

Miners from every coalfield have been unanimous in rejecting this contemptible "offer", and in pits all over the country feeling is running high against the state of affairs which allows the great banking concerns to declare increased dividends, insists on the yearly toll of approximately £15 million in compensation to ex-owners, and in interest charges, but callously persists in its refusal to pay a living wage to the 400,000 day-wage men in the mining industry. Because of the nature of their work and the fact that a high percentage of them are partially disabled, these day-wage men are precluded from participating in the, relatively speaking, higher-paid piece-work systems and jobs, and are only able to make ends meet by working overtime at week-ends.



"But why won't he produce more—for less?"

It is particularly significant that the resistance of the Coal Board to the miners' demands for higher wages has increased in direct proportion with the rising stocks of coal held by the Board. Recently, Sir Herbert Houldsworth, the £8,500 a year chairman of the N.C.B. was able to announce that coal stocks are now higher than ever since the war, which may explain the N.C.B.'s refusal to pay a living

wage to the lower-paid miners. The existence of substantial stocks of coal is a powerful weapon in the hands of the N.C.B. when it comes to haggling over wages and working conditions—a weapon which the extra effort of the miners to produce more coal has freely donated to their employers.

Miners are not slow to remember that most of the appreciable increase in the stocks of coal held, has been mainly due to Saturday working and overtime. Therefore, at the moment, the miners have the ball at their feet; they have it within their power to fight back now, against the policy of lowering living standards and so regain their once-honoured leadership in the struggle to defeat those who deliberately plan the overall depression of all workers' standards of living.

While lower-paid miners must sacrifice sorely needed leisure hours, working overtime to make ends meet, there can be no talk of renewing the Saturday working agreement. Instead, the mine workers of Britain must clearly indicate to the coal bosses that they are not prepared to even discuss Saturday working or overtime, until all miners can live on the wage paid for the standard five-day week!

JOHNNIE MINER.

Housing

Restrictive Practices

WE often hear about the so-called "restrictive practices" of building workers. What could be less restrictive than working in their spare time in order to help build houses or do decorations, privately, thus helping the housing drive? Yet this the building employers are trying to stop, in order to preserve their profits, saying one must not do outside work in one's spare time while working for a boss.

Needless to say, it does not apply to company directors, who may continue to be M.P.s in their spare time.

The truth is that the only restrictive practices they want to stop are those which curtail their own profits. The housing drive is only helped by the men who actually do the job. So far from their practices being restrictive, if they ceased to practice there would be no housing, which certainly cannot be said for the employers' side of it.

Builders, painters and decorators all had a very thin time of it pre-war, and they must defend their standards now. In order to push for a free society they can play an important rôle—in helping to undermine the grip of the employer and the Whitehall domination, by being the centre of the new move amongst workers which says "Private Enterprise and the State having failed to build me a house, let me build one for myself in conjunction with my fellow workers." This so far from undermining the building workers' wage level, is the only way in which it can be stabilised, by keeping alive the demand for housing, and also by which a free society can be introduced, thus leading to the abolition of the wage and profit system.

London.

INDUSTRIAL UNIONIST.

Road Transport

Snoopers in the City?

SOME 400 workers came out on strike in Birmingham the other week because of a former mayor's pamphlet saying that the standard of morality was so low amongst railway workers that when a few proved to be "honest" and co-operated with the police in tracking down pilfering, the remainder went on strike. The workers struck in defence of the syndicalist principle involved, the social strike being a main point of revolutionary syndicalism as against orthodox trade unionism (whether they knew it or not). This proves once more our contention that the unofficial trends in industry are moving towards a syndicalist conception.

It is an old jibe against both railwaymen and transport workers, and one that can only be used by those who have no conception whatsoever of the meaning of the word *freedom*. To hate the idea of copper's marks and to be determined not to be spied upon is a reasonable and logical conception of anyone believing in freedom and not just of someone who happens to be pilfering.

