SYNDICALISM AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

BY ARTHUR D. LEWIS
THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES
SYNDICALISM AND THE GENERAL STRIKE
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Illustrated. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6/- net.

THE KENT COAST

"Gives just the information which the tourist who likes to learn a little history on his wanderings wants. . . . We have thoroughly enjoyed the tour round the Kentish coast in the company of Mr. Lewis, and we are particularly grateful to him for his many literary allusions, which show much research."—The Westminster Gazette.

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
SYNDICALISM AND
THE GENERAL STRIKE

AN EXPLANATION

BY

ARTHUR D. LEWIS

T. FISHER UNWIN
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE
LEIPSIC: INSELSTRASSE 20
1912
INTRODUCTION

Before dealing methodically with the subject, there are two matters connected with Syndicalist doctrine I should like specially to refer to.

I do not think I have seen it once pointed out in English articles on the subject that Syndicalism, when best presented (and I think it will be found most completely and ably explained in French), aims at decentralisation as well as at the representation of industries instead of opinions: the producers of each small locality or commune are to be represented on trades councils, which will stand for all the trade unions of the district, that is, for all the inhabitants of the district, for every one will be in his trade union, and the non-producers (or the parasitic class, as the street-corner socialist frequently but accurately calls it) be abolished; it is these local councils that will arrange work so that it supplies what local needs demand and will control the conditions of the workers: Parliament and the central Government, which are not competent to deal with the details of a host of trades,
will sink into non-existence. This conception has certainly advantages over the ideal State, as it is conceived by the "orthodox" socialist, because the latter leaves the impression on our minds that huge State monopolies are to be formed in all industries, and that these will be controlled by a few, very powerful, officials at Westminster.

Syndicalism escapes many difficulties by declaring that theory is subordinate to action, and that action develops out of action; it declares that they who discuss the relative advantages of "direct action" and of parliamentarism as if they were two methods leading to the same result are mistaken—the moods and actions to which the two methods lead are different; discussions commonly lead to wavering opinions while action leads to action. Syndicalism is the anti-rationalist reaction of the day as it is seen in politics.

I think my book, the subject of which was suggested to me by Mr. J. McKillop, contains much matter not previously accessible to English readers, and that on this account I may claim from critics some indulgence, where errors may be found in it. I have thought it more interesting to quote somewhat extensively from the original authorities on which my work is founded
Introduction

rather than lose in paraphrases the tone of the propaganda as it reaches the working-man, or the spirit of the philosophers of the doctrine.

I have tried to acknowledge in footnotes the large amount of help I have received; if any acknowledgements are forgotten, it is my memory which is at fault, not my gratitude. Mr. Graham Wallas (whose lecture on Syndicalism, as well as Mr. Balfour's speech when acting as his chairman, was not, unfortunately, delivered until my manuscript was complete) kindly lent me all the Syndicalist pamphlets which he possessed, and thus placed before me several documents which I had not previously seen. Mr. B. M. Headicar, the Librarian of the London School of Economics, did much to help me in obtaining material.

A. D. L.

June 5, 1912.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAP.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. POPULAR IDEAS OF SYNDICALISM IN FRANCE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. MONSIEUR GEORGES SOREL AND HIS IDEAS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. MONSIEUR GEORGES SOREL AND HIS IDEAS (cont.)</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ITALY</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. GERMANY</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. ENGLAND</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. THE GENERAL STRIKE</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. OTHER COUNTRIES</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. OBJECTIONS TO SYNDICALISM</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. SOME GENERAL REFLECTIONS</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANNOTATED LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED BY THE AUTHOR | 293 |
POPULAR IDEAS OF SYNDICALISM IN FRANCE
Syndicalism and the General Strike

CHAPTER I

POPULAR IDEAS OF SYNDICALISM IN FRANCE

In penny pamphlets and street-corner speeches things are to be heard that are not known to readers of Liberal or Conservative newspapers, and to those who buy books at booksellers' shops, and it is enlightening to discover what is argued out down below. There is perhaps wisdom to be found in these low places which is not known to the cultured and educated.

In the present chapter I propose to give the message of Syndicalism as it actually reaches the working-men of France or Switzerland. I shall indicate in what pamphlet I found each opinion which I attribute to Syndicalists, and at the end of the book in an annotated list of the books and pamphlets used I shall attempt to explain how far each is of interest.

But before going into details, I may give a
Syndicalism and the General Strike

small composite photograph of the Syndicalist doctrine, which I shall explain more fully in the latter part of the chapter.

Syndicalism hopes for the construction of a juster type of society to be brought about by a war between the classes: all its hope is based on the righteous anger of the exploited directed against their robbers. It is therefore indifferent to theories so long as it has an aggressive working-class. It wishes to work purely through working-class bodies—it will have no middle-class sympathisers: this partly because it distrusts politicians, partly because French trade unions were long the battle-grounds of warring views of socialist tactics, partly because it wishes to train the working-man to act by himself and without orders from a superior. Delegates are to be distrusted and leaders to be led: their fear of responsibility, their separation from the man who is under the thumb of a master, make them always less rebellious than some of their followers. The Syndicalist likes poor unions best—riches bring caution: he likes low weekly dues and small benefits. All strikes are useful: they train men in working together and rouse their spirit: they encourage insubordination and make revolution more probable. The great
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France

weapon of the workers against their masters is disorder: the main purpose of the law is to defend property. If the strike is good, the general strike would be better: a strike in the railway service or in coal-mines might bring on a strike in all the chief trades of a country. There are other useful forms of "direct action"—sabotage, or the destruction of property, intimidation of masters, sitting in factories with folded arms so that no blacklegs can take your place, leaving work at an hour earlier than the masters want, wasting materials, telling the truth to customers—all these are means by which masters can be made to yield.¹ The Syndicalist is not only the fighting force of the present, but it is the germ of the productive unit of the future. The worker in it is to study so as to prepare himself to carry on the necessary work of the district without help from another class. The subservience of the army to the propertied class is to be dissolved by anti-militarist propaganda. The Syndicalist is to prepare for a new world in which he, the producer, will have the upper hand, and the other class, overcome by means of the general strike, will be forced to capitulate. In that new world there will be no authority

¹ Sabotage meets with the disapproval of Sorel, the philosopher of Syndicalism.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

either of the State or of masters: all work will be looked upon as of one value: property will be abolished: men will be associated in small federated but ungoverned groups.

Before I proceed to illustrate from Syndicalist writings the clauses in which I have here briefly set forth their doctrine, I will say a few words about French trade unionism, merely giving a few inadequate details likely to be of special interest to English readers. The history of French trade unions has resemblances with the history of the English unions: there are the same laws against combination in the eighteenth century—in particular a famous Le Chapelier law passed in 1791, after an attempt by the carpenters to bargain collectively with their masters; in introducing it, Le Chapelier, expressing the "advanced" doctrine of his time, said, "There are no more corporations in the State; there are only the separate interests of each individual and the general interest of the State." 1 In 1810, all associations of more than twenty persons were forbidden unless the State expressly permitted them. However, unions were formed in spite of the law, and the law yielded very slowly before the force of facts. At first the unions professed to exist only for the provision of mutual bene-

1 Louis, "Mouvement Syndical en France."
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France

fits. As time went on their militancy became more and more pronounced. They were far quicker to believe in Socialism than English trade unionists. A section of the working-men's delegation to the Universal Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876 speaks in a decidedly Syndicalist tone, saying:—

"The formula of the socialist party should be the emancipation of the workers by their own efforts. War on the centralising principle which paralyses all initiative; replace it by communal autonomy, the starting-point for political organisation, just as the corporate societies will form, when they unite the productive forces in one organisation, the basis of the economic organism."

But at that time this was only the opinion of an infinitesimal minority.¹

In opposition to the socialists, the general strike was more and more recommended as the chief instrument for improving society.

The establishment of labour exchanges led to a great extension of trade unionism. Many of the French exchanges have the power of granting railway fares and the cost of living in order that men in search of work may have time to look for it in any place and to travel on if

¹ Kritsky, "L'Evolution du Syndicalisme en France."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

there is none to be found: they brought together men of many trades who exchanged opinions, and besides, as they gave most facilities to those in unions, directly encouraged trade combination.

The labour exchanges, unlike those of England, are under the control of the working-classes themselves.

The Congrès de la Fédération de la Bourse de Travail of 1896, held at Tours, put into words another part of the Syndicalist doctrine—the necessity for using working-class organisations (they specified the labour exchanges) for obtaining information as to cost of living of men in each trade, the amount manufactured in each district, the density of the population—in short, such information as would be necessary if a district were made non-competitive and managed sensibly so that the burden of necessary labour was justly distributed among all.¹

The division between the political section and the Syndicalist section of opinion grew ever greater, and in 1895 the C.G.T., or Confédération Générale du Travail, a confederation of federated unions, which aims at getting rid of politicians, was formed.

It contains, however, both a reformist and a revolutionary section: the former resembles our

¹ Kritsky, "L'Évolution du Syndicalisme en France."
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France

own old-fashioned trade unionists, who confer with masters before, instead of after, strikes, and consider themselves bound by agreements, however much the force of circumstances favoured the masters against the men in need of the price of to-day's (or next week's) dinner. Its revolutionary section is, therefore, the minority of a minority of a minority—only some of the members of the C.G.T. being revolutionists, and the C.G.T. itself only representing a minority of the unions. The revolutionary section of the C.G.T. probably best embodies the Syndicalist idea which I have to explain.¹

From about 1884, when the law legalising trade unions was passed, attempts have been made to form unions of a tamer kind, likely to break the force of those who fight for their rights. Syndicats mixtes were formed "under initiative of the directing classes" and largely controlled by Catholics. These were found chiefly in the textile industries—at Lyons and Roubaix there are such syndicats, for example.² This Christian trade unionism did not live long, nor was it always as tame as it was expected to be.

"In France, the weavers of Neuvilly, com-

¹ Chiefly based on a lecture by Paul Loyson, delivered to the Fabian Society on November 25, 1910.
² "Histoire du Mouvement syndical en France."

15
Syndicalism and the General Strike

bined at first by reactionary influence and imbued with religious prejudices, entered frankly on the revolutionary path. Their revolt was in itself a complete education, by putting them face to face with the oppressive powers; and they, showed themselves much more energetic than certain kinds of workmen who called themselves more emancipated in ideas and more advanced in intellectual development.”

Out of the Christian and mixed unions arose a little later the “yellow movement,” as opposed to the “red movement” we are concerned with. The yellows believe that we all have the same interests, that Utopian socialists are dangerous, and that the rights of minorities must be respected, especially when they are loyal to the masters. Like our “free labour” movement,” the “yellow movement” does not seem to move much.

So much for history. Let us return to doctrine. Syndicalism recommends immediate aggression without careful planning of what is to be done after the victory is won: it is therefore comparatively indifferent to theories. It would unite the more timid working-men with the revolutionary, letting one work by stirring up strikes, damage of property (sabotage), boy-
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France

cotting, anti-militarism, and preparations for the general strike, while the others use those less violent means of helping the workers which co-operative action places in their power.

Thus a Swiss pamphlet, "Ce qu'est le Syndicalisme," says:

"To begin with, the Syndicalist organisation is neither specifically socialist, nor purely anarchist. The socialists of our country are grouped into cantonal parties: their organ is the *Peuple suisse*. The anarchists, on their side, have their 'Fédération romande' [Federation of Latin languages], and their organ *Le Réveil* of Geneva. The Syndicalists need not agitate on behalf of these sects. The workers in uniting according to their trades, stand together for economic interests before everything, in order to arrive, as the *Confédération Générale du travail de France*, puts it, at prosperity, and through prosperity at liberty.

"By the fact that any one is a wage-earner, a workman, a mechanic, a producer, his place is in the Syndicalist movement. Whether he is a foreigner or a native, young or old, man or woman, legally in order or not in order with his papers, this being is exploited by masters, oppressed by the creatures of the Government who get duties out of him, or taxes for the bandits
Syndicalism and the General Strike

of finance, or force him to submit to landlords, or military service, &c., he has the same interests as the fellow-workers in his workshop or yard in getting rid of the yoke of his master and his government; he has to submit to the same restraints, and has the same reasons to free himself; and that whether he is called French or German, Italian or Swiss, socialist or anarchist, Christian or Freethinker, teetotaller or Malthusian, reformer or revolutionary. The Syndicat is the group for resistance of the producer, of all producers, and of nothing but producers."

Associations formed on a basis of affinity of ideas, opinions, hopes, are looked upon as less useful than those based on unity of interests.¹

Syndicalism tries to build up purely working-class associations, free from middle-class sympathisers, and even, so far as possible, from direction by committees and delegates. "Under pretext of discipline, the workers' organisation must not cause a new spirit of resignation to spring up. The organisation should aim at the individual development of its members, not at replacing individual development of each one by a more or less authoritative direction. It would be bad if individuals trusted entirely in delegates and gave them full powers, leaving it

¹ "Le Syndicat," by Emile Pouget.
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France
to them to make all decisions. This would be an abdication of will and of personal energy and would be a return to idleness and weakness. . . . Besides delegates, whoever they are, have a repugnance—you may say a natural repugnance—against revolt. They are drawn away from it by fear of responsibility, by fear of being outwitted, by the calculations of reason, which are wrong when actually tested because they do not take into account the strength of the feelings of the masses since this force is not known and cannot be estimated.”

