

INTRODUCTION
TO THE "LEFT".

SOLIDARITY
SCOTLAND
PAMPHLET NO. 3

PRODUCED BY
ABERDEEN SOLIDARITY
& GLASGOW SOLIDARITY

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introduction

Over the past three years the Scottish 'Solidarity' group has extended its circle of sympathisers, pushed up the circulation of its magazine, and from being solely a Clydeside organisation now has active groups of sympathisers in other centres such as Aberdeen. This support has been mainly confined to two groupings: members of the remnants of the Scottish peace movement among whom Solidarity have been active, and industrial workers such as some of the Glasgow busmen who have been aided in their struggles with the management and reactionary union officials by Solidarity. Lesser support has also been obtained from those disenchanted with other left-wing groups, from students and from tenants in struggle.

We are living at a time when ideological clarification is more necessary than ever before, for all official ideologies of East and West (and of the rulers of the under-developed countries) are being revealed as totally bankrupt, destined to lead men into greater forms of domination and ultimately to catastrophe. There is a compelling need for knowledge about our society - what it is and how it has evolved - what are the basis and functions of its dominant ideas etc. - in order that we find areas in which meaningful activity is possible and methods to which those who control our lives are sensitive.

In trying to show up the real nature of these ideologies, 'Solidarity' found itself hamstrung before it began, in that those who were sympathetic to the organisation in various degrees had a woeful ignorance of basic political knowledge and apart from sporadic attempts by the Aberdeen group to outline the theories of socialist thinkers and socialist methods of tackling problems from Vietnam to Greece, no attempt has been made to remedy this.

This pamphlet, then, tries in an elementary and sketchy way to outline the ideas of the various socialist groups, their main thinkers and historical fates. To do this without criticising them, in the hope that their usefulness will be evaluated by the readers themselves. A limited edition of the pamphlet will be distributed to those who have sympathies with us in the hope that they will better understand the total criticisms of our society put forward not only by ourselves, but also by other groups of socialists who are trying to replace our society, based on unjust distribution of wealth and the robbing of ordinary people of control over their lives, by one in which these evils and the related ones of war and militarism will no longer exist.

PART 1.

ORIGINS OF THE "LEFT"

LINES OF APPROACH

In the short account which follows we shall confine ourselves to thinkers and theories which still have supporters today and which still inspire movements of social change. This means that many interesting and influential figures who could be included as socialists, such as Lao-Tze and Zeno, through Winstanley to Godwin and the French Utopians, Fourier, St-Simon and Sismondi, must be omitted.

Also, in the light of what we believe socialism to be we will define whether such and such a doctrine is socialist. To be considered as such it must fulfill two criteria :- a) that it must have as its object the elimination of social injustices by the abolition of private property in land, industry and the facilities of communication; b) that ultimately, even though the actions of its supporters contradict this for reasons of expediency, it also aims at the placing of the control of social life in the hands of those who perform socially useful functions, workers to control and regulate the running of industry, peasants to perform similar functions in relation to the land etc. Without the second criteria being fulfilled, the first remains meaningless and can actually lead to a strengthening of existing forms of exploitation, or the creation of new forms.

RESPONSES TO INDUSTRIALISATION

We have to start our story with the Europe of the mid-19th century, and deal with the origins and evolution of the two main streams of socialist thought which began their course in this period; that of Karl Marx and his collaborator, Friedrich Engels, which is generally called simply Marxism; and that of Michael Bakunin, which became known as anarchism.

By about 1850, the first stage of the process known as the Industrial Revolution had been consolidated in Britain and industrialisation was beginning in other countries, notably France and Germany. The whole complex of events had begun about 1760 in England and usually took the following form, although there were variations. From being organised in small-scale domestic units and powered by hand, industrial production began to be organised on a factory basis and to be powered by non-manual means (at this stage usually steam). Peasants and artisans were drawn in droves from the countryside to the expanding industrial towns to work in the new factories in conditions of appalling misery. Various means were employed to this end, including robbery of the peasants land to force him into the towns, but these need not concern us here.