We may say that when such matters affect the bourgeoisie, the newspapers take up the

clamour loud and clear. Can you imagine the daily press printing a statement that shopkeepers are so dishonest that they resent the idea of Government inspectors checking up to see which of them is engaging in black market activities? Not so! Instead, we get a denunciation of bureaucratic snoopers.

And supposing one fine morning in the City, vanloads of police drew up in Basinghall Street and Fenchurch Street, and began questioning every bowler hat and umbrella in sight. Supposing that the cars went snooping down to Putney and Surbiton and knocked at the doors of handsome detached-style villas at four in the morning, asking to have a look round the garage? Supposing Government inspectors were given the right of inspection into every chartered accountant's office, and the police had the right to appoint some of the articulated clerks as spies upon their employers? Would we hear that the chartered accountants were so dishonest and immoral that when the authorities tried to prevent abuses by a few firms fiddling the books, they all wrote indignant letters to the *Daily Telegraph*? In the words of Eliza Doolittle, "Not bloody likely."

BERT.

Syndicalism at Home

IN this country, before World War I, the influx of Syndicalist ideas was largely restricted owing to the fact that its sponsors were not anarchists, as had been the case with the large syndicalist movements that had flourished in many other countries (particularly the "Latin" countries). The industrial workers, however, particularly in Wales, were impressed by the Syndicalist techniques which had been used in France, and also by the rise of the American I.W.W. While they were not influenced by anarchist ideas (the anarchist movement having always been a small minority), they realised that the Syndicalist method could bring results.

Accordingly, many of the strike techniques were brought in, and those who had been I.W.W.s in the U.S.A. or Australia were very quick to show how the lightning strike could paralyse the boss class. Likewise, French workers introduced methods of syndicalist organisation that were then common in France—for instance, the principle of the union standing for workers' control and "interfering" in the affairs of the management. There were many Syndicalists then, who endeavoured to re-cast the English trade union movement in a Syndicalist fashion, but unfortunately they did not have the major influence, and it was in Wales and Scotland where the militant influence was strongest, while it almost infiltrated the Irish trade union movement.

The major industrial strikes preceding the first world war were caused by Syndicalist ideas on resistance to economic pressure, and were a symptom that there were many workers who supported Syndicalism against the Socialism that was becoming parliamentarised under the rising banner of Ramsay MacDonald and other mis-leaders.

The Syndicalist centres later developed into the shop-steward movement that was the centre of working-class industrial resistance to the First World War. This was particularly the case on the Clyde. Having become almost a mass movement, however, the Syndicalist renaissance was due to become largely extinguished for several reasons. One was the rise of the Communist Party which captured so much for its own ends, under the glamour-value of the Russian Revolution. The other was the much greater rise of the Labour Party, some of whose still-militant members, who were not compromised by the war, were able to pump back life into it and then become as reactionary themselves as those who had been compromised. And another reason was the fact that the militant method was insufficient without the decentralist and libertarian background which was lacking in many of the sponsors of the movement in the 1910s.

One big exception was Sam Mainwaring, the pioneer of Anarcho-Syndicalism in this country, a fluent Welsh speaker, whose long devoted work was largely responsible for the introduction of the ideas that were then sweeping the industrial workers everywhere. In this he

was succeeded by his nephew, Sam Mainwaring, also, who died only a few years ago, and who continued to work for anarcho-syndicalist ideas among his fellow-miners in the Rhondda. A furore was caused when, in the early days of the Spanish War, Sam Mainwaring insisted on reading to the Miners' Conference the appeal of the C.N.T. for help—the "Communists" having attempted to gag all mention of anarcho-syndicalist movements elsewhere.

Although the groups formed from time to time to propagate syndicalist and anarcho-

syndicalist principles, have not met with outstanding success in this country (which does not prevent us from continuing) it should be said that the principles as such have met with a degree of success amongst the workers to-day. Thus the idea of workers' control has gained ground to a very large extent since the chimera of "Nationalisation" was blown away, while unofficial strike action in this land of regimented trade unionism is another pointer. In certain other fields, too, the workers are showing this spontaneous brand of syndicalism, and it remains for us to show them what such a movement really represents and in what direction it should logically take them.