“Ce qu'est le Syndicalisme” says: “What are the actions demanded by Syndicalist ideas? All the actions that workers can do towards making themselves free by always forcing themselves to be sufficient for themselves, in trying not to appeal to non-workers, in keeping by themselves, in stimulating themselves, helping one another, not going to be misled by the non-producers. The latter, in reality, have often many things that bind them to our masters, with the bourgeoisie, and however sympathetic they may be, tend to filter into our organisations manners, customs, methods, tactics, institutions, of the possessing classes: besides, the workers who separate themselves from their surroundings allow themselves

1 “Syndicalisme et Révolution.”
Syndicalism and the General Strike
to be fatally influenced also by an atmosphere
that is not essentially working-class, and all these
things help in making the working-class work
go astray. The Syndicalists wish the Labour
movement to remain a labour movement, and
not to draw its strength, tactics, and style from
anywhere but the working-class. Thus will our
class fulfil its true function in society, in not
letting itself be contaminated by the rottenness of
capitalism, thus will it most properly expand,
and thus shall we be able to show all the renew-
ing and beneficent power which is in us,—it is
thus that we shall best be able to secure respect
for our function of producers.”

Syndicalism distrusts middle-class influence
partly because it distrusts the politicians and
speakers: “Laws affecting the workers (les
lois ouvrières) are no use if they are not
confirmations of palliatives which have been
already won, if they are not merely the blessings
bestowed on what is already a fact as regards
the morals and customs of the workers.”

Further on the same pamphlet says:—

“'It is quite useless to recall the vexations and
disillusions of those who have sincerely trusted
in parliamentary action. The way in which the
laws affecting workers are administered is enough

1 "A B C Syndicaliste."
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France
to enlighten the workers. They know how many
years it takes to elaborate and pass a law if it is
not to the complete advantage of the propertied
classes. They know how ingeniously employers
divert or benefit by a law which seems to favour
their employees."

The unforeseen methods by which employers
take advantage of laws intended to benefit the
workers—discharging women and children and
the old, lengthening the hours of work and so
forth in order to avoid regulations—are constantly
insisted on.

Paul Delesalle, explaining how reformist
methods have been used by socialists, says
bitterly:—

"M. Millerand's coming into power had, as
we are compelled to say, much to do with the
present crisis, and was for some Syndicalistes
the start of their evolution towards State action.
The corruption which power brings forth had
not a little to do with this. Because they were
received in ministers' ante-chambers, some trade
union leaders thought the freedom of the workers
was nearer to hand, and from that day the move-
ment which before seemed strongly directed to-
wards revolutionary action went through a period
of inaction which to-day has for its effect a
threatened division between the advocates of the
Syndicalism and the General Strike

two methods, and which will be avoided if both will frankly discuss their views."

After denouncing M. Waldeck-Rousseau's clever idea of enforced arbitration in cases of labour disputes, and the institution of other commissions and councils, mixed tribunals composed of masters and men, and showing how various measures of social reform failed to give any real help to the workers, he says:—

"On the other hand, you can create an aristocracy of trade unionists, a privileged proletariat of artisans, in antagonism with the army of unemployed, of men without a trade, which increases every day. Thus divide the workers into two for the benefit of the propertied, and so lengthen the life of capitalist society: in one word, do a work anti-socialist and anti-revolutionary.

"Or you can keep yourselves in a position of irreconcilable opposition, and make the unions remain bodies of men opposed to the masters and to capitalist society and not to be absorbed in it. Organise the workers, make them every day more conscious of their position, and teach them to rely only on themselves. Prepare to unite all the working-class forces, without any distinction, against the whole propertied class.

* "Les deux Méthodes du Syndicalisme."
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France

"For this purpose, it is necessary to prevent the workers from passing from a society in which they are under the economic oppression of their masters into one in which they are under the oppression of an economic state.

"Syndicalism and Democracy are the two opposite poles which exclude and neutralise each other. Examples abound, which everyone can recall: in all economic groups where politics creep in disintegration and decline are provable.

"This is because Democracy is a social superfluity, a parasitic and external excrescence, while Syndicalism is the logical manifestation of a growth of life, it is a rational cohesion of human beings, and that is why, instead of restraining their individuality, it prolongs and develops it."¹

"Experience shows that deputies—whether socialists or others—only move under pressure from public opinion or when afraid of an agitation."²

"All governments treat it [the disinherited class] with enmity and ill-will. If it has gained from them any alleviation of its miserable fate, this is due not to their feelings of justice or pity,

¹ "Le Syndicat," by Emile Pouget.
² "Syndicalisme et Révolution."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

but to a salutary fear which it has been able to arouse in them."  

"However, it is impossible to conceive anything more pitiable than the socialist papers are when they compare the skeleton of trade unionism in France with the strong organisation in Germany and England. The ideal of the reformers and politicians is to be able to show a great army of adherents, paying their dues regularly. . . . The ideal is not to have a compact sheep-like majority on paper, poor in spirit and needing authoritative leadership. A fighting working-class body is stronger through the moral force of the individuals who compose it than through its numbers. . . . It is better to have an active group of propagandists who know how to carry away the masses and turn them in the right direction by their words and actions, propagandists who make recruits among the masses, who feel their needs and share their feelings, and differ from their fellows only in the strength of their convictions."  

The Syndicalist has a contempt for the vulgar idea of democracy—the inert, unconscious mass is not to be taken into account when the minority wishes to act so as to benefit it; the millions

1 "Les Bases du Syndicalisme."
2 "Syndicalisme et Révolution."
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France are the first to profit by the militant actions of the few, who expose themselves to the black-listing of the masters.¹

Syndicalism aims at federating the trade unions for common action: it therefore tries to make them purely aggressive bodies, asking for only low weekly dues and giving few mutual benefits.

"The Syndicat has an interest in not isolating itself from other syndical groups."² The same pamphlet says:—

"At the most, the Syndicats may be allowed to have a fund for strike-pay and for help for the unemployed, if that may attract a few egoists, who still do not understand that the Syndicat ought to be an association formed only in order to defend and to set free its members. It is clear that unions with big reserves are only of use for helping the sick and the unemployed. Instead of being used to organise a battle against long hours of work such as would diminish considerably the amount of sickness, these big reserves are only used to maintain the evil by helping the sufferers.

"As for the funds for strike-pay, we know well

¹ See "La Confédération Générale de Travail," II. "La Tactique."
² "A B C Syndicaliste," by Georges Yvetot.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

that however big they are, they will never exceed the employers' funds. The celebrated strike of English engineers proves this: *Twenty-seven millions have been used up in pay, and yet the strike has failed.*

Delay is a hindrance to strikers and a help to employers, but where funds are large the workers are made to vote for or against a strike, and every obstacle is put by the officials in the way of a sudden expensive militancy.

As the process of exploitation gets more perfect, skilled labour is more and more replaced by comparatively unskilled machine-tending, and therefore the need for separate trade societies gets less—they can be replaced by a single union.

Thus we read:

"What is a Syndicat, then? An association of workers united by the bond of fellowship.

"This co-ordination in a corporation can take place, according to circumstances, either with the more limited bond of a trade, or, in the large-scale industrialism of the twentieth century, can unite the workers of the different trades together, since all their efforts are for a common task."  

Action undertaken by strikers for themselves is regarded as the antithesis of action taken by

1 "Le Syndicat," by Emile Pouget.
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France

the State on behalf of its subjects—reforms are considered much more praiseworthy when extorted from below than when imposed from above:

"We, in opposition to those who try to penetrate into power, act on the power, which is not exactly the same thing." ¹

The strike is regarded as excellent in itself, apart from anything gained by it; strikes exercise men in solidarity, in working together for their own aims, and in revolting, and therefore they are useful, "although they may not aim at arriving at more than very precarious immediate modifications." ²

Syndicalism aims at replacing an economic hierarchy by a system in which different kinds of work are regarded as being of one value, and where there is brotherhood instead of mastery and subservience. Trade federations are to carry on production and local organisations to look after consumption and education and training. Decentralisation and federation of autonomous communes ³ is looked forward to.

¹ "Les deux Méthodes du Syndicalisme."
² "Syndicalisme et Révolution."
³ This is the doctrine most commonly found in the popular French pamphlet. The idea of Syndicalism which nearly every one here has—the mines for the miners—will be mentioned later.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Authority—i.e., enforced regulations as opposed to those which organisations agree to with a view to their own convenience—is to end.

"The PRODUCER is the base of everything: he fills the essential organic function, thanks to which society perpetuates itself. He is then the primary cell of economic life, and it is his contact and accordance with the producers whose action is completed in the same sphere as his own—that is, the same industry, the same trade—which reveals the bond of solidarity, the claim of which extends through the whole of interconnected humanity.

"This necessary and logical understanding between producers leads to the PRODUCTIVE GROUP, which is the corner-stone of society. No other form of agglomeration has such a character of necessity; all the others are secondary." 1

The author then goes on to point out that this primary nature of the productive group—their common interests and aspirations—was less obvious when production was carried on in home industries.

The Syndicalist, having this ideal of local trades councils controlling the work done by the producers, is as much opposed to State ownership, with its vast centralised industries, as any

1 "Les Bases du Syndicalisme."
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France

anti-socialists. He points to the bad matches and cigarettes supplied by the French Government as showing its business ability. Want of initiative, wastefulness, incompetence, and tendency to reward officials for political services, not for professional ability, are all said to be characteristics of State monopolies.

Syndicalism has an immediate programme. It would have the unions look to it that there are meeting-places for working-men, where there will be lectures, baths, and all that helps them to learn how to take control of production and consumption; also the officials, with professional help, should get for workers their legal rights, and place medical and legal advice at their disposal; public working-class kitchens should be started where unadulterated food will be used, and milk depôts, by which the lives of babies will be saved which otherwise would be lost.1

The Syndicalist, aiming at improving the position of the producer, is interested in improving the technique of his work. That masters want quick and profitable work rather than good work is one of the complaints of the good workman. Thus the General Association of Postal Servants has published works on proposed alterations in

1 "Ce qu’est le Syndicalisme"; "A B C Syndicaliste."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the times of collection of letters and on apprenticeship, and how work could be made less monotonous and young supernumeraries, many of whom are for the first time living alone in large cities, provided with "a second family" in their association.¹

Time after time, Syndicalists press for the reduction of hours of work enforced by direct action and better sanitation in factories, but always it is insisted that it is better to conquer by the power of the unions than by begging help from the State.²

"It is of the greatest importance that the Syndicats should study these problems of social reorganisation. In each the question should be asked, 'What shall we do if a general strike takes place?' In each, according to its trade or industry, the reply may differ in all its details, but in all one aim will be affirmed, that of self-education and preparation in order that the revolution may be fruitful." ³

"In the future, it (the Syndicat) will be the base on which the normal society, purged of exploitation and oppression, will arise." ⁴

The general strike and other forms of direct

¹ Beaubois, "La Crise postale et les Monopoles d'État"
² See "Les deux Méthodes du Syndicalisme."
³ "Le Syndicat," by Emile Pouget.
⁴ "Les Bases du Syndicalisme."
action are the main tools for producing a better state of society.

"Partial strikes better and better organised, more and more energetic, more and more general, make us hope for the formidable movement which will set the whole working-class face to face with exploitation." ¹

"When these people find no bread and no newspaper, that morning they will at once feel fairly hit. If we succeed in taking from them other things of the greatest necessity, then it will be all over with them. If they wish to live, they should become producers instead of parasites. The war of the classes leads to the disappearance of classes." ²

"The hairdressers' assistants who were in Syndicats used direct action when in order to get Sunday rest they painted the fronts of the shops of resistant shopkeepers with potassium.

"Again, the bakers used direct action in order to enforce the law as to labour exchanges by looting such exchanges as were open. They used direct action again when they broke the windows of such bakers as would not give the Sunday holidays their workers demanded.

"But the masters of the bakers' shops (for

¹ "A B C Syndicaliste."
² "Ce qu'est le Syndicalisme."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

whom the police were as blind and tolerant as they were wide-awake and brutal for the workers), the masters used direct action against certain other bakers of the Grenelle district in Paris, in breaking up their shops and throwing the bread in the street, because these employers resisted the decision of the employers intended to defeat what the workers did.

"Of course, the papers made a great fuss about the violent action of the employers, but they were not unanimous in blaming it as they are when the men's actions are concerned. Like the police and the magistrates, the press is only severe when the direct action is done by the workers, who imitate the example of their exploiters."

The dockers' representatives in the port of Cette gained their purpose of getting their hours of labour reduced by locking the employers' representatives in the room and declaring they would not go away from there until they had signed an agreement conceding their demands. They won them.

The use of trade union labels is regarded as an instance of direct action.

*Sabotage* consists in not considering the employers' interests—pursuing a policy of "ca'

1 "A B C Syndicaliste." 2 Ibid.
3 "Le Syndicat," by Emile Pouget.
Popular Ideas of Syndicalism in France
canny,” or working slowly—in some cases it consists in giving customers good measure and truthful opinions as to the qualities of goods; in others, in cooking well and refusing to use bad meat delivered at restaurants; in others it consists in wasting materials. *Sabotage*, it is said, “is in the social war what guerrilla fighting is in national wars.”