Whereas in 1760 the main index of wealth had been the ownership of land, and the two main classes peasants and feudal nobles, by the time our story starts there had emerged two entirely new classes. Firstly, those who owned and controlled the new dominant source of wealth, i.e. industrial technology and capital, who formed a small minority of the population, and who did then, as they do today, own the vast part of society's wealth. This class became known as the capitalist class. The other class were those who worked in the new factories, mines etc. and owned nothing but their labour-power which they sold to the capitalists in order to live. In the early period of industrialisation, when the working-class and the capitalists were beginning to realise that their interests were opposed, many weird and wonderful roads to salvation were pointed out by reformers, but it was not until the mid-19th century that profound, coherent and practical socialist criticisms of capitalist society were made.

THE MARXISTS

Karl Marx

We will begin with the figure who is central to the socialist tradition, Karl Marx. By virtue of his contribution to human knowledge in the fields of economics, history, philosophy and sociology, Marx has few rivals as the greatest thinker who has ever lived. He was born in 1818 in Germany where he studied philosophy, but he later moved to France and then to England, which was the most advanced capitalist country at the time. Here he devoted himself to the study of the economics of capitalism, and spent most of his remaining life in study, apart from a period of activity on the General Council of the International Working Men's Association (1864-76). His most famous works are - "The Communist Manifesto", "Capital" (1867) and "The Civil War in France". Although during his lifetime his theories

3
found support in the German, and to a lesser extent, French working-class movements, there did not occur while he was alive a revolution either led by Marxists or taking the form predicted by Marx, although he was always expecting it to break out in England.

(There follows a brief account of his ideas, and this will be followed by those of other people who claim to be Marxists.)

We cannot really do justice to Marx's thought in so short a space, and will merely list his major ideas.

1. The ECONOMIC SYSTEM (i.e. the class structure, distribution of wealth and nature of technology) which operates in any given society determines its SOCIAL STRUCTURE (i.e. political, legal and religious institutions as well as men's ideas and consciousness). This is a difficult and complex concept which can best be expressed in Marx's own words:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." 1.

It follows from this that the cause of all major historical events is ultimately economic, and that the ideas which motivate men, or by which men profess to be motivated in all wars, revolutions and reformations, are part of the "superstructure" which expresses their real, i.e. economic motivations. And that, for example, one country does not have a different government system from another because of its superior ideals or national characteristics, but because it has a different economic system.

2. The driving force of history is the CLASS-STRUGGLE, membership of the opposing classes being determined by relationship to the means of production (land, factories, mines, etc.). If you owned then you belonged to the ruling class, if not, to the subjected, producing class. Historical change from one form of society to another, e.g. feudalism to capitalism, or capitalism to socialism, is caused, not by everyone sitting down and deciding that it would be a good idea, but by the victory in open, violent struggle of one class over another.

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes." 2.

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1. "Preface to 'THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY'" - 'Selected Works V.1. p. 362-3.
 2. "Manifesto of the Communist Party" - 'Selected Works' Vol. 1 p. 34.

3. Marx's conviction that historical change was achieved by the victory of one class over another he related to modern society by asserting that the inevitable conflict between the capitalist class, the bourgeoisie, and the working class, the proletariat, would lead to the victory of the latter and the establishment of socialism. Class-consciousness would be fostered in the workers due to various reasons:-

a) Large-scale factory production would enable the workers to see their common conditions and interests, as a class and not as individuals. The small degree of education necessary to operate the machines would also help them evaluate their experiences and develop their ideas.

b) Due to the workings of the capitalist economy (especially the tendency he observed for profits to fall) the material conditions of the workers would worsen, until they would be provoked to revolt. In this they would be helped and educated by a minority of bourgeois intellectuals who would give up their old way of life.

c) The middle class (by this Marx meant peasants, shopkeepers and artisans) would be forced into the ranks of the workers, due to their inability to compete with large-scale monopolies. The whole complex of processes would eventually erupt into revolution;

"Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. 3..... The lower strata of the middle class - the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants - all these sink gradually into the proletariat 4..... What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable. 5"

In his early years Marx felt that the revolution would take the form of a violent uprising, but later he viewed the election of workers' representatives to Parliament with favour.