Printing

Past, Present and -- Future ?

THE Council of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, the employers' organisation which operates in London as a negotiating body for daily newspaper wages and conditions of labour, recently decided on drastic action to stop unofficial strikes which have delayed production of daily newspapers in London on two occasions recently. In future, the Newspaper Proprietors' Association will be prepared at half-an-hour's notice to stop production of all newspapers in the event of unconstitutional action by any section of workers in any office, states the *Scottish Typographical Journal*.

The printers in the past have not proved incapable of meeting such a challenge. The compositors on the *Times* were prosecuted in 1810 for belonging to a combination, and in sentencing them, Sir John Silvester—known as Bloody Black Jack—said: "Prisoners, you have been convicted of a most wicked conspiracy to injure the most vital interests of those very employers who gave you bread, with intent to impede and injure them in their business; and indeed as far as in you lay to effect their ruin. The frequency of such crimes among men of your class of life and their mischievous and dangerous tendency to ruin the fortunes of those employers which a principle of gratitude and self-interest should induce you to support, demand of the law that a severe example should be made of those persons who shall be convicted of such daring and flagitious combinations in defiance of public justice and in violation of public order. No symptom of contrition on your part appeared—no abatement of the combination in which you are accomplices has yet resulted from the example of your convictions."

The present craft basis of the printing unions make them incapable of being used as a weapon in the industrial struggle. Workers connected with printing are divided between the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers (135,584), Typographical Association (50,328), National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (35,984), London Society of Compositors (13,588), National Union of Journalists (12,146), and Litho Artists (11,109), affiliated to the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation. The D. C. Thomson dispute proved the failings of this arrangement. What we need is one union for the whole printing industry.

The model rules should be amended:—

THE CITY PRINTERS CHAPEL,
January, 1953.

THE CHAPEL.

1. Name.—The name of the Chapel is (say) "The City Printers (London) Chapel."

2. Aims.—(a) To abolish private property in land and to institute common ownership; (b) to expropriate the printing industry and to institute workers' control; (c) to abolish the wage system and to institute a system of sharing according to needs; (d) to abolish inheritance, poverty and capitalism.

OFFICERS.

3. The Chapel.—It shall be the duties of the Chapel: to call all Chapel meetings and to elect *ad hoc* Father and Clerk; to hear all

deputations appointed by the Chapel; to sign all pass-rouds; to provide delegates to any meetings decided upon by the Chapel, and to issue credentials and fees to such delegates.

4. Clerk.—The Clerk's duties shall be: to keep a record of all Chapel meetings; to supply each member and apprentices with a copy of this "card", the cost of which to be met by the Chapel, and to present schemes for workers' control.

5. Delegate Meetings.—Delegates shall be elected at Chapel meetings. The delegates shall be paid the rate for the job.

6. Funds.—No sick benefit, subscriptions, donations, fines, retiral grants to be made out of Chapel funds except to other printing houses engaged in a dispute. R.E.M.

The Railwaymen of Mexico

THE railwaymen of Mexico are all, without exception, members of a first-class union, radical to the backbone and never averse from a strike; and they hang together to a man. Their organisation, and the spirit prevailing in it, make self-respecting men of them, who are eager to improve themselves as citizens of their country. Courteous and helpful, always laughing and joking, they bear no resemblance at all to the growling and snarling N.C.O.'s who, disguised as railwaymen, make travelling in Central Europe such a disagreeable experience. They are not the subordinates of arrogant superior officers, for all share as comrades in the pride of their organisation. The fireman may be president and spokesman of the group at whose meetings the chief of the line sits modestly on the same bench as shunters, pointsmen and wheel-greasers and listens quietly and attentively to the proposals the fireman has to make, as chairman, for improving the conditions of the railway worker. And in the event of a strike, the chief of the line, whose pay is ten times that of a wheel-greaser or shunter, does not organise the technical staff as an emergency gang. On the contrary, he gets out the bills and posters which inform the public of the reason and the necessity for the railway strike, because he is better at writing than the fireman, though the fireman is chairman and spokesman. The chief of the line and the shunter eat from the same spoon, so to speak; by virtue of their organisation, the dirty wheel-greaser is more to the chief of the line than the State can be, or the interests of trade and industry, or the common weal, all of which come second to the aim of securing the necessities of existence for the pointsman, his comrade.