Children in some strikes have been removed from the strikers' homes and taken care of by workers in other districts.

In order to prevent blacklegs being employed, the strikers at the Bordeaux gasworks remained in the factory but refused to do any work.

On the railways obstruction has been practised by exact obedience to official rules and by purposely using wrong labels.

“Legality having been made in order to defend that which is, it is necessary sometimes to go outside it in order to obtain anything.”

Pouget is careful to insist that the purpose of *sabotage* is to hit the master and not the consumer: thus bread has been made inedible but not injurious.

The subservience of the army to the propertied class is to be dissolved by anti-militarist propaganda. Thus we read:

Syndicalism and the General Strike

"On the other hand, as the army is the great safeguard of the owning classes, we must work vigorously at anti-militarist propaganda. Further, we must open the eyes of our comrades to legal scoundrelism; the propertied classes give the people a piece of paper—the voting paper—to defend their rights; but the propertied keep rifles to defend their own interests with. When this is realised, much is clear. The revolutionary methods of the Syndicalists are justified everywhere."¹

Again:—

"The principal obstacle to a revolution is the army. . . . When the Government does not use the army to replace strikers, it makes soldiers into massacres of workmen."²

If it is proposed to use soldiers to replace railwaymen or electricians who have struck, Pouget says that the machinery, "the indispensable material," can be so treated that it, too, will strike and refuse to work.

The tailors of Philadelphia are said to have practised sabotage in an ingenious way by leaving behind them in a certain shop incorrect yard-measures, which made their successors work to wrong measurements.

¹ "Ce qu’est le Syndicalisme."
² "A B C Syndicaliste."

34
MONSIEUR GEORGES SOREL
AND HIS IDEAS
CHAPTER II

MONSIEUR GEORGES SOREL AND HIS IDEAS

Monsieur Sorel, the learned commentator on Syndicalist developments, himself wrote to tell me that I should find in the autobiographical letter placed at the beginning of Agostino Lanzillo’s pamphlet, “Giorgio Sorel,” “all that I have to say which is useful about myself.” We learn from that letter in conjunction with the list of his works at the end of the book that he started as an author and as a prophet of revolution only after he had retired at the age of forty-five from his profession of public-works engineer.

Michels has compared Sorel to Engels. Both as elderly men living lives of studious peace send their messages to a circle of admirers (Sorel is now sixty-four years old, he was born on November 2, 1847, at Cherbourg): both—Engels the prosperous merchant and Sorel the retired ingénieur en chef des ponts et chaussées—stir up revolt against the privileged prosperity.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

in which they themselves are placed; "both believe in their own infallibility," says Michels: only one thing distinguishes one from the other (he concludes)—Engels was as German as Sorel is French.¹

He studied in Rollin College at Paris and at the Polytechnique until he was twenty; after twenty-five years of work as an engineer, he retired decorated with the légion d'honneur; he might then, he says, have asked the favour of "perpetual leave," which would have been granted and would have left him his right to a pension: but he preferred not to ask for a favour.

Sorel married a lady who shared his interest in politics. He lost her in 1897, and since her death lives with one of her married nephews at Boulogne-sur-Seine, near Paris.

Sorel is neither a professor nor a populariser, nor one who wishes to lead a party; he is "an eager student about sixty years of age," as Mr. J. H. Harley called him in his article in The Contemporary Review.

Sorel began his literary career with a commentary on the Bible—it is now lost—a book

¹ See Michel's review of Lanzillo's book in Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus u. der Arbeiterbewegung, Band II. Heft 2, 3.
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

intended (and it is characteristic of the man's permanent view of things) to show how the Bible, in opposition to our modern, utilitarian, calculating, profit-and-loss morals, sets up an ethic of ideals, of power, and of character. Like Shaw and Chesterton (I promise not to mention them again), he is violently opposed to a determinist view of the individual, although he lays enormous emphasis on the power of economic conditions. But he would inspire men with hatred of oppression and oppressors, and not at all leave them to drift along as part of an economic machine. The natural instinct of man, he believes, makes him oppose merely those who oppose his will, and so the demagogue denounces the misdeeds of *individuals*, and concentrates the whole of the popular anger on representative personages: because we only hate those who cut across our immediate course, we are inclined to dislike those who are nearest to us, since they stand in our way most obviously; democracy does not get much beyond this— it is merely desirous of satisfying feelings relating to immediate and private material interests: it is only after the worker is dominated by the idea of revolutionary socialism that he has "lost all confidence in, the old mysteries that once disguised the brutality of economic relations: his mind is sharpened and
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the importance of the economic motive in the world is clear to him, the idea of the overthrow of the social order is laid on him like a law of reason." ¹

But in the working-class there is automatically developed a great force of revolution; the worker is unconsciously driven on to create a new order of society—he is the creative evolutionary power in the world. He has no need of definite principles: the conflict of class with class develops an unpredictable conclusion. All this happens if only he is not corrupted by reason. This opposition to rationalism was seen in Sorel's second book, "Le Procès de Socrate," in which he accused Socrates of introducing "probabilitism" into morals. "The man who is contented with probabilities, who believes in the absolute independence of reason and the entire original purity of the mind, cannot abandon himself to pessimism. There is nothing better for him than to let things go, not to torment himself if evil triumphs. If he attains a sufficient degree of optimism, he will look on the spectacle of life as if an interesting panorama were being unrolled, and will end by believing that everything is done to amuse him."

¹ "Insegramenti Sociali dell' Economia Contemporanea" (Sandron, Palermo, 1906).
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

It is characteristic that Sorel dislikes life as an amusement, and is all for moral conflict and uncomfortable virtue.

His sanity of view is indicated by his belief in monogamic marriage. He does not agree with those confused people who think that by denying the validity of all moral codes a good standpoint is obtained from which to attack the errors of the world: conventional morality will serve well enough, if its principles are firmly applied, to knock down wealth founded on inheritance, and ownership apart from services and present-day needs. We hear much of a new morality, but we never see its formulated codes. Complicated in application, in principle the sacrifice of the individual to the needs of the community is morality; and the opposite, sacrifice of the community to the individual, is immorality; there is no need for any revolution in this simple principle—only apply it steadily and the revolution in the economic form of society will follow. To return to our summary of Sorel's life: Socialism about 1893 began to show its growing power in France, and there was a stir in the world of propagandist and controversial literature. Dvamandy, a Roumanian student, started the Marxian review, *L'ère nouvelle*, and Sorel contributed to it. It would
Syndicalism and the General Strike

seem that his study of Marx's works began at this time. "The formidable instrument of historical materialism now found, perhaps for the first time, that it may be included in a wider theory," says Lanzillo. Sorel had already been influenced towards socialism by Proudhon before he read Marx, and the former writer exerted perhaps the more profound influence on his mind.

*L'ère nouvelle* died. The *Devenir social* was founded by Sorel, and to it he contributed much work, both under his own name and using the pseudonym "David," and various initials. (The *Devenir social*, by the way, died in France, to be reborn as the *Devenire sociale* of Italy.)

When Sorel first took part in the controversies between socialists, he sided with Bernstein, who favoured reformist tactics, against Kautsky, the more revolutionary socialist.

The crisis produced by the Dreyfus case did much to annoy Sorel with the socialists, each section of whom seemed to him to use the disturbance of opinion only for the advantage of its own little sect. Sorel wrote a large volume on the *affaire Dreyfus*, out of which he later compiled a small pamphlet, "La Révolution Dreyfusienne," which is all that he intends to
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

publish on the subject. Although even then somewhat disillusioned about the socialist politicians, he did not, when Millerand entered a capitalist ministry, condemn him; regarding the affair as a movement “directed against the Church, and against militarist interference in French politics,” and at that time thinking that socialists could work with the Dreyfusards, and could for a particular end ally themselves with other parties, on such matters as are outside the economic realm. He, however, was rapidly disgusted by the “degeneration of socialism,” which he saw resulting from the electoral tactics of the party.

The Dreyfus affair led to riots and agitations, which created once again in France “a temperature of violence,” and thus revealed to the working-class their own power, if they acted unitedly and not by the mouths of messengers and parliamentarians; the contrast between the two socialisms—the socialism of parliaments and the socialism of independent working-class action became clearer. In the end, the confusion of aims produced in all working-class movements by their working together for all kinds of “betterments,” whether or no they were connected with the wage-earners’ struggle against property, brought Sorel out of sympathy with

43
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the Socialist party and with democratic and political parties. He was for a revolution brought about by the elect few.

"Sorel is a reactionary against the revolutionary confusionism which is not class war": he lives, we must remember, in France, where the working-class are still ready to die for liberty, fraternity, and equality, for Jacobite intangibilities. His pamphlet, published 1898, called "L'avenir Socialiste des Syndicats," is of historical importance, as it contains the first reasoned expression of some of the characteristic Syndicalist views. (I may point out that the C.G.T., although founded in 1895, was not of importance till some years after.) Here, for instance, is to be found a bitter attack on the intellectuals—they are said to be less intellectual than they seem; their importance to the world is slight, and to a socialist movement still less. He says of them:—

"The democracy of the propertied classes catches hold with the energy of despair of the theory of capacities and struggles to use the superstitious respect which the people instinctively have for knowledge; it makes use of the most mountebankish means to increase its reputation, multiplies degrees, and tries to turn the smallest of men of letters into a mandarin; parasites distinguish themselves by their im-
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

moderate enthusiasm for science in order to throw dust into the eyes of the people—they get towed along by the high priests of science, act as their heralds, ask for big pensions for them, and hope, in these ways, to get the respect of simple people and make profit for themselves. . . .”

“Experience shows that the qualities needed for directing are not exceptional, and that they are very commonly found among manual workers. . . .”

“In France the intellectuals claim that their right place is in Parliament, and that dictatorial power would come to them with complete right in case of triumph. It is against this representative dictatorship of the people that the Syndicaux protest: they think it would be quite different from the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

The divergence of the interests of their interests from those of the proletariat is insisted on:—

“The men of law will find, without doubt, no great occupation in the society of the future. It is not probable that illnesses will increase in the future; the progress of science and the better organisation of poor-law have already done much to diminish the number of doctors employed. In large-scale industry, many of the superior
Syndicalism and the General Strike

persons employed could be abolished, if the great shareholders did not have to find places for customers of theirs. A better division of functions would allow, as in England, a small but clever and experienced technical staff to do the work which a larger number of less competent engineers do badly. In so far as the mental and moral qualities of the workers improve, you can do without most of their supervisors—English experience proves it. Finally, in offices women compete with men, and will do all office work when socialism has emancipated them. Thus socialisation of the means of production translates itself into a huge lock-out: it is difficult to believe that the intellectuals do not see a fact so obvious as that!

He says the interests of these intellectuals are quite different from those of working-men: they live "at the expense of society, while modern society lives at the expense of the workers."

"The true calling of the intellectual is the exploitation of politics: the calling of the politician is much like that of the prostitute, and he has no need of industrial ability. You must not talk to them of suppressing the traditional forms of the State; in this their ideal, revolutionary as it looks, is reactionary. They want to persuade the worker that his interests consist in carrying
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

them into power, and that he should accept the hierarchy of abilities, which places the workers under the direction of politicians."

In opposition to many Syndicalist teachers, Sorel here stated that he would have trade unions provide benefits (pensions, sick and unemployment pay), if the members wanted them, but would have them optional, membership in the union only entailing membership for protection and aggression against the masters.

The final words of the pamphlet are: "Pour résumer toute ma pensée en une formule, je dirai que tout l'avenir du socialisme réside dans le développement autonome des Syndicats ouvriers."

A different line of reasoning causes him to reflect that "democracy constitutes a danger for the future of the proletariat when it occupies the first place in working-class preoccupations; for democracy mixes classes and consequently tends to cause the ideas of a trade to be considered as unworthy of the attention of an enlightened man." ¹

Sorel has not reprinted this pamphlet on the future of trade unions, and in his "Confessions," written in 1901, but not yet published, he says he considers its formulæ "doubtful and also

¹ "Introduction à l'Économie moderne."
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

dangerous."¹ The pamphlet's anti-intellectualism and pro-autonomous working-class effort-
ism is, of course, permanently Sorelian. His ob-
jection to politicians is expressed also in "La Décomposition du Marxisme," where he shows
how the politician degenerates when he succeeds
in politics, and explains why politicians are all
conservative, even when they advocate violent
revolutions.

"The introduction of political parties in a
revolutionary movement takes us far away from
its primitive simplicity. Those who revolt are
at first intoxicated by the idea that their will
should not meet any obstacle, because they are
the majority; it seems to them evident that they
have only to elect delegates in order to make
laws which suit their needs; but in so doing they
accept the rule of men who have interests other
than their own; these men wish to give their
services, but only on condition that the masses
deliver the State to them, power over the State
being what they covet. Thus the instinct of
revolt in the poor may come to serve as base for
the formation of a popular State, formed of
propertied people who wish to continue a bour-
geois existence and who support bourgeois ideas,
but who profess to be proxies for the disinherited.

¹ See Lanzillo, p. 33.