4) The post-revolutionary society Marx saw as first passing through a transitional phase which he called the "dictatorship of the proletariat"; here inequalities and coercion would continue to exist, but he was hopeful that these would fade gradually:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." 6

"In the higher phase of communist society; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly..... only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" 7

3. "Manifesto of the Communist Party" 'Selected Works' 1957 pp 34-35

4. Op. cit. p.41. 5. Op.cit. p.45.

6. "Critique of the Gotha Programme" 'Selected Works' 1958 pp 32-33.

7. Op.cit. p.24.

The Social Democrats

5

After the death of Marx in 1883, large parliamentary parties, which took as their guide Marx's philosophy, grew up in many European countries, but especially in Germany. The social democrats ultimately aim for a stateless, classless society but this was put off until the far distant future. In the meantime the workers should concern themselves with building up the trades unions and winning higher wages; with electing representatives to parliament; and with winning what political and economic gains they could without recourse to revolutionary activity or violence. The social democrats were, then, revolutionary in ideology but reformist in practice.

By 1890 the social democrats had become the largest party in the German parliament, and they continued to build up their strength until they were almost "a state within a state". In these circumstances it was proposed by certain social democrats that the party, by keeping its revolutionary Marxist ideology, was imperilling their hopes for further advance; and they proposed that the party should become reformist both in practice and ideologically.

The most important of these "revisionists" as they were called was Eduard Bernstein, who in 1899 published "Evolutionary Socialism". In it he argued that Marx was wrong in predicting the collapse of capitalist society, the elimination of the middle class, and many other things. His economic analysis was muddled and useless. The State was not owned by the capitalist class, but was a more independent organisation in which the workers had secured a part. The capitalists would not resist the slow drift of society towards socialism since "the rights of the propertied minority have ceased to be a serious obstacle to progress".

Bernstein was opposed by other members of the party, notably Karl Kautsky who insisted that Marxism be retained as the party's guiding principles, as to throw them over now when they were (he thought) very close to victory would be suicide. The controversy between the revisionists and the orthodox raged for many years, but it should be remembered that it was never one of tactics upon which they were all agreed. With the approach of World War I, a small group of the party under Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht demanded that action be taken by the party in the name of the international working class against the war, but they were denounced as extremists who didn't have the interests of the party at heart. The social democrats led the German working class into an imperialist war in which many millions of them died, and when in 1918-19 the German workers, peasants and soldiers rose to overthrow the system that had caused them so much suffering, the social democrats allied with the capitalists and Junkers* to put down the Revolution in a great blood-bath. In 1933 they took no action against Hitler's seizure of power and today it is the same social democratic party that forms a coalition government whose premier is an ex-Nazi.

* Prussian feudal landowners.

6
BOLSHEVISM

While social democracy was making great strides in the economically and politically advanced Germany, a different form of Marxism began to emerge in the backward Russian empire. Small Marxist study circles debated upon the possibilities for a working-class revolution in Russia. At a congress in 1903 the minority of Russian Marxists, who became known as Mensheviks, insisted in true orthodox Marxist form that the working-class could not achieve power until industry was far more developed and that a mass party should be set up to educate and prepare this growing working-class for taking power in some far future date. Opposed to them the majority (Bolsheviks) insisted that if guided by a small close-knit and dedicated Marxist party the Russian working class could itself, small as it was, lead the great masses of Russian peasants to a socialist society without a long period of capitalism in between.

The leader of the Bolshevik party and its main theoretician was V. I. Lenin, born in 1870. His brother had been executed for revolutionary activity and Lenin early threw himself into the struggle and was later exiled to Siberia and led the life of an emigré in Europe until the Russian Revolution enabled him to return. He was a selfless and constant agitator and he developed his ideas in various books, the most notable of which are "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" and "The State and Revolution" (1917).