—B. TRAVEN: *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. (1934).

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Aspects of Syndicalism

1. The Syndicalist

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2. The Communist

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IF YOU LIKE The S

Reading

THE WAGE SYSTEM

By PETER KROPOTKIN

Shows how the idea that certain work is "worth" more than others leads to inequality and the maintenance of class privilege, whilst differences in wage levels are used by governments to divide the workers and so frustrate the class struggle.

16 pages

3d.

SYNDICALISM—THE WORKERS' NEXT STEP

By PHILIP SANSON

48 pages

One Shilling

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What Do They Mean By It?

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WHEN discussing Workers' Control with both individuals and groups, the gulf between the anarcho-syndicalist view and that of the various "Partyliners" soon becomes apparent. This is readily understood once we grasp the fact that while Syndicalists are advocating Workers' Control the arguments from the political groups are concerned solely with how to control the workers.

Any worker who doubts this can easily prove it by putting a few questions to those politicians who peddle "Workers' Control" as a side-line. Many such are to be found in the Labour Movement, N.C.L.C., etc., but for the benefit of those workers who are unaware

Aspects of Anarcho-Syndicalism

1. The Syndicate

OBVIOUSLY the main basis of a revolutionary workers' movement is to secure a more dynamic policy as regards the wage-struggle. This is bound up with the decentralist idea—which only libertarians are prepared to admit—and has nothing to do with particular leaders. Many minority political movements exist which believe that by attacking particular labour leaders, they are carrying on a militant policy, but what is wrong is not just *certain leaders*, but the whole idea of leadership. We therefore need a movement which can dispense with Central Offices and Constitutions to determine the way it is run. Such a movement can be seen in unofficial strikes and other local moves which have got to be carried out independently of the established machinery (or they just would not exist).

It is this type of movement which we support, and which we want to see organised generally, its basis remaining on the floor of the workshop and at the place where the job is done. We believe it can become something more than a union—for a union is concerned only with present-day reforms (and not even always that nowadays)—for just the same type of organisation can be the means of achieving workers' control. An independent workers' movement freely federated, on the basis of organisation at the place of work, could not only carry on the militant struggle according to its members' own desire, but likewise move towards workers' control.

Penetration of industry with our ideas is the first step, and the next step—that of forming the workers' syndicates—is one that can only come from the workers themselves.

2. The Commune

As we envisage industrial unionism and the tendency of workers to federate industry by industry, there is an important aspect of anarcho-syndicalism in the idea of the local commune. Just as people come together in the same trade for industrial organisation, so would they come together locally for social organisation. In a militant workers' movement this would be expressed first of all by so elementary a step as the labour hall, but it could be the starting-point for all local schemes which by-pass the necessity for leadership of government—health and self-building projects, for instance. It reflects the time when the free communes will be the form of social organisation, for in a free society we need our social units small enough for everyone to be able to participate.

It will then be for the community to express its needs through its local organisation, while the work can actually be done by the workers concerned, and nobody can know better than them how to do it.

IF YOU LIKE

The Syndicalist

DISTRIBUTE IT!

of what the politicians mean by "Workers' Control," here are a few examples.

From a N.C.L.C. lecturer: "Workers' Control? Yes, I am in favour of it—provided the workers don't have the last word." Having thus admitted that he isn't interested in Workers' Control we can pass on to yet another N.C.L.C. lecturer. He, too, we discover paying lip-service to Workers' Control—but, "The workers are too ignorant."