48
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

"The popular State tends to extend its tentacles more and more, because the masses become more and more difficult to dupe, as soon as the first moment of the fight is passed and it is found necessary to preserve the instinct of revolt in humdrum times; this renders necessary complicated electoral machines, and consequently a very great number of favours to be given away. By thus constantly increasing the number of its dependants, the State produces a group of intellectuals having interests different from those of the propertyless producers; thus the defences of the bourgeois structure of society against the revolutionary working-class are strengthened. Experience shows that this bourgeoisie of clerks may well have a feeble culture, but is none the less much attached to the ideas of the propertied; we even see, in many examples, that if some propagandist of revolution gets into the governing world, he very easily becomes an excellent man of means."

(The labour exchanges and Insurance Bill supply good examples of the way in which the State creates new classes of officials, and these officials have a direct interest in proving that the Insurance Bill and the labour exchanges go a long way in satisfying the just demands of labour.)
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Sorel has stated in one of his letters that the safest parliamentary candidate for the Syndicalist to vote for is the most ignorant democrat who knows nothing about working-class affairs: such men are easily intimidated and can never betray the possible weakness of a trade union; they have also no power to mislead or divide the working-class.¹

Sorel's idea of the value of independent purely working-class bodies was derived from his knowledge of the Bourses du Travail. Sorel wrote a preface for the history of their bodies, which was written by Pelloutier, at one time secretary of the Fédération des Bourses.²

¹ Lanzillo, p. 79.
² Fernand Pelloutier, a journalist, was intended originally for the Church, but at the age of sixteen a violent attack on the Church was found in his desk and he was dismissed from the seminary. While still at college, he contributed to various papers. As a delegate of the Bourses du Travail de Saint-Nazaire et du Nantes at Tours, he supported the general strike, which became one of his favourite ideas. He was made secretary of the Fédération des Bourses. His health having become exceedingly bad (he was tuberculous), he was given a small post as investigator at the Office du Travail, but this did not prevent him from opposing "the hybrid projects of the pseudo-socialist minister Millerand," relative to regulation of strikes and compulsory arbitration and to old-age pensions. He was dismissed from this governmental post on account of opinions expressed in his book "La Vie ouvrière en France." He died after great sufferings in 1901, aged 33. (See the biographical notice 50
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

I have suggested that in Sorel's works we find much learning, the precise purpose of which is not always clear, and even if it were it could have little interest to those distant from the controversies in which he is engaged. We thus find in his pamphlet, "La Décomposition du Marxisme," that before arriving at the very interesting pages on the social myth, he discusses how far Engels agreed with and how far he diverted Marx from his original ideas; how far the Marxians agree with Marx, and how far Syndicalism is Marxian; how far Marx was a blanquiste, or believer in a revolution suddenly brought about by a dictator, and how far he was an insurrectionist; how far capitalism has been able to get over difficulties that Marx said it could not get over, and how the old Marx agreed with the Marx of his earlier years—these things, I feel sure, cannot be made interesting to the Englishman who does not know the difference between a S.P.G.B'er and a Fabian.

It is, however, in this work that one of his best explanations of the nature of the social myth occurs.

It is when he is referring to that final catastrophe which will, according to Marx, overtake by Victor Dave at the beginning of "Histoire des Bourses du Travail." Sorel refers to Pelloutier's influence in the 6th section of "La Décomposition du Marxisme."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the capitalistic society when the workers revolt, that he says:—

"This text need not be taken literally; we are in the presence of what I have called a social myth; we have a strongly coloured sketch which gives a very clear idea of change, but no detail of which can be discussed as a foreseeable historical fact.

"In seeking how minds always have prepared themselves for revolutions, it is easy to see that they always made use of social myths, the formulæ of which varied according to their times. Our epoch demands a more sober literature than that which was formerly in use, and Marx had the merit of disembarrassing his revolutionary myth of all the phantasmagorias which too often have caused people to look for a land of Cocaigne.

"The myth is not suitable for division into successive slices of change which can be arranged in a series, and which, being spread over a long space of time, can be regarded as forming an evolution. This transformation is necessary in all action conducted by a political party, and it has taken place wherever socialists have entered into parliaments; it is impossible in the Marxian myth, which gives a revolution in a lump, like an indivisible whole."
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

In the same book he remarks:—

"The catastrophe—which was the great rock of offence to the socialists who wished to make Marxism agree with the practice of the politicians of democracy—corresponds exactly with the general strike which for revolutionary Syndicalists represents the coming of the future world. . . .

"It is not to be hoped that the revolutionary movement can ever follow a direction rightly determined in advance; that it can be conducted according to a learned plan like the conquest of a country, or that it can be studied scientifically except when it is present. Everything in it is unpredictable. . . .

"It is just because of these novelties in the revolutionary movement that care must be taken not to use any formulæ except mythical formulæ: discouragement might result from the disillusionment produced by the disproportion between reality and what is expected; experience shows us that many excellent socialists have been thus led to abandon their party."

The political strike, intended to intimidate politicians or put one set out of power and another in, is to be carefully distinguished from the general economic strike. The political strike is made by people who plan out its conse-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

quences: it is the great value of the general strike that it over-turns society absolutely, and leads to an unknown future entirely different from the past. Unlike the political strike, it is not controlled by generals who expect to increase their power if it succeeds. Sorel was a Bergsonite before he read Bergson: you will note at once how both rejoice in trusting to the unknown, the not-reasoned-out.

The general strike is an embodiment of the extremest form of class-struggle: one of those ideas which, true or untrue, are productive of energetic action: like the belief in the resurrection of Christ or the eternal war of Satan against the army of Christ. When a mass of people make up their minds to act upon the world, when a social myth is present in the consciousness of all of them, they actually succeed in influencing their environment, just as the individual consciousness influences its body. (Bergsonians will note the Bergsonism of this.)

"You may talk indefinitely," Sorel goes on, "of revolts without ever provoking any revolutionary movement, so long as there are no myths accepted by the masses; this is what gives such great importance to the general strike, and this is what makes it so odious to socialists who are

1 Sorel, "Réflexions sur la Violence," Introduction.

54
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

afraid of a revolution; they make great efforts to shake the confidence that the workers have in their preparation for a revolution; and in order to succeed they try to ridicule the idea of a general strike, which is the only idea which has any value in moving people."

A myth differs from an intellectual Utopia, he proceeds to explain, in that the former is an expression of will, the latter the product of intellectual labour: "it is the work of theorists, who, after having observed and discussed facts, try to build a model with which you can compare existing societies in order to measure the relative amount of good and evil which they comprise." The proof that a myth is a myth appears to be that it cannot be disproved and that experience cannot show that it is impossible: thus the believer in the general strike will always say of any strike that fails that the preparations for it were insufficient, and that the work must be begun with more courage, determination, and confidence next time. There is much good in this distinction between a Utopia and a myth: Plato's Republic, much as I admire it, is argued out so reasonably that it is Utopian. What is dogmatically asserted can alone affect imaginations and wills. It is because science is scientific that its vast Darwinian generalisations are not
Syndicalism and the General Strike

impressive as those of religion are: the gloomiest predestination of the majority to eternal hell is inspiring in its grandeur. It is only that which has not been proved that moves us. The imagination is positive in its effects while the reason is negative.

The general strike is said to be such a social myth, which calls to mind in one mass all the socialist ideas, all manifestations of the war which socialism wages with society—one part of it grows out of another, the whole being an indivisible movement. Sorel is not moved by the fact that the general strike is said to be impossible. "There is no method by which you can foresee the future scientifically or even discuss the value of different hypotheses about it; too many memorable examples show us that the greatest men made the most prodigious errors when they tried to master even the nearest facts of the future." Myths describing the future are of great value when they embody the strongest tendencies of a people, a party, or a class; when they give reality to what we wish to do in the near future. The general strike dramatises in its extremest form the real bitter war between the classes. I should myself suggest that the social myth is best when reduced to its

Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

simplest form: it then becomes the bare conviction that the socialists will ultimately win and get a socialist State. If it be objected that this bare conviction that they are destined to succeed is not embodied in a sufficiently plastic form to be a good myth, as an alternative I suggest as the perfect myth the Jewish idea of the Messiah, almost as the orthodox among them believe it. The Christians have spoilt the idea with their false spiritualisings. It is the idea of a man who is destined to come, at the right moment, in order to revenge the wrongs done to the poor by the prosperous wicked. But he will not come until the right moment, when the poor have become ready for him and understand the wrongs and rights of their class. He comes not at first to bring peace but to bring a sword—the banner will be raised, the trumpet will be sounded—in the great battle of Armageddon, socialists and anti-socialists will fight, and all who will not submit to justice will be killed. It is afterwards that swords will be turned into ploughshares, that every man will live in assured possession of his own fig-tree (or, I suppose, some other tree if figs do not grow there and he does not like figs), and that the lion will eat straw like an ox (and man, I presume, will not be less humane than the lion). I suggest that the combination of
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Messianism with preparation and effort on the part of the millions forms the perfect myth. It may, however, be objected by sensible people that it is not certain that any Messiah ever will arrive. I do not know of any answer to that.

Sorel, as a believer in the catastrophic conception of the coming of socialism, favours violence as a means of keeping alive a spirit favourable to adventurous daring.

Violence—which is force exerted by the majority in order to destroy a government, a certain social order, in opposition to force, which aims at preserving any order of society which is advantageous to a minority—violence is praised because it maintains a rigid division between the chosen people and the Gentiles—it prevents compromise and confusion of thought—a little violence and persecution will be enough, if only there is a feeling of coming catastrophe connected with it. True morality is not a calculation, a probability of profit accruing somewhere; it is the spirit of a sublime battle, a violent and desperate effort to remake the world.

Hatred causes people to study their opponents and to study their own opinions. It does away with the silly "We all agree at the bottom" idea. The righteous anger of the oppressed against their oppressors is no petty, self-centred,
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas calculating feeling. Dreary intellectuality flees before passionate hate. The saint is a fighter while the well-meaning person is peaceable. The torpor of the times needs pricking—prudence and sense are the devil.

Violence, according to Sorel, is a moral necessity if the state of mind is ever to be set up which will lead to the establishment of socialism and the definite break-up of the present system. The working-class tactics must include violent force exerted outside the law—the "laceration (lacerazione) of the existing historical constitution" as Lanzillo calls it: in order that the right tone of mind may be created in which the old conventions will lose their reality.

As a clear-eyed believer in real violence, he is opposed both to those who can see a harmony of interests and those who threaten in order to get concessions from Parliament. The believer in social peace argues that "the legislator has to create social peace by showing to the poor that the Government has no greater anxiety than that for improving their lot, and imposing necessary sacrifices on people who possess a fortune considered too large for social peace. . . ." "Experience shows that the propertied classes easily allow themselves to be spoiled, provided they are pressed a little and the fear of a revolu-
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

tion put in them: the party that knows how to move the revolutionary bogy about most boldly will inherit the future; that is what the radicals are beginning to see; but clever as its low tricking comedians may be they will have difficulty in finding any who will know how to dazzle the big Jewish bankers as well as Jaurès and his friends do.” For Sorel hates the political socialists more than any other body of men.

In a competitive society, he goes on to explain, the idea of social duty, or the idea of a fair wage, has no meaning. Duty or wage is fixed solely by the bargaining power of the contesting forces, and the worker, finding the masters always try to dupe him with untrue statements as to what is economically possible, come to the conclusion that production and distribution can be indefinitely manipulated to their advantage.

As against this idea Sorel is all for the aggravation of the class-war: “The more the propertied class is capitalistic, the more the dis-inherited class is full of warlike spirit and confident of its revolutionary power, the more sure will be the movement” towards socialism. This fills Sorel with immense pleasure, because in it he sees heroic figures acting with intense passion: he views the moral and moderate man as acting with a confounded mildness and indecision, as
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

encouraging languor and gentlemanliness and pity in the propertied class: the American millionaire is more his ideal bourgeois. Again, he considers that revolutions are only useful when production is improving, they accomplish nothing otherwise, and he contrasts the good French Revolution with the bad Christianisation of the Roman Empire. But he thinks that legislative interference by its ignorant prescriptions weakens production, while direct striking forces the capitalist to economise without dictating to him how he is to do so, and therefore it stimulates improvement. He admires the violence of this class-war, which he compares to the violence of war, and contrasts with revengeful violence of legalists who proscribe enemies of the State—the State to which Syndicalism is entirely hostile, and therefore hostile also to legal violence and to militarism. Here, again, we see his preference for passion and intuition in place of thought.

Christianity in its most active, early period, he sees as a religion which caused people to believe they were fighting daily against the devil and soon to win; just as to-day the socialist fights capitalism: the battle-spirit is a great force. The Salvation Army, as its name shows, started out with this idea, but I have not
Syndicalism and the General Strike

heard its preachers use the fight with the devil motive much—they prefer fear of hell. It is said that in modern times people are less to be moved by the love of aggression than formerly.

Sorel, however, is not entirely in favour of all violence, all rebellion against order and government. He is a believer in machinery and economic development—he is untouched by Utopian, artistic reactionarism of those who want handicraft to replace machinery (a view that I sympathise with, because I think every man can have joy in his work, but not if he is subordinate to a machine that circles round a path of routine).