In his classic text on imperialism, he insisted that the catastrophic crisis of capitalism predicted by Marx had not occurred, due to the development of Imperialism, which he saw as the highest and final stage of capitalism. The falling rate of profit had been temporarily offset by the procuring of cheaper raw materials from the colonies; the shrinking of markets had been temporarily alleviated by selling to the subject peoples; the drying up of investment at home was temporarily counteracted by investment in the colonial countries. These things were only temporary said Lenin since (a) conflict for colonies would lead the capitalist nations to war and hence Revolution - this in Lenin's eyes was what the R.S.D. was about; (b) national liberation movements in the colonial countries would mean that Imperialism would be expelled from there.

When the Russian Revolution erupted in 1917 the Bolsheviks, although not the largest left-wing group in the country, were able to seize power in October and establish their regime. In what followed, the anarchists, mensheviks, and socialist revolutionaries were all either exiled, imprisoned or murdered; the Bolsheviks took total control of the trades unions, societies and other organisations built up by the Russian workers, and workers' control came to an end. There were not, and still have not been, any other revolutions led by bolsheviks, apart from an attempt made by the Spartakists in Germany (who were near Bolsheviks) to take power in 1919, but this failed and the leaders, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, whom we have already mentioned, were murdered.

THE EVOLUTION OF BOLSHEVISM: STALINISM & TROTSKYISM.

7

Lenin died in 1923. There then occurred the differences in the Bolshevik (now re-named Communist) party as to the tactics which ought to be followed by the Soviet government. These differences grew into a great split.

Stalinism

A majority of the party eventually accented the views of Stalin, which were also accompanied by a good deal of bullying and shoddy dealing. He put forward the view that the world revolution, which had seemed near at hand from 1917-21, had now failed, and would not revive for some time. The best way for "socialist" Russia to defend itself was to build up heavy industry in order to be able to ward off the hostile capitalist powers which he said were plotting against the country. Communist parties and trades unions abroad had to give up any idea of revolution and to spend their time advancing the interests of Russia in various ways. Essentially Stalinism subordinates the interests of the working-class in any country to the interests of Russian foreign policy. Most of the communist parties and many of the trades unions in the world are controlled by Stalinists, but, as is obvious from their position, they have not pushed through a successful revolution since 1917. In fact they have often betrayed various working classes who were near to achieving revolution, e.g. in Britain 1926, China 1927, Germany 1932-3, France and Spain 1936-9, Greece 1944, France and Italy 1945-7. Their policy of industrialisation at home was accompanied by mass purges in which millions of people were murdered, and the collectivisation of agriculture in which many more millions died.

Trotskyism

Stalin was opposed in the party by Trotsky, who had to leave Russia in exile in 1927, when the party went over to Stalin. He spent the rest of his life, until murdered by Stalin's agents, in publishing books and building various Trotskyist groups.

He was a more profound thinker than Stalin who merely muttered commonplaces, and probably contributed more to socialist theory than even Lenin. Important works are:- "The Russian Revolution", "The Permanent Revolution" etc.

Trotsky never admitted that the Revolution in Russia had failed because of the methods and ideology of the Bolshevik party. Instead he said it was due to "exceptional circumstances" prevailing in Russia - economic backwardness, foreign intervention etc.

Russia was now a "degenerated workers' state" and the various communist parties "degenerated workers' parties"; it was necessary to (A) carry out a political revolution in Russia against the Stalinist Bureaucracy - he opposed any suggestion that there should be a full-scale workers' uprising; (B) to infiltrate (entrism) trades unions and Labour parties etc. in the capitalist countries and once these were under "correct leadership" a revolution would follow. Trotsky, as can be seen, had little

3
faith in the ability of the working class to achieve its own deliverance. Trotskyists have, like Stalinists, never made a Revolution and have mainly acted as gadflies in the much larger communist parties all over the world. They had a brief importance during the Spanish Civil War but were all killed by the communists, and today spend their time attacking their C.P. rivals, bewailing the further degeneration of Russia and infiltrating labour parties. Only in Guatemala do they seem to have any chance of leading a successful revolution and here they are in their most un-Trotskyist position of leading a guerilla uprising in a very economically backward country. In the rest of the world their groups are fantastically split against each other and engage in bitter feuds to a degree unheard of in any other organisations.