In pointing out that he isn't doing anything to educate them as to the *real* meaning of Workers' Control, we are met not by denials but by sneers. "Educate the workers!" scoffs our N.C.L.C. man, "The workers are hopeless. All they think about are the racing results." From this we are forced to the conclusion that the "education" received from such sources must be of a nature that even the most "hopeless" and "ignorant" workers can understand—and so it is! We find that where before there was only an ignorant worker we now have an ignorant worker who boasts about the fact, the net result of such "education" being a total loss to the workers and a corresponding gain to the politicians.

And Workers' Control? That will come if you vote for the "right" parasite! This at least is what we are always being told, so to discover how this miracle is to be accom-

plished, and to provide our third example, the following was forwarded to the editor of the *Socialist Outlook*, in vain hope that we would be let into the secret:

"In your editorial of November 21st, you state that the *Socialist Outlook* has consistently championed the cause of Workers' Control of industry. Would you care to enlarge on this theme by giving a clearer conception of what you understand by 'Workers' Control' and how you intend to reconcile Workers' Control with rule by the politicians?"

At the time of writing (Dec. 18th), a reply is still awaited. These few examples may suffice at present, as any worker who takes the trouble will find it a simple matter to call the bluff of the political racketeers. Having done so, however, the task remains to put forward the alternative of *real* Workers' Control. Don't let yourself be kidded by mouthfuls of Marxism; Workers' Control is what counts, not the opinions of "wise leaders" or equally "wise" followers. The winning of Workers' Control is a task which needs men and women who think things out for themselves and the *first step* is taken when we turn our backs on the politicians, but that vital *first step* depends on you. If you don't take it—you've had it!

T.O.M.

Leadership

GLASGOW

IT is peculiar to find at this day and age many workers, outside and inside political parties still clinging to the idea of leadership. One would think that the many betrayals by leaders, even in our own time, should have removed all blind faith in leadership. But, apparently, tradition presses like a mountain on the human mind.

Although the rank and file recognise that they have been betrayed once again by the Shipbuilding & Engineering Union leaders, they are still reluctant to withdraw their support from leadership as such. This psychology of the worker can be explained by the fact that, apart from the working-class having behind it a long history of authoritarian culture, the means of propaganda and education are in the hands of the capitalist class due to their ownership of the means of production.

In the course of the worker's "mis-education", he is taught to be servile and obedient; he is disciplined and commanded to be humble, to respect teacher, clergyman, king and country (which he owns no part of), father and mother (who, incidentally, have come through the same sausage-machine education) and all types of authority.

His whole being is moulded in such a way that he leaves school ripe for exploitation and if the degrading conditions influence him to rebel, having been indoctrinated with the idea of authority and strict discipline in his younger days, his initiative is curbed and he tends to express his revolt through leaders.

The result of this is, on the one hand, a mass of amenable beings, and on the other a growth of power-hungry maniacs. It is significant to note that dictatorship has risen from the working-class movement due to reliance on leadership—witness Benito Mussolini, Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin.

No doubt it is a hard task for the worker to overcome the idea of leadership but not an insurmountable one. If the capitalist class own and control the means of production and therefore the means of propaganda, then the worker cannot learn fundamentally from his boss's institutions. The worker's faith in leaders cannot be broken in the cinema (unless he saw a film like "Viva Zapata" every week!); it cannot be broken by the daily press, by the pulpit, by the radio or in colleges or universities!

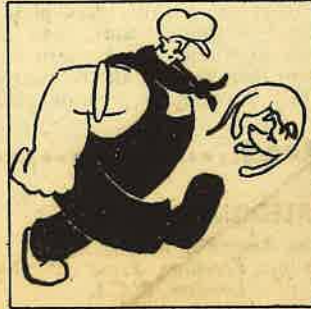
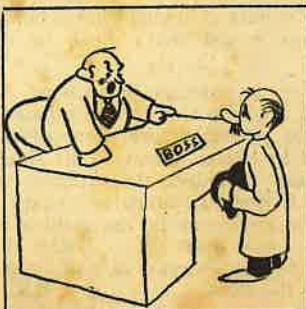
The worker's field of education in the main is in the factory or workshop. If he will transfer his union branch from where he lives to where he works, he will be laying the foundations of his own universities. His experiences, along with his fellow workers who would be organised in the same industrial branch irrespective of craft, would create a greater sense of solidarity. And more solidarity creating greater confidence, the worker would develop more individual initiative, which is essential for dispensing with leaders. When the workers' universities (industrial syndicates) are created and through them the workers are encouraged to train themselves to finally take over the management of industry (which they are entitled to), leadership will be on the road to dying its natural death.