F. Challaye, in "Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et Syndicalisme réformiste," says:—

"Many Syndicalist theorists—M. Georges Sorel, M. Edouard Berth, for example—declare themselves entirely hostile to sabotage. M. Georges Sorel considers that 'socialism will inherit not only the utensils which have been created by capitalism and the science which has been developed by technical co-operation, but also that power of co-operating which has been developed by a long factory-life in such a way as to get the best out of the time, strength, and skill of men.' Hence he regrets that certain Syndicalists recommend the use of sabotage,
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

which 'does not at all tend to direct the workers in the path of emancipation.'" ¹

I may here note that the anarchists have used strong language against Sorel, because, with reference to Ferrer's execution, he advised the workers not to trouble about principles which did not concern their own class and not to agitate for any "political end," but reserve all their force for their own revolutionary emancipation. Hervé, near to Syndicalism as he seems at times to be, had a quarrel on paper with Yvetot, one of the two Secretaries of the C.G.T., in which he spoke scornfully of "Syndicalist and labour" movements. Hervé's projected strike is a mixed strike—partly to protest against war, partly to establish socialism. Hervé believes in the "intellectuals" working with the working-class socialists.

Sorel to-day is more sympathetic with the extreme conservatism of the "Action Française," which stands for a monarchic government and paternal regulation of the poorer classes by the richer and more aristocratic, and for the State in alliance with the Roman Catholic Church, than with any other non-Syndicalist party. Rumours of alliances between Syndicalism and

¹ G. Sorel, Le Syndicalisme révolutionnaire, Mouvement socialiste, Novembre, 1905, p. 277.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

monarchists may be set down as untrue and we may compare them to the old radical story of the English labour members being paid for by conservatives. Sorel’s hatred for the Republic is a great bond of union between him and the royalists. Besides, Sorel’s preoccupation with the moral aspects of life (I must insist that he regards the class-war as a war which enables sublimity to again enter life) brings him into sympathy with every movement that is animated by idealism.
MONSIEUR GEORGES SOREL
AND HIS IDEAS
CHAPTER III

MONSIEUR GEORGES SOREL AND HIS IDEAS

(continued)

Many great books require persevering readers, and I admit I think it is so with Sorel's works. They often seem ill-arranged, obscure in intention and heavy: but he, like Karl Marx, has ideas. Marx's inspiring ideas (even if they were not original he put them into circulation) were the ideas of surplus value, or the part of the results of work which the idle appropriate; the class-war and its importance; and the dependence of moral ideals and social institutions on the economic structure, the method of production, of a society, although (a point that some mistaken exponents of this materialist conception of history ignore) once the moral ideas are started they may exist in enmity to the economic society around them. Sorel's ideas are the social myth, or the prophetic vision, the dramatic conclusion to the hopes of the present, which because a multitude believes in
Syndicalism and the General Strike

it is likely to be realised; the imaginative embodiment of men's struggles and hopes which will help them to turn ideas into actions:—the idea that the unconscious (or instinctive) acts of the workers struggling to develop their own institutions in opposition to the capitalists are of value, while any interference on the part of intellectuals, whose interests are not really the same as those of the workers, is bad: the idea that violence and sublimity, not calculation, are necessary in morality. His attacks on reform are in the manner of his school, but made with individual ability.

The praise of a morality based on enthusiasm and instinct in opposition to one based on calculation is, of course, thoroughly Bergsonian. I cannot but sympathise with it, because our intellectuals get so one-sided and inhuman, and lose all the natural feelings of man: man finds out at last that the impulse to live and act is not a reasonable one, and that reason can supply the means but not the energy or desire. Yet praise of instinct is not entirely satisfying, because man's instincts are both numerous and indistinct: they are all sophisticated with reason: the will to live and fight is after all only one, if an important instinct. The enthusiasm of a soldier in a war for freedom, knowing that the foremost
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

in the fight may have to die in order that the others may win, but giving his utmost without calculation as to his pay, the artist's interest in his work for its own sake, or the inventor's—these supply Sorel with examples of what is excellent.

The difficulty involved in a morality based on the heroic enthusiasm caused by a class-war has been pointed out by Vernon Lee—it involves two moralities, one bourgeois, one proletarian:

"For remark that if the valeurs morales have no chance save from the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice begotten by the Syndicalist myth, that Syndicalist myth cannot itself be kept up, with its class warfare and militant virtues, except by the application of such 'violence' (however platonic) as will exasperate the selfish ruthlessness of the bourgeoisie, and make or keep it just as wicked and vile as you may want it.”

But even the bourgeois is improved by perpetual strikes and labour restlessness—without such troubles he would get fat on his income, and degenerate, and with his degeneration, his special work, which is the improvement and forcing onward of production, would cease. The reformer is an incompetent creature who hinders and discourages progress.

1 *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1911.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Sorel has written a book called “Les Illusions du Progrès” but I do not think I can summarise it—I am not sure that I entirely understand it. In a passage criticising P. Lacombe, a writer who thinks that progress is either due to an accumulation of wealth and of knowledge, or to an increase of happiness following a better harmonising or conciliation of different feelings, and who lays great stress on the increase of those intellectual pleasures which are certainly calm and feeble, but are also more lasting than others, and who declares that superiorities in science particularly indicate a great nation, Sorel says: “P. Lacombe speaks sometimes of technical improvement in terms which would not be disavowed by a disciple of Marx; you might expect, therefore, that he would arrange civilisations in a scale according to the methods of production; but while recognising the priority of economic development, as an experimental truth, P. Lacombe does not use economics to ‘judge the relative height of civilisations.’ This attitude corresponds exactly to the situation of contemporary civilisations; they exist in countries which are growing richer day by day owing to causes alien to the preoccupations of the leaders of democracy—and very often in spite of the activities of these chiefs. It is therefore natural to look on progress of produc-
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas
tion as being the fundamental condition for the whole of modern civilisation; but at the same time to put the essence of this civilisation elsewhere than in economic facts.” Sorel himself seems to hold that if civilisations can be arranged in a scale, it must be according to the excellence of their productive methods, and that improvements of production always precede improvements of morals or of legal principles.

We shall find, I think, that Sorel’s idea is that all the ideas of progress hitherto held by people have been false. (What are ideas but the justification of a man’s desires and a defence of the conduct which self-interest demands? When a class is getting richer it will always find a philosophy that is equivalent to the belief that “God’s in His heaven.”)

No doubt the book is largely intended to discredit all accepted ideas by showing the unavowed roots from which abandoned theories grew up, which in their day were defended with the kinds of eloquence and logic then in use.

In his summary of the book (Chapter V. p. 275 of the 2nd edition) he says: “We found [in the earlier part of this book] a minor philosophy held by men of the world who asked to be allowed to enjoy their wealth, and who did not wish to hear of the prudence practised for so
Syndicalism and the General Strike

long by their fathers; the contemporaries of Louis XIV. boast of the novelties of their century and grow enthusiastic by thinking of the fine things that are spontaneously born in order to assure more and more happiness to mankind." He traces the growth of a bourgeois bureaucracy administering France in the eighteenth century after the manner of clerks engaged to look after the king's affairs, and preferring ideal or unreal speculations to practical matters, because they do not wish to appear to be inquisitive and inclined to interfere in their master's affairs: hence the eighteenth-century love of republican virtue and speculations on the social contract—these were only looked upon as exercises in rhetoric so long as they amused the prosperous class for whom they were at first intended. Utopianism is natural to rich people because they are not acquainted with economic necessities. But what is fashionable is soon imitated by parvenus and descends to lower classes: the myth remains, but its meaning changes. Theories were in demand which destroyed the feudal rights and claims and justified State powers which the rich bourgeoisie possessed; the social contract was of use to people, and it suited the ideas of its age because it was clear, and a clear theory, at a time before science began to specialise, a theory which
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

enabled people to explain everything without experimental study of anything, was much esteemed: explanation by principles without any facts was therefore much liked. Besides this, sects, the adherents of which undertake to support a creed, and societies for a given purpose, really are contractual even if no nation ever was. Rousseau, as I need not say, was no believer in progress: his man in a natural state of happiness was derived partly from the Bible, with its mythical Adam and Eve and Garden of Eden, from which men fell; partly from the notion of contrasting nature with highly developed arts, against which fashion then rebelled, and, for instance, opposing the caprices of Gothic architecture (then counted barbarous) to the work of true primitives; partly from the anti-clerical fervour of the time, which believed all evils came from the deceits of the Church, and the Church was doomed; partly from an exaggerated belief in the effects of education, and lastly from admiration of savages, whose dignified manners covered a multitude of evils and miseries. But after all the whole praise of man in a state of nature was only a "mythical" way of expressing disgust with man as he actually was.

The mystic theory of the general will is derived, Sorel thinks, from the Protestant idea of
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the inner light, from admiration of the Greeks and their direct democracy, and from an old belief in what "everybody says."

Then arose an historical school who saw in each successive legal system something necessary, when considered in relation to its own times. Sorel points out the resemblance between this idea and that of Darwin: both look backwards and explain how, at a given time, certain species suited a certain environment or certain laws and customs suited a certain level of development. But why is there a movement forwards? Darwin, he says, does not explain the primary factor, why species do vary, but he connects the elimination of certain variations with the struggle for food and for water. "Darwinian naturalists recognise by the results of the struggle which were the best armed of the competing types" ¹: they test the superiority of one type over another by the fact that one type has now conquered another in battle; but all this is no use as a guide for the planning of future campaigns and the winning of future battles. Hence the dislike of those who look forward for "historical" and "Darwinian" explanations. Both explanations were liked by a tired age which did not want to

¹ Sorel, "Introduction à l'Économie moderne." 74
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

look forward, and was quite content to believe that the fittest or most suitable had survived. Survival proved fitness; but this does not satisfy the man with his own idea of fitness. Having scoffed considerably at those who believe in a progress manifested by increase of knowledge and enlightenment, spread of education, increased mildness of manners, or a world-wide commerce and politics which tend to join all the nations and break down all barriers, and all who believe in other stupid phrases used for electioneering, Sorel comes to "real progress, which deals with the technique of production." It is due to the reduction of friction in machines, and to the use of perfect geometrical forms in them; to the reduction of wasted energy, and therefore to the use of large machines—for large machines are economical, though the value of increased size and "economical concentration" where machinery is not used has been over-estimated in Sorel's opinion; and to the love of the worker for the tools that he uses: he ought to be trained, if he is to be most useful, rather to look for their imperfections than to understand the services that they render. The stupidity, from the point of view of any one who wishes for technical progress, of turning men into machines will one day be seen and the employers who organised
Syndicalism and the General Strike

their factories until everything was done by a routine will be considered fools as well as torturers. Lee's "Inspired Millionaires" has recently said this. The importance for the Syndicalist of every worker taking an interest in the success of his work, as the cultivator is said to interest in himself in the size of his harvest, is obvious: the Syndicalist requires to increase the power of the producer to take charge of the whole control of production.

Just as a new morality is to grow out of the labourer's fight against the capitalist, so a new learning is to grow out of the mechanic and his machines. "Experimental physics progresses only thanks to the help of constructors of apparatus, and in the same way mathematical physics seems to demand more and more cinematographic combinations for the hypotheses of which it has need."

Working-class action in the workshop and in the strike is the source of both material and moral progress—this, no doubt, is Sorel's main idea, and most of the pages of the book are only destructive of bourgeois valuations.

Sorel appears to believe that economic improvement takes place without any fixed order, when it can, or rather when geniuses arise; he combines his materialist explanation with a vast
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas
desire for genius and a great belief in the con-
stant recurrence of mediocrity: in spite of all his
anti-clericalism and anti-churchism, he speaks,
because of his desire for genius, with a great
admiration for saints and mystics who can experi-
ence the supernatural, and who sometimes exert
a superhuman influence in changing the morals
of a people. "What we know of the prophets
of Israel permits us to say that Biblical Judaism
owed its glory to religious experience; the
modern Jews only see in their religion rites like
those of old magic superstitions; also, as soon as
they are educated, they abandon their traditional
practices with contempt; having been brought up
in surroundings almost entirely deprived of spiri-
tual life, they are scandalously incompetent when
they talk about Christianity, which is nourished
entirely on spiritual life." In fact, I should under-
stand Sorel to imply that there need be no
continuous process in any direction in human
history, and consequently there is no law of pro-
gress—it is neither continuous, nor spiral, nor
cyclic, for in all these things there are times
of genius and times of mediocrity.

It is, perhaps, worth while to point out that
Sorel's ideas have no resemblance to the popular
idea of the materialist conception of history. He
asserts only that economic improvement precedes
Syndicalism and the General Strike

moral innovations, but by no means asserts that moral ideas are mere reflections of existing economic interests. He asserts that in a society, with classes having antagonistic interests, antagonistic moral ideas and moral kinds of action and moral traditions are likely to be found and will exert influence; but the movements of classes as well as of individuals belonging to different races and religions by bringing different ideas into contact with one another exert great forces making for change. There is, in Marx’s own catastrophe idea of the transition to socialism, a touch of Jewish Messianism—it does not go badly with the raising of a banner and the sounding of a trumpet at the moment when the leader comes who will punish the wicked and cause the good and the poor to triumph for ever, and will enable every man to sit under his own fig-tree: that is an idea quite out of relation to the London of 1849, but Marx and Engels, both Jews, may well have inherited it from the days when the old Hebrews, conquered by the Babylonians, proceeded in imagination to see their conquerors defeated with absolute certainty. Sorel is far from asserting that history can be understood if it is read entirely in economic changes; only he certainly does intend to assert, I take it, that all really valuable ideas are in accordance with the
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

fundamental economic changes of their age, and he certainly pours scorn on moralists, idealists, and legal reformers, because he does not think they can tell what ideas will prevail after an economic change has been made. He is, as I said before, a hater of that which is reasoned out and planned in advance.