MARXISM, UNDER-DEVELOPMENT & PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Since the war countries have come into the soviet bloc by two methods. Either they have been liberated from Nazism by the Red Army and a system like the Russian one imposed, or, in under-developed countries Marxists have led national liberation movements against imperialism, and proceeded towards industrialisation and the creation of a "socialist" state.

Accordingly new theories have evolved to deal with this new situation, the most important being Maoism and Castroism.

Maoism

Maoism is more an attitude than a theory, and, insofar as it has expression, consists mainly in paraphrases by Mao Tse-Tung of short phrases from the works of Lenin, on the nature of imperialism, class-conflict, etc. What is new about it is that it insists that the way ahead to socialism is through guerilla warfare which will bleed imperialism white. After the failure of the urban workers to establish communism in China in 1927, the communists led the masses of Chinese peasants through 22 years of guerilla warfare against Chiang Kai-shek (armed and aided by America) and the Japanese, to the victory of their form of communism in 1949. No other Asian revolution has followed this example successfully yet, although guerilla warfare has been erupting in Malaya, Laos and Vietnam since the last war.

The Maoists' main enemy is "Revisionism" which they see embodied in the U.S.S.R. It is difficult to name a brand of Marxism that has revised Marx so much as Maoism itself, but this is not what they mean by the term. To them being revisionist means advocating peaceful trading and diplomatic relations with the western capitalist countries, and not insisting in all-out wars against their interests in the under-developed areas of the world. Most communist parties in Asia are either controlled or contested by Maoists and they have also made some headway in Europe (notably Albania), Latin America and some parts of Africa among people who see in them a radical alternative to the pro-Moscow parties. Whether their anti-revisionism would die down if America admitted her to the U.N. and traded with her remains to be seen.

CASTROISM

This has developed as an ideology for under-developed nations since the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Its essential features are those of Maoism in its insistence on guerilla warfare as being the road to national liberation and it is actively sponsoring this form of activity in many Latin American countries. It has a few different features, however. It is less vicious, less sloganizing and less critical of Russia than are the Chinese. It has no support outside Latin America, but the direct and indirect effects of its activities there will determine the evolution of the whole sub-continent in the rest of the century.

These then are the main groups in existence today, claiming to be Marxist; their theories, a short history of their revolutions, and an assessment of their current strength. We must now deal with their great historical rivals.

THE ANARCHISTS

Long before Bakunin there had been skirmishes between Stirner, the German individualist anarchist, and Marx, before he had developed his theories. And later he quarrelled with the French anarchist Proudhon over theory and control of the French labour movement.

BAKUNINISM

Marx's main rival in the mid-19th century labour movement was Michael Bakunin, born in Russia in 1814. He spent 5 years in the army, but left to study philosophy at Moscow. Later he moved to Paris where he met Proudhon and Marx, both of whom influenced his thought. He took an active part in the 1848 Revolution in Paris and in 1849 in Dresden after which he was handed over to the Russians and imprisoned for 12 years, later escaping to participate in the First International. Before his death in 1876 he published various pamphlets, including "God and the State" and "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-theologianism".

In many ways the thought of Bakunin is close to that of Marx; for example, he accepts Marx's doctrine of the class-struggle, and also his view of the polarisation of classes, although he imbued them with his own passionate idealism, as can be seen from the quote below.

"Hence it follows that the gulf separating the lucky and the privileged minority from the millions of workers who maintain this minority through their own labour is ever widening The antagonism existing between the bourgeois world and that of the workers takes on an ever more pronounced character. It is clear that there can be no conciliation between the fierce striving proletariat, moved by social revolutionary passions and persistently striving to create another world upon the foundations of truth, justice, freedom, equality and brotherhood . . . and the educated world of the privileged classes defending . . . the precious privilege of economic exploitation."