But we must bear in mind that there are things which do not die natural deaths. The idea of leadership may die for the worker but the bosses will not fail to exercise their authority to protect their interests if they see them in danger before a rising working-class.

History has shown us that no ruling class has ever given up its privileged position without a fight. So then authority in the minds of the boss class will not die a natural death, and the capitalist system will not die a natural death. These must be rooted out by the workers' organisations at the point of production.

R. LYNN.

SCISSOR BILL



Loyal to the End

YOU say that any Syndicalist ginger group in the trade union movement would be hammered out by executive committee. The executive committees are elected from trade union branches and if a large part of the branch was of a syndicalist tendency the executive committee could therefore be changed. The executive committee would be powerless if every branch of any trade union refused to recognise it.

The power in the trade unions lies in the branch committees which only need to have a syndicalist majority and the authoritarian structure collapses.

Why is it not possible to change the system of paying trade union leaders salaries?

It is necessary to work through the trade unions because it will be very difficult to get the majority of workers to leave their present unions. There is nothing wrong with the unions, the trouble lies in the bureaucracy and the influence of authoritarian Socialism. Syndicalist militants in the present unions could curb and finally overthrow the bureaucracy.

The point of capturing the trade unions is that they are the only organisations in society of any use to the workers and the most ignorant will remain loyal to them to the end. The best elements of the working-class are in the unions and to cut yourself off from the unions means losing contact with the people and it is through the people that our idea will be achieved.

Governments will allow anarchists to hold open-air meetings without taking strong action. But when the port workers organise their strikes the Government rushes troops in and calls a state of emergency. But what could the trade union bosses do about it?

If we had militants like the dockers in other main unions who understood our ideas, pressure would be felt throughout the country. Through these militants our ideas would be developed in these unions, solidarity would grow until an injury to one would be an injury to all. This is the state of things we want to build.

Two examples of working through trade unions are the present syndicalist movements S.A.C. of Sweden and the U.S.I. of Italy. These were formed by trade unions which split away under the influence of French syndicalism. This was done by militants working inside reformist unions and finally taking them over to our ideas.

What can be done there can be done here

also, and what we will have to work for is getting the better elements of the trade union movement to accept our ideas.
Dukinfield.

J. MACPHERSON.
N. ASHTON.

The Editors' Reply:

Once again the question of "Capturing the Unions" comes up, this time from two workers who accept the Syndicalist point of view—or say they do. Before going on to answer their points, however, we should like to ask them one question: As syndicalists, which do you consider the more important to capture—the trade unions or the means of production?

If the former, then go ahead. Capture the branches (just like that) and then change the executive. You will then have syndicalist leaders instead of the present shower, and they may or may not be better. But this assumes that you will be allowed to grow from a minority to majority within the unions without being dealt with before it is too late. This is precisely the hope that some parliamentary socialists have—that they will be able to build up gradually a majority in parliament which will then take political power and put an end to capitalism on behalf of the working-class. Presumably you reject these arguments as applied to politics—why then assume the same thing can be done in the authoritarian industrial field?

You say it will be difficult to get the majority of workers to leave their present unions. We think it will be far more difficult to get them sufficiently interested in their present unions to turn up at branch meetings to vote the way you want them to—or will you be content to capture the unions in the same way that the Commies or the Catholics do—by minority votes? It will, in any case, make it even more difficult to make them leave if no positive alternative is ever offered them. By working inside the unions you will help to maintain the myth that they are of use to the worker, and they will think of Syndicalism merely as a sort of militant trade unionism instead of the radically different thing that it really is.