However, it is possible that my explanations are not entirely right.

His doctrine does not seem a very cheering one. Less stern critics may be disposed to say: One lie follows another, and happy is the man who is satisfied with Christianity or Pragmatism, or any other intoxicant—although, in fact, all are lies. The rigid exclusion of all idealistic and moral arguments can never be practised by working propagandists.

Sorel’s argument about progress seems to have grown clearer in his own mind after he had finished his book on it, so that in the introduction to the book of his which next appeared, “Introduction à l’Économie moderne,” we get this clear paragraph, following one in which the idea of a steady evolution from unrestrained right of bequest to a great degree of State control of bequest, from slavery to serfdom, and thence to the modern worker, is laughed at:

“ The philosopher of law will always be much
Syndicalism and the General Strike

more impressed by the contradictions which are manifested between the main principles of successive systems than by the more or less specious continuity which may be discovered on the surface. We may even ask if it would not be right to proclaim as an almost universal law: *Continuity is complete in proportion to the slightness of the feeling aroused*? 

In this study of modern economics, Sorel proposes to consider, in detail, what the real effect of reform in a bourgeois society is; how, if private property and capitalistic production is left untouched, *socialisation of the economic environment* (a vile phrase which I will try to make clearer later on) strengthens the capitalist system. This, he thinks, is the probable effect of reforms achieved by the collaboration of popular and bourgeois parties.

The first part of the book is an argument in favour of studying economics from the point of view of *rural* economy. He points out that political economy started by being mathematical; that is, by regarding everything in life as if it could be reduced to quantities: based on one unit, so that Ricardo (and Marx, in this, followed him) could express value as a product of labour and time. Also, the cotton industry was its typical productive process.
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

What Sorel would recommend is that economics should be regarded concretely; that is, actual men should be studied, with their traditions and their law, in addition to their machines and their wages; with their love or hatred of their work, as well as their demands and supplies; the workman's idea of the rights and duties of fathers and children, of masters and men, are as important as the recommendations of Royal Commissions (not that Sorel mentions Royal Commissions). In short, Sorel tries (and it is very necessary) to unrationalise or unintellectualise economics—to make it concrete instead of abstract and complete.

While political economy made life mathematical, life itself was really becoming mathematical. Property has grown abstract in so far as it represents value, or even so far as it consists of things to be consumed or looked at; when property was chiefly land, property was the means by which work was carried on, liberty maintained, and the stable family preserved. Those who believe in property and in capitalist production may, strengthen both by socialising (a nasty word, but Ogilvie's dictionary allows it for "to render social")—I say capitalism can be strengthened by socialising the environment of production. Under environment of production is to be under-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

stood everything which, while it decidedly affects production, can be altered to any extent without affecting the system and principle according to which production itself is carried on. Cartels or co-operative stores may concentrate the sale of products and either keep up prices or by suppressing middlemen both cheapen prices and increase producers' profits, and yet leave production by competing owners of capital unchanged. He thinks these co-operative stores are often overrated—dishonesty and incapacity are common in managers democratically appointed, and where no strong party feelings are roused the democratic control of the shareholders is careless. He thinks, however, that a municipal monopoly for the supply of certain things (bread, for example) might be good, and that large co-operative stores show the way to establish such things. He points out that people with fixed salaries could form societies which, by taxing their members uniformly year by year, could sell food at uniform prices in spite of recurrent periods of high prices. However, the point is, that however social the distributive organs become, it will not prevent the productive organs being owned individually. The economic environment includes other publicly provided services which may facilitate production—whatever protects the
productive power of labour against excessive expenditure of health is part of the environment of production, and insurance schemes, housing and education may be socially provided in order to place better human tools in the hands of the capitalist. Modern industry demands power to work its machinery, and coal is so easily transported, compared with water or wind, that it may be regarded as a mathematically abstract force; this element of economic environment may be provided from State mines at cost price (or under) for the benefit of all manufacturers.

Patent laws, with more or less of comparative justice, socialise inventions by limiting the proprietary rights of the inventor. Workshop secrets and apprenticeship are replaced by scientific instruction in State continuation schools; this obviously places the supply of skilled labour at every one's disposal. Even justice, in so far as the prosperity of the producer depends on the degree of certainty with which criminals are punished, is a fact of economic environment. Adam Smith¹ seems not far from concurring in this, for he says, "Envy, malice, or resentment are the only passions which can prompt one man to injure

¹ Book V., Chapter I., Part II., of "The Wealth of Nations."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

another in his person or reputation. But the greater part of men are not very frequently under the influence of those passions; and the very worst men are so only very occasionally. As their gratification, too, how agreeable soever it may be to certain characters, is not attended with any real or permanent advantage, it is in the greater part of men commonly restrained by prudential considerations. Men may live together in society with some tolerable degree of security, though there is no civil magistrate to protect them from the injustice of those passions. But avarice and ambition in the rich, in the poor the hatred of labour and the love of present ease and enjoyment, are the passions which prompt to invade property, passions much more steady in their operation, and much more universal in their influence. Wherever there is great property, there is great inequality. . . . The acquisition of valuable and extensive property, therefore, necessarily requires the establishment of civil government. Where there is no property, or at least none that exceeds the value of two or three days' labour, civil government is not so necessary."

If the State is to control such public services as the post, the railway, and the gas-works (the latter uses the roads and therefore can be con-
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

veniently controlled by the owner of the roads), precautions must be taken, Sorel thinks, to place their management outside the inefficient power of majorities. Something is gained if different places compete with one another, because it is unlikely that the same party will be in power everywhere, and therefore party interests will promote comparisons and criticisms. There are advantages in these services being managed by a bureaucracy if it is independent of all outside control, because the rigid routine of a bureaucracy leads to accuracy, and if the officials have secure places they are not open to corruption. At the same time, he emphasises the necessity of giving the private individual the power of starting actions to repress abuses of administration. We in England have power (when any one has money enough) by writ of *a certiori*, or *mandamus*, to do something of the kind: I cannot say what it is worth. The officials are to be foremen of industries, persons charged to carry out some piece of management, and to be judged purely by a standard of business efficiency: they must in no way be dependent on political services, or on the political effect of their work.

In a democratic State Sorel finds two disadvantages in State railways: the first is, that
Syndicalism and the General Strike

democracies demand passenger facilities at the expense of goods traffic, because democracy places pleasure before business; and the second, "bureaucracies prefer peace to everything else and avoid, so far as possible, undertaking responsibilities. A Minister of Public Works finds the reforms very easy which he tries to get imposed on companies; but he will hesitate a long time sometimes before he carries them out if he has to account for their consequences—deficits in the receipts and more accidents resulting from lowered fares and more trains!"

Sorel next considers credit as part of the economic environment. He traces its progress from personal usury to impersonal banking, and approves the use of sureties in connection with the Raffeissen banks, in that the sureties have no reason to view the transactions with prejudice—their participation is a disinterested testimony in favour of the borrower; a calm social judgment is passed on the use of the borrowed capital. (In passing, England's want of banking and loan facilities for the small man may be insisted on: the failure of the Birkbeck Bank recently brought it before the public; the Post Office savings bank is useless to the small business man because it will not issue cheques, nor pay out over a pound to depositors without notice, nor accept over a
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas
very small sum in one name; as for ever making loans to its depositors—such a proposal would be preposterous. Yet in Ireland, the co-operative societies which purchase agricultural tools and machinery used to receive State aid under Sir Horace Plunkett’s scheme.)

The loan of money for interest has been justified in three ways. It has been regarded as legally similar to a commandite, or partnership in which the active partner, who actually uses the money to purchase means of carrying on his work, is entitled to unlimited gain or loss, but the sleeping partner who lends is entitled to a fixed return on his money according to his contract. It is sometimes regarded as a lease, sometimes as a sale, the borrower ultimately returning the equivalent of what he has had, the interest being merely compensation for temporary non-use by the original proprietor (an ingenious idea used by early Roman Catholic theologians to justify usury in practice while condemning it in theory). What these theories help to explain is how the loan originally made loosely, possibly out of kindness, passes onward to the mathematical investment, where laws and customs fix the obligations of all parties.

The construction of large warehouses at railway centres is of general utility in that it enables
correct statistics of the stocks of commodities to be compiled: the wheat elevators of America are therefore of use: these statistics fix prices more accurately. The great exchanges tend to further improve the accuracy of prices by their use of experts. By these means, the small speculator, the village money-lender as Eastern Europe knows him, disappears, and speculation is concentrated in the exchanges of London and New York. Practically two usurers now fasten themselves on those who trade—the banker who advances money on the security of the bill of lading or the weight-note, and who advances on the minimum value below which the goods cannot fall, and the broker who speculates by means of the warrant on the future rise of prices; neither could do anything with the actual goods, but trade in an abstracted value of the goods.

Having by such consideration of developments of the milieu économique attempted to show that reform strengthens capitalism, he makes some observations générales intended to explain why most sociology and economics is "rot."

He states that all the classifications of history, all the laws of history, must be frankly considered as subjective. History is so complex that unless the author frankly states what kind of society he
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

approves of, what he is working towards, his work is of little use. Every one knows that the movements of his own time are so complicated and confused that the stationary simplifications which different people form of them in order to get a view of what is going on are quite different one from another: the projection of successive types belonging to successive periods is an art rather than a science. The essence of reality is a motion, a becoming: in the act of abstracting from this moving reality a motionless picture, a man is necessarily guided by his intentions and prejudices. It is essentially the artist who can preserve the feeling of life and action in a dead and motionless picture. Unfortunately the people who write on the evolution of ideas and institutions are seldom artists. The central force of human activity, the real attraction and ideal which causes people’s behaviour, is the last thing that collectors of facts can discover: and for this reason their attempts to predict the future are useless. History never repeats itself, and Utopias formed out of museum specimens are “disorderly mosaics.” He praises myths “which illustrate in a clear manner” something “essential to life and to the progress of civilisation,” whilst declaring that the “learned, legalistic, and practical” construc-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

tions of more or less socialistic persons are false science and deceitful. Sorel, in short, is opposed to intelligence.

Sorel's attack on sociology is probably quite justified. If we cannot understand the central attractive force of Christianity or Judaism which are near us, cannot find out, not the creeds which come easily to the lips of the adherents of these religions, but the real powers which affect their actions (whether these powers are or are not at all like the faiths they merely think they hold), how shall we understand "primitive man"? It takes a great literary genius to explain how men really are moved. Descriptions of externals—religious ceremonies and social customs—are no good. If a great Chinese philosopher—I'll call him Ling-Foo, though that is an impossible Chinese name—came to England and made inquiries, might he not carefully note how these people have a religion which causes their children to hang up stockings on Christmas Eve, expecting a curious bearded man called Santa Claus to come down the chimney and put toys in them? For the devout Christians would hesitate to tell the inquisitive pagan foreigner of the birth of Christ. "Primitive men" are quite as hard to question. The learned like strange tales—they have read so many that they have no sense of
probability, and the stranger the things they learn, the more pleased they are at being learnedly different from other people. But can they penetrate to the central motives of men and civilisations?

The *spirit* of the past alone explains the past.

Now, having given this painstaking summary of the main ideas of the "Introduction à l'Économie moderne," and defended Sorel's anti-sociologist-ism, I will conclude this chapter with some brief references to a few other interesting ideas held by Sorel.

His remarks on arbitration were somewhat enlightening to me, because I could never quite see what common rule can be invoked in a world of supply and demand (or unregulated take-all-you-can-get) to decide whether an employer should raise his wages. The idea is different—each party is willing (says Sorel) to pay a little for definite advantages. The employers pay a bonus for *fixity of wages* during a given term, the politicians benefit the people by a popular arbitration in return for *voîtes*, and the worker gets his *wages slightly raised*. It is "an arrangement of appetites under the auspices of political lawyers." It is, we must remember, "the state of the market" and not any idea of what a man needs or does that fixes his wages.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

The socialist argues that the pure, the ideal capitalist, who does no work of initiation or management, but lives by investment and ownership, should, according to all ideas of fairness, take no part of the product of labour. High salaries correspond not necessarily to vitally necessary services but to services for which either the training or the needed authoritative air demands an ownership of income which severely limits the number of those who enter these services.

Sorel points out that as capitalism develops administrative intervention replaces law, so that we get in England our indeterminate sentence Act—which means that police and governors of prisons keep a man in prison as long as they like. The State sets up masters similar to the masters who rule in the factory: their word is law.