He accepted Marx's materialist philosophy, but in a modified form; religious institutions and membership of race and national groupings also exert a profound influence on men's consciousness. Because the Church and State were not just reflections of existing economic institutions as Marx claimed, it was necessary to wage a struggle against them as well, as fetters on man's liberty. This expansion of struggle Marx saw as so much wasted effort.

But Bakunin's real differences only emerged with the question of the State and political power. According to Marx the workers had to seize the State and political power (either by revolution or through Parliament) and then exert the proletarian dictatorship. Bakunin, under Proudhon's lead, insisted that the State was as great a fetter on the forces that would produce socialism, and far from being captured should instantly be overthrown by a successful revolution, and its functions taken over by an armed working class in control of the factories. The "People's State" he said would merely be the cover for a dictatorship exerted by scientific administrators and ex-workers.

"It is clear that the so-called general interests of society supposedly represented by the State constitute a fiction, a falsehood and that the State is like a vast slaughterhouse and an enormous cemetery, where all the best aspirations of a country are interred....The State has always been the patrimony of some privileged class; the sacerdotal class, the nobility, the bourgeoisie - and finally when all other classes have exhausted themselves, the class of the bureaucracy enters upon the stage."

He also differed with Marx on tactics, and opposed his view that it was in the most advanced industrial countries that the revolution would break out, led by organized and skilled workers. Bakunin said that in these countries the leading workers had become enbourgeoisified and that it was in countries which were undergoing industrialisation that workers' uprisings were most likely. He also said that in these countries the workers should ally with the land-hungry peasantry, to whom he ascribed a revolutionary role, as he did to the intelligencia, both of whom Marx rejected as essentially reactionary.

"By the flower of the proletariat, I mean above all, that great mass, those millions of non-civilised, disinherited, wretched and illiterates whom Messrs. Engels and Marx mean to subject to the paternal regime of a very strong government..."

Bakunin then proposed an all-embracing revolution at a certain stage of economic development as the surest way to socialism and indeed all the great revolutions of this century, the Russian, Spanish and Chinese, have taken this form, and in none of the advanced capitalist countries has the organised working class created a revolution as Marx expected them to. During his life time the ideas of Bakunin were accepted by the workers in Spain, Italy and Belgium.

ANARCHISM AFTER BAKUNIN

11

It was another exiled Russian, Peter Kropotkin, who continued the tradition of Bakuninism. Kropotkin was an eminent geographer, and contributed a great deal of scientific argument and support for the ideas of Bakunin, arguing in his book "Mutual Aid", that it was not conflict that led to historical advance, as both Marxists and Darwinists claimed, but cooperation between various species and groups. He also wrote a good deal upon the type of humane, integrated society which it would be possible to create after the revolution, using the discoveries of modern science and technology. His real contribution to anarchist thought was the application of scientific method and research to the movement's problems. As an old man he saw the Russian Revolution turn into a disastrous failure, but at his death in 1921 he still held the balanced optimism that had motivated him all his life. Other important works are:- "Conquest of Bread" and "Fields, Factories and Workshops".

THE RISE OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

While Marxism, in the form of social democracy was making advances in Germany (and to a lesser extent Britain) the strength of the anarchist movement in Europe remained constant, having no coherent organisational structure through which a growing movement could flow. In frustration there occurred in the 30's & 90's of the last century widespread anarchist violence against the rulers of Europe, in the hope that this would spark off a spontaneous Workers' rising. The Tsar of Russia (1881), the French president (1894), Empress of Austria (1898), King of Italy (1900), president of the U.S. (1901) were all slain by anarchists, but no risings, only police repression, followed. Ravachol, one of the most famous assassins, had sung on the gallows - "Every bourgeois shall have his bomb! Long live anarchy!".

With the failure of this policy many anarchists began to look around for other areas of activity. The political parties were rejected as deflections from the workers' real struggle; but many anarchists were much more favourable to the trades unions which were expanding as fast as socialist parties. These anarchists evolved a new strategy, anarcho-syndicalism. According to this the trades unions had the dominant role to play in the revolutionary movement; not only as vehicles for the procuring of shorter hours and better pay in fights with the bosses, but as the embryos of the post-revolutionary society. In the unions workers would be educated and trained for the tasks of running modern industrial society.