But it seems you think the unions are of use to the worker "and the most ignorant will remain loyal to them to the end". Why should the "ignorant" workers do anything else but remain loyal when they see the—shall we say, "advanced"—workers remaining loyal, too, even if for different reasons? We think the best elements of the working class are looking for an alternative to the unions and are already leaving them anyway—except in

closed shops where the boss will not take them on unless they have a union card.

The argument that you can only contact the workers in union branches is a fallacy. How about contacting them at your place of work? That is where the workers gather in strength, and that is where the second part of our question to you comes into the argument. If you want to capture the means of production—organise at the point of production, not at the trade union office. That's elementary Syndicalism, surely, and the place where syndicalists should organise is in the workshops, encouraging working-class activity at workshop level and endeavouring to get workers to lose faith in executives of all kinds. It is through the people in the workshops that our idea will be achieved, and the task of the syndicalist is to build up an organisation inside the factories that cuts across all the divisions that unionism has created and maintains.

If you are a member of a union you will go to branch meetings of fellow craftsmen miles away from where you work and perhaps not one of your brothers in the branch will work in the same factory as yourself. This will certainly give you good opportunities of meeting others like yourself from other factories—but it still won't help you to build a militant organisation in your workshop.

Anarchists and syndicalists alike are allowed to hold open-air meetings (and incidentally these are as good a way as any other of making contacts with workers outside your own workplace, for you can often meet workers who are too fed up with the unions to go to a branch meeting) and they do not incur strong government action as long as they don't cut any ice. The same goes for dockers' strikes. A strike of a hundred dockers does not bring in the troops—but ten thousand out does. It's a matter of degree, isn't it?

It should be remembered, however, that the dockers' militancy has all been *unofficial*—in other words, against their executive as well as against the Dock Board, and they have set up their Portworkers' Committees in opposition to their leaders, although they continue to pay those leaders salaries. Suppose they all withdrew from Deakin's union and organised themselves as dockers and not as members of the Transport & General Workers Union—would they be any weaker? Would they be cut off from each other? Would they be less militant or show less solidarity? Of course not!

You say there's nothing wrong with the unions except "the bureaucracy and the influence of authoritarian socialism". This seems an astonishing point of view for professed syndicalists. Take those away, and what's left? From our viewpoint, everything is wrong with the unions!

Bakery • • • • •

No Jam On It

GUERNSEY.

IN the bakehouse, the moisture caused by steam from the ovens runs down the glazed brick walls and forms pools on the floor. Someone, probably unaided, has to drag through this a pan full of dough which may be styled "one-such dough", i.e., consisting of two bags of flour each weighing 140 lbs., mixed with water about the same weight, or it might even be double the weight.

It's easy enough when the surface of the floor is new and dry and the wheels of the pan well greased, but when, as in most cases I have seen, it is full of ruts and holes, it is not surprising that the men will say "It needs two men and a bloody donkey to pull this thing along."

Working on the draw-plate oven, too, is rather strenuous work, and at intervals the victims of this will be seen wiping the sweat from their faces with the nearest grimy towel, which is near to grey or black through the

frequent resort to it. They have, incidentally, very little time to go to the dressing room and get their own towel, which most men, knowing the job, bring with them.

In my experience, it is unusual for a bakery to keep a maintenance man and consequently most of the equipment is often in a very bad state of repair. Wheels, etc., on troughs and tables are replaced by the men themselves when they can snatch a few minutes to do so. This is sometimes the subject of mess-room comment (when there is a mess-room) and, as I imagine with most workers, it is often said what would be done if they personally were in charge or were the owner of the place.

It is possible at times to pick up a number of hints on method from this conversation, but to my reckoning merely changing charge-hands or the ownership would make little or no difference.

We have no say, as workers, as to when or where equipment shall be repaired or obtained and no interest in producing order out of the chaos at present in being. Change this situation, however, and take over the control of the factories and I should be prepared to expect to see a great improvement in the conditions of working in a fairly short time. Under the competitive system it is always a case of "make do and mend" to the boss.
B.S.

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