Sorel rightly refuses to be impressed by similes in which sociologists compare society to an organism and then argue about society's unity, and say that the hand is not the brain and the most excessive "division of labour" is right in society. In order conveniently to describe ants or ant-hills, the scientist compares them with what we know more of, men, and human society: for this purpose he suppresses the more human
Monsieur Georges Sorel and His Ideas

characteristics of man and then assumes that real men have the characteristics of his ants, which he has previously artificially humanised for the purpose of describing them. The physiologist can only think of an organism as an organism, a collection of interconnected parts: man, although always in certain material circumstances, can under the dominance of convictions, "more or less analogous to religious forces," forget his material circumstances—the absolute rules of morality act on him—he is placed outside his real circumstances—the maxim of Jesus, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," begins to act in all its irrationality. The isolated mystic, ascetic, or monk (for monks are men willing to live the unnatural life, and, for that purpose, to enter into a contract with one another to perform certain difficult actions) does live a life out of contact with material circumstances and in contact with a spiritual world. If nations cannot be unified, if Church and State cannot have their claims harmonised, why should we try to make out that we all have the same interests within the State? It is the fighting strikers, the monks of the working-class movement, who give power to their whole party: inspired by contemplation of the "social myth," they prepare the world for the social revolution
Syndicalism and the General Strike

by irrationally sacrificing themselves in their effort to transcend the evil necessities of the present.

Sorel's works are full of references to Marx, Proudhon, and Renan; he appears to write by arguing about what he is reading: he searches for historical exemplifications of what he likes or dislikes. He has contributed a vast number of articles to various socialist and economic periodicals, and those who desire to track down a great number of them are recommended to look up his name in Volumes II. and III. of Stammhammer's "Bibliographie des Socialismus und Communismus." The most complete bibliography of his works is at the end of Lanzillo's "Georgio Sorel"—this, however, gives the Italian translations (and not the French originals) of those of his books which have appeared in Italian, and gives only the names of the periodicals to which he has contributed, and the years during which he contributed, without mentioning the titles of any of his articles.

I have made this chapter rather long and rather heavy—I am not sure that I could help it—but I will try to make the next one shorter and lighter.

1 Jena, Verlag von Gustav Fischer, 1900 and 1909.
CHAPTER IV

ITALY

"For us all Italy is Venice and its gondoliers, Naples and its songs.

"The rest of Europe is hardly better instructed than we are."

So says Monsieur Saint-Cyr near the beginning of his book, "La Haute-Italie Politique et Sociale"; it is a nice depressing quotation with which I can suggest that my task of indicating to a slight extent the trade union and political conditions of Italy which led to the formation of the Syndicalist party is a hard one.

Yet Italy is interesting apart from its past.

It is a poor country, of which the main industry is agriculture, which in 1901 employed ten out of the twenty-five millions (excluding children) of its population. Its systems of land tenure are many: it has peasant proprietors, such as the well-fed, seldom illiterate, French-speak-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

ing peasants of the Upper Val d'Aosta, who live in their own houses, and are Protestants or free-thinkers, and liberals. Many of the less prosperous peasant proprietors have to work some months in the year for wages. There are métayers (mezzadria), chiefly in Lombardy and Tuscany, who divide the profits and losses of their harvests with their landlords, the landlord supplying varying shares of the capital, in the form of vines, olives, and cattle, and the tenant supplying the rest in the form of implements. The system is said to produce more prosperity in Italy than any other, but the revolutionaires dislike it, as being unfavourable to a war between the classes. The métayer is said to be stolid, conservative, and neither rich nor poor, but in the north his sympathies are with the labourer and not with the capitalistic large landlord. For some lands all over Italy are cultivated for the profit of a capitalist landlord, who often reduces the labourers, of whom there is too large a supply, to the most miserable conditions. The agricultural, market-gardening district round Mantua is the chief socialist centre of the country, Italy being probably the only country where socialism has taken more hold of agricultural labourers than of any other class. The tenant-farmer aims at both large profits and a
Italy

quick turn-over, and is frequently merciless towards the labourer, who in many cases is imported for a season’s work. The most productive parts of Italy have the most miserable populations. It is true that wages have risen, but they are still terribly low. A wage of 1 franc a day where the year’s work has about 250 days may be found—and even lower wages than that.

Speaking of 1909, King and Okey say: “In the Roman Campagna, bands of poor creatures are recruited and hired out en masse by caporali to dig the soil, under conditions little removed from those of slavery. In bondage of debt to their taskmasters, these miserable guitti have been seen labouring under the lash, and woe to her—for more often than not they are women—who slackens in her toil or attempts to rest on her mattock.”

The soil of the plain exhales malaria—quite curable by drainage or systematic exclusion of all mosquitoes at night: but, like other curable evils, left uncured because it does not affect the rich as it affects the labourers, who are exposed to infection.

It is probably in Sicily that the peasant is worst off—treated like a brute beast by the landlord or middleman, housed with the pigs and
Syndicalism and the General Strike

donkeys in a windowless and floorless house, illiterate and brutal.

Lastly, there are lands used in common by partners (fifteen or so in some cases), "affitanza colletive"—either cultivated on a common plan and the products shared equally, or worked in individually held plots,—the cost of marketing, purchasing implements, insurance, and so on, alone being collectively arranged. In some cases these collective holdings are only used to supplement a family income: in others they provide the whole of it. In the former case, when owned by socialists, the funds may be accumulated as a strike fund for use in some future battle with the farmers. For, especially as regards the north of Italy, trade unionism of an aggressive kind is strong among the agricultural population. The leagues (leghe) founded in 1884 were suppressed by the Government, but in 1885 leghe di miglioramento (so called, probably, in order to make them seem less aggressive) were founded in the north to educate the workers and to help them by collective action to resist their employers. Masters' associations were soon formed to resist them. The majority of the small proprietors and métayers sided with the labourers against the large proprietors. The blacklegs, kroumiri, were mostly defeated, and the pro-
Italy

Prietors were forced to bargain with the unions. Strikes are endemic, and agreements between masters and workers are broken by both sides. The labourers' conditions are frequently still scandalous. In the rice-fields of Vercellais, where large numbers of labourers are imported annually, the workers stand bent in mud; they are partly paid in food: girls are permanently deformed by the work.

The extreme poverty of the country is attested by the great emigration away from it. Part of this is seasonal, supplying cheap navvies to Europe: part permanent to North and South America, although some Italians come back from these countries with a fortune to buy a plot of land and bring new ideas to their country.

The birth-rate in parts of Italy, as in all poor districts, is very high—one of the highest in Europe. The south is mainly illiterate, destitute, and conservative, a land "brutalised by endless centuries of political and economic slavery." In the census of 1901, when the illiterates had fallen to 56 per cent. of the population, there were still 78.7 per cent. in Calabria. It is said that out of nine million voters, only three have votes, the rest being disfranchised by illiteracy. As you might expect, in the south votes are bought
Syndicalism and the General Strike
to a large extent. Naples has, however, returned
one socialist to the Chamber of Deputies.

The north, on the other hand, is modern, capitalistic, and socialist. Milan was one of the first cities in Europe to light its streets with electricity. I need not (especially as I do not know much geography myself) talk about Genoa as a port, or of Milan, Turin, and Cremona as manufacturing towns; it is sufficient to remind you that the north of Italy is part of industrial Europe, and the north and south are foreign to one another. In the south the people largely live in towns from which they go to work in the fields daily; there are people here who have never tasted meat; blackmailing is one of the local industries, the Camorra and Mafia being protected by vote-hungry politicians and money-hungry police (the socialists are almost alone in openly attacking it): there are large landlords, and a grasping, idle, middle class of small proprietors.

Until 1890 strikes were nominally illegal. Since then, laws have been passed at various times against them, and ministers and judges have by various methods tried to check them: but they are nominally allowed by law. The labour exchanges (camere del lavoro) have since 1891 been great sources of working-class
activity. They collect information about employment, promote new legislation and the enforcement of existing laws, and negotiate with employers. Their membership is not limited to wage-earners, but special trade societies within them are so limited, and these have special powers. Until 1896 the municipalities gave contributions to their funds, but in that year this was decided to be illegal. The trade unions, co-operative societies, and mutual aid societies are affiliated to the exchanges, and elect their managing committees.

The trade unions are often small and confined to a single district. The numbers belonging to them vary up and down very rapidly. They are grouped into a federation of industrial workers, and a federation of workers on the land. In addition there are Catholic unions, which are anti-socialist. Strikes on a fairly large scale have been common. The proposal made by the Italian Government to deprive the railway workers of the right to strike, when the railways became State property, led to the passive resistance strike, during which strict obedience to regulations prevailed. The habit of proclaiming "general strikes" began in 1904, when a great agricultural and industrial strike took place. In Italy, "when the life of Genoa and Milan is para-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

lysed, the whole kingdom is paralysed," so that a "general strike" is a smaller undertaking than it would be here. A general strike of railway workers was attempted in 1905 as a protest against a new attempt to introduce the law: it failed and the law was passed. Men were shot down by the soldiers in 1907, and there was a renewal of a widespread strike. The strikers were defeated, and it is said that 20,000 men, or one-third of all the men employed on the railway, were punished, either by imprisonment, discharge from the service, fines, or degradation of rank. The number of rural strikes seems always to be greater than the number of industrial strikes (there were nearly 650 in 1901, in nearly all of which the workers were victorious), and it was the Parma strike of agricultural labourers in 1908, which was preceded by a lock-out lasting three months, which made clearer than ever the difference between socialist and Syndicalist opinion. The prevalence of strikes among the rural population is perhaps due to the urban, unpeasant-like character of part of the market-gardening peasant class. The market-gardener is never a peasant. There are about four political parties. The "right" is still discredited a little, perhaps, by an excessive use of corruption in Crispi's time:

1 A. Lanzillo, "Le Mouvement ouvrier en Italie."
they tend to a policy of negatives without any proposals for amelioration.

The great capitalists of the rapidly "progressing" north, especially of Milan and Genoa, have the purely negative idea of politics: their property is to be protected and the growth of any democratic or socialistic movement is to be resisted. They are for liberty, as understood by those who use the tyrannical power of property to the utmost, and for property. "In the interest of the big landlords," King and Okey remark in "Italy To-day," "they maintain a corn duty"; from which the landlords are estimated to have gained £60,000,000. Writing in 1900, these authors assert that "the Right has still elements of strength in its wealth, its power over a corrupt electorate, its insistence on authority, perhaps in its hold on the army. Governmental pressure in the south and private bribery in the north reach monstrous proportions. Prefects are used to 'prepare' the elections, and if a prefect refuses to work for the ministerial candidate, he is summarily removed, or after the more decent custom of to-day, is temporarily suspended till the election is over." Voters on the wrong side were in Crispi's time arrested on false charges, and kept in custody till the poll was over, and an influential prisoner awaiting
Syndicalism and the General Strike

trial for murder was released on condition that he worked for the right man.

The deputies are not paid, and in a comparatively poor country like Italy this leads to corruption; they expect Government help in obtaining paid work. However, King and Okey in 1900 said: "At all events the Italian Chamber has fewer parliamentary guinea-pigs than the House of Commons, perhaps because there are fewer opportunities for company promotion; there is far less manipulation of tariffs for private ends than in the United States, no more bribery of localities than in Canada. . . . Public opinion, at all events in the north, is making steadily for political purity; the socialists are doing a fine work in exposing the worst scandals. . . ."

The radicals hover between monarchism and republicanism, while the republicans, whose stronghold is Ravenna, have a more decided social programme, in which the expropriation of owners of uncultivated lands and reform of taxation figure. The poor, at present, are taxed on a higher scale than the rich. It is supposed that the Italian throne is not too stable and that the republicans will have their day.

The clericals were at one time forbidden by the decree non expedit to recognise the Italian
Italy

Government by participating in politics; the decree was never very fully obeyed by Catholics, and has now been withdrawn. The clerical advice is, "Vote against the socialist," but there is a social party in the Church, which is not liked by the higher ecclesiastics. The Lega Democratica Nazionale, a Catholic democratic league, is attacked by the Vatican, but maintains that the Church has no right to dictate in political matters. Individual priests sympathise greatly with working-class ideals, and the co-operative glass-works at Murano were created by a priest.

The Italian Labour party was founded in 1885: it was composed partly of anarchists, partly of socialists. In 1891 Signor Turati, a wealthy Milanese barrister, and Dr. Anna Kuliscioff, a Russian exile, founded the Critica Sociale, a fortnightly Marxian review, and this spread socialism rapidly. In this year the socialists definitely separated themselves from the anarchists. They opposed the radicals and republicans, and therefore the conservatives spoke well of them. For some time the party, believing the Marxian prophecy that small peasant proprietors, like other little men, are destined to be swallowed up by the few big proprietors, did nothing to help the small-holders,
Syndicalism and the General Strike

but by about 1896 this policy had been entirely altered, and the socialists were helping in establishing village banks and co-operative associations to help *mezzaioli*, small tenants, and peasant proprietors. Socialist sympathy with the agricultural labourer was an extraordinary phenomenon and gained the gratitude of the labourers.

In the north (Lombardy, Venetia, and Piedmont) a system of village banks (*casse rurali*), in the main like the Raffeisen banks, has now been developed, some of them being Catholic banks and only open to Catholics, a minority unsectarian. They lend small sums, averaging £8, "as a rule for three or six months, to the small farmers or peasant proprietors, who are the majority of their members." Their work has been so successful that it is said "they have banished the usurer."