Political activity was totally rejected and the workers had to concentrate on economic issues, and had to achieve these by the methods of direct action in a fierce class struggle with the employers in which no quarter would be given or expected. By direct action they meant assassination of managers, sabotage of his property, boycotts, and the strike which the syndicalists claimed showed clearer than anything else how society was divided into classes. Ultimately when enough workers were enrolled in these revolutionary unions, there would be a general strike which would bring the economy to a halt. Some syndicalists thought that this would be enough for

12

the overthrow of capitalism, but later the idea that the workers should take possession of the factories, supply each other with the essentials of life and defend their control by armed struggle began to find favour. The post-revolutionary society would be run by the unions, each factory being under workers control and co-ordination being established between them by the regional union groupings. Syndicalism was not an original theory, being a combination of anarchist philosophy and trades union practice, so that it cannot be said to have any theoreticians. Sorel, a French intellectual who wrote "Reflections on Violence" is often cited as the father of revolutionary syndicalism, but he had no connections with the movement which disowned him. The best full-scale exposition of the theory, tactics and history of the doctrine is Rudolf Rocker's "Anarcho-Syndicalism" (1937).

The French trade union movement was infiltrated and captured for the syndicalists by 1906; and those in countries where the labour movement was already anarchist, Spain, Italy and Belgium the transition to the new form of organisation was natural, as it was in Latin America whose labour movement was formed by Italian and Spanish exiles. Even in the U.S., Russia and Germany the movement gained thousands of adherents making anarchism for the first time a doctrine which could claim many millions of supporters. The syndicalists played an active part in the Russian Revolution voicing the latent demands of the workers for workers' control, but they were eventually all exiled, imprisoned or killed by the Bolsheviks. In Italy, with half a million members, they were the main force behind the revolution which almost came in 1920; and in Spain the 2,000,000 strong C.N.T. was the backbone of the Spanish Revolution (1936-9). Today there is a mass syndicalist movement in Sweden, but this is very reformist, and other small groups in most countries. Not all the anarchists entered the syndicalist camp; many under the influence of Errico Malatesta, insisted that the unions were essentially defensive and could not be used for the overthrow of capitalism. These called themselves, with Kropotkin, anarchist-communists. There are still small anarchist-communist groups and communities all over the world. Most anarchists, unlike the Marxist groups already mentioned, will not deny that their movement has been defeated. They will also insist that, unlike Marxism which is a fixed body of dogma, anarchism is more a series of ideals which can be applied to any historical situation; and that modern society in both East and West drives people to anarchist solutions. Thus many say that the American New Left, the Hungarian Revolutionaries, the Ghandian movement in India and even Solidarity itself are all inspired by anarchist philosophy. The writer of this pamphlet would agree, but many other Solidarists would not.

IAN R. MITCHELL

APPENDIX

LEFTWING GROUPS IN BRITAIN TODAY

Newspaper

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| <u>Authoritarian</u> - Communist <u>Groups.</u> | - COMMUNIST PARTY - YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE - 'MLOIST' (Several Organisations) | - Morning Star. - Challenge. - The Marxist. |
| - Trotskyist | - SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE - 'THE WEEK' GROUP - REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE - REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY - YOUNG SOCIALISTS | - Newsletter. - The Week. - Militant. - Red Flag. - Keep Left. |
| <u>Trotskyist cum Libertarian</u> <u>Socialist.</u> | INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM | - International Socialism. - Labour Worker. |
| <u>Libertarian</u> - Anarchist <u>Groups.</u> | - ANARCHIST FEDERATION | - Freedom. - Anarchy. |
| - Syndicalist | - SYNDICALIST WORKERS FEDERATION | - Direct Action. |
| - Libertarian Socialist | - SOLIDARITY | - Solidarity (London). - Solidarity (Scotland). |
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