In 1894, after the labour disturbances in Sicily, in which soldiers shot down eighty-five people, Crispi, who had conspiracies on the brain to such an extent that he thought the demand for food in Sicily was due to French conspirators, passed a law to enable all his opponents to be punished by imprisonment and exile. Common misfortunes now drew the radicals and socialists together. The workers' party met in secret in
Italy

1895, named itself socialist for the first time, and agreed to support radicals at the second ballot. Then, too, there was issued the minimum programme, which with some modifications has been reissued several times since. Universal suffrage, payment of members of all local and national governing bodies, liberty of speech and meeting, and neutrality of the Government in labour disputes (nominally attained now); the prohibition of night-work in factories except in cases of public necessity, and a weekly rest of thirty-six consecutive hours; better education (nominal compulsory education exists, but is not enforced, and the school buildings are often disgraceful and the small wages of the teachers in arrears); compulsory insurance against accidents; nationalisation of mines and railways (the latter carried out since, and very badly the State railways work); the admission on equal conditions of workers' co-operative associations to all contracts for public works—these are some of the clauses of this minimum programme.

In 1898 a riot caused by a panic on the part of the authorities took place at Milan, in which more than a hundred people were shot and men were imprisoned for "exaggerating the sufferings of the people and the hatred of classes." At the end of the year, 2,700 people were
Syndicalism and the General Strike

pardoned and released, who had been condemned for minor offences. An attempt was made to suppress, by a royal decree, public meetings and all associations "whose object is to subvert by overt acts the social order or the constitution of the State"; the law-courts held that the decree was not legal; the Government tried to pass the law in the Chamber of Deputies, but ultimately gave up the attempt. There were many risings during the year, one cause provoking them being increased duties on wheat. The Government was of opinion that shooting men was a cure for revolts caused by hunger.

After the murder of King Humbert I., in 1900, the policy of the Government changed, and the attempt to prevent the workers from forming organisations was abandoned.

The Italian love of ideas and clear theories of things was favourable to the rapid spread of socialism among the middle classes. The country is overstocked with middle classes: the small landlord wishes his son to be a barrister, doctor, or engineer. The consequence is that there is an over-supply of members of these professions, as well as of candidates for the "civil service," and the unemployed intellectuals are inclined towards socialism. Some of them aim at success in a "socialist career," as Lanzillo calls it.
Italy

The attitude of the Socialist party towards strikes has been for some years a source of differences within the party. A Syndicalist section, impatient with discussions in Parliament, gradually formed itself and is eager for strikes and action. In 1906 the whole parliamentary party resigned owing to internal dissensions. Out of 30 deputies 25 were re-elected. (The entire chamber has 508 members.) Almost everywhere the socialists, republicans, and radicals at present act together. The party is divided into about five groups—revolutionaries, reformists, and "integralists" who would combine all the policies. A socialist, Turati, was offered a post in Gioletti's Cabinet; he refused, but without objecting in principle to working inside a "capitalist" party. This incident has been a subject for much discussion.

Wherever there is a socialist branch there is also a co-operative store.

After being defeated (by 26,547 socialist votes to 5,278 of their own) at the Socialistic Conference at Rome in 1906, the "new school," or Syndicalists, held a conference of their own at Ferrara in 1907, at which they decided to leave the Socialist party. They are led by Arturo Labriola, a Neapolitan barrister and university professor, and Enrico Leone. According to
 Syndicalism and the General Strike
themselves they number 200,000, but their opponents would reduce the figure to a few thousands.

The fact must be emphasised that the Socialist party in Italy is largely middle class. Hunter, in "Socialists at Work" (p. 33), says that in 1904 it contained 20 to 30 per cent. of industrial workers, 15 to 20 per cent. of rural workers, and 50 to 60 per cent. of professional men, merchants, students, and small proprietors. The support given to the party at the polls by unattached electors is mainly working-class. The socialist deputies in Parliament consist chiefly of advocates, professors, journalists, business men; they include a few working-men. A reformist like Bonomi narrows his programme down to the maintenance of armed peace, and of the secular character of the State, and reform of taxation.¹

At the present time Gioletti's Cabinet is discussing the nationalisation of life insurance and manhood suffrage. The problem for the Socialist party is how far they shall support him in spite of the war being waged in Tripoli on the Turks.

Two facts with regard to Italy are of great importance in relation to Syndicalist theories:

¹ See Bissolati's articles in the Socialist Review for January and February, 1912.
Italy

I mean the success in Italy of working-class co-operative productive associations, which divide all their profits among the workers—these have increased the workers' confidence in their power to lock out the capitalist, although the initiation and management of the societies has sometimes been provided by middle-class enthusiasts—and the intensity of life in the local authorities, in which the people are more interested than in the Chamber of Deputies. Local liberty of initiative is great; seats on local bodies are looked on as great honours; in some parts the local authorities are said to spend money on fireworks and music which is needed for schools and street lighting.

Various *societe co-operative di lavoro* have undertaken comparatively large pieces of work: at Parma they have paved the streets and built abattoirs; they built the Reggio-Ciano railway, and it is leased to them for seventy years. Legal restrictions and public officials have often tried to prevent their obtaining contracts, and we have seen that an equal opportunity for them to obtain contracts from public authorities in competition with others is one of the demands on the minimum programme.

These societies, by which middle-men and employers are abolished, do masons', plas-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

terers', stonecutters', painters', varnishers,' and labourers' work. They are financed by friendly societies, people's banks, or by private savings banks, which in Italy do far more business than the State's post-office savings banks. They accumulate funds for old-age pensions, sick and invalidity benefits for their members. Co-operative dairies were founded in 1872, and have spread all over Northern Italy.

The Catholics also have spread the idea of "corporations," by which they sometimes merely mean unions of masters and men with machinery for settling disputes, but sometimes compulsory groups of all the men in one trade with power to regulate their own affairs.

The work of these co-operative societies meets with the warm approval of men holding various political views: the reformist socialists see in co-operative societies properly carried out, according to the spirit as well as the letter of co-operative principles, "the end of slavery"; but the Syndicalists condemn it utterly as anti-revolutionary. In spite of their condemnation, I cannot help thinking that they have been influenced by what the co-operative societies have done. For it seems clear that this development of co-operative production is the source of that doctrine which to many people is the whole of
Italy

Syndicalism. I mean the idea sometimes found in Syndicalist writers that each trade, through its federated unions, is to take over the whole control of its own work. For the sake of clearness, I should suggest calling this Italian Syndicalism, in contradistinction to what I should call French Syndicalism, in which the idea is that each small locality should, by means of the federated local branches of its various unions, work out the production of all that is needed in their locality—the whole country being left largely to come into existence through the summing up of all the local trades councils with a little adjustment between local communes, but without having any one centre. I do not, of course, pretend that all the writers in either country keep rigidly to either conception.

The objection most commonly advanced, I may as well at once point out, to the Italian doctrine is that trade wars would prevail. Whether they are worse than class-war may be open to discussion.

I now proceed to speak of a specimen work by each of the Syndicalist leaders, Labriola and Leone.

Up to the present I have tried to present the positive conceptions of the Syndicalists, and have referred very little to their criticisms of other
Syndicalism and the General Strike

people's views on social improvement. Arturo Labriola's chief book, "Riforme e Rivoluzione Sociale," is, however, mainly concerned with criticism of those socialists who, while looking forward to the coming of a new order of society, are, in the author's opinion, not doing the right work in order to bring it about, and it therefore offers a convenient opportunity for noticing some of the characteristics of the Syndicalist attack on socialists and socialist parties. His definition of Syndicalism does not differ from those we have previously met with, and its main position is summed up, I think, in the statement (on p. 193 of the second edition) that "the revolutionary method of the socialist movement consists in working for the taking possession, by the working-class organisations, of the work of management (manual and intellectual), by means of the simultaneous dissolution of all the authoritative powers (State, party, &c.) external to the said entirely working-class organisations," a statement with quite the same meaning, I take it, as other definitions we have met with. Italian Syndicalism may be considered moderate in that it does not usually refuse all help from Parliament. Labriola allows that Parliament may in some circumstances assist in preparing for that sudden change by which the final transformation
Italy

of society is to be achieved; it may educate both those who are in it and those who listen to it from outside, although it cannot directly attack or change the capitalist organism. The educational effect in politics in advertising the things that matter to certain sections of the population and in suggesting possibilities to people is of no small importance; the land taxes in Mr. Lloyd George’s Budget and the discrimination between earned and unearned incomes in Mr. Asquith’s earlier Budget may be regarded as more important in their principles than in their immediate application, and those who have no land and little income may be inclined to hold that the discussions about them were more important than the taxes themselves.

One point, perhaps necessarily implied in what has been said of the Syndicalists’ view of how a new society is to be brought about, is made clear in Labriola’s work. He says clearly that Syndicalism does not, as is implied in the unified and rigid society of the State socialist, look forward to a great reduction in the number of industries carried on without division of labour and without factory labour—in those industries which are at present exceptional survivals from the period preceding the trust, limited liability company, and large-scale production. He says:
Syndicalism and the General Strike

"The socialisation of production has already come about, thanks to the mechanism of the capitalist system. We have no need to substitute a new method of production (State or municipal) for the capitalistic method, but a new method of distribution. The method of production remains what it was in a capitalist society. We are concerned only with the redivision of the claims to ownership.

"This point is of great importance. Capitalist society has not in reality produced one form of industrial organisation, but unites the different productive elements (land, capital, and labour) in very different ways. Nothing could be more repugnant than too much uniformity." ¹

He holds (and finds his idea in Marx's work) that the domestic system of production, the co-operative method, production by companies and other groups and by individuals could all be left in existence and "socialised." In this future society the controller of the work will himself be the paid servant of the co-operating workers, instead of (as at present) the owner of the capital. As regards a method by which this is to be brought about, the following hint is given:—

¹ I am indebted to my sister, Mrs. R. B. Pyke, for help in translating the Italian quotations.
Italy

"You can imagine that a Syndicat for a certain trade could contain all the workers in a single branch of industry, could contract on uniform conditions with all the capitalists on behalf of all these workers, and would form a kind of common treasury of all the profits to be distributed according to a rule of exalted justice to all its members, distributed, for example, according to the number of a man's children, the conditions of his health or his strength, and so on; and this Syndicat—a State within the State—by carrying out the insurance of its members in various ways, takes them out from under the control of the State—that is, from a power outside their own will. This process could go farther. It can be imagined that, at a certain point of its development, the workers' union might hire the capital of the capitalists, for a fixed return, and then use it co-operatively, either working in one mass or by constructing so many separate co-operative bodies, having separate and distinct accounts. And finally the federation of various Syndicats could become so strong as to refuse all return for the use of capital, and so become master of it without compensation. The revolution would then be complete. The capitalist class would have to work in order to live. Syndicats, as organisms opposed to monopoly, and therefore
Syndicalism and the General Strike

open to all, would enthusiastically receive the capitalists of yesterday, become the companions of to-day, and would make use of their indisputable directive and administrative capacity."

If this is not thought to be a very complete explanation, the fault is Labriola's: he introduces it after a brief remark about a *Syndicat* of printers in Paris that works on its own account with hired machinery.

This, however, is not given by the author as a certain prophecy of what will happen, since he expressly says (p. 205) that he does not know how the means of production will be taken possession of by the workers—only that it certainly will only be a *Syndicat*, "an association of the workers who already possess the technical capacity necessary for managing production," through which the expropriators will be expropriated.

It will be noted that he conceives of the sudden transformation of society to be brought about by a kind of lock-out of capitalists—a method by which it is sometimes supposed that the "general strike" could develop into a construction of a new working order.

Not that he has any objection to strikes. They are included by him among the *violent* means by which new economic positions are usually assumed
Italy

at the beginning of a new epoch—only after the epoch has begun will its arrangements seem to those born into it to be acting automatically. He points out that violence will not suffice to produce any alteration unless those who use it are prepared to make full use of the means of which they violently take possession—misery and revolt will not in themselves lead to a permanent change unless those who are miserable have an idea of the cause of their misery, are conscious of it, and are collectively ready to alter their condition. Thus violence must not be used capriciously. That the bourgeois society grew out of feudalism only with the help of violence he, following Marx, points out, giving the disbanding of princely trains, the secularisation of monastic buildings and estates, the conversion of arable land into pasture, the clearing of estates, and enclosing of lands held in common or cultivated in strips, as well as the lowering of wages by the Statute of Labourers, as means by which a landless population of labourers dependent on being hired for wages was produced with the use of force, where before the population had had secure means of existence. At the end of his chapter on violence, he states that in the Russo-Japanese War the use of hand-bombs was found to be an effective final deter-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

ominant in battle, while in the recent Russian revolution the general strike combined with armed demonstrations and "the personal use of explosives" was used; he argues from these recent experiences that the chances of a crowd against modern battalions are now better than has been long supposed.

Now to turn to the main contents of his work, criticism of political sinners, from the consideration of which I have been diverted longer than I intended.

He finds that the machinery of "socialism" is capable of being used in three ways, and consequently socialist parties contain three sections—revolutionaries, conservatives, and reactionaries. The first are those who retain "the traditional idea of Marxism," and this "is not to abolish a number of individual masters, who may leave a certain play for liberty, and substitute for them a single collective master, who, because of his very unity, might well suppress all liberty, but it would be a much more profound and more essential revolution, which would rid the workshop of all capitalist and administrative control, and give it over to the self-contained working of freely associated workers."

The reformists, on the other hand, look for a gradual accretion of the powers of the State—
Italy

State intervention everywhere. Such reformist measures may consist of systems of benevolence (charged with the relief of the sick and the old, for instance), such as insures the rich against the danger of a revolt of a desperate poor class; of taxes, which tend to be passed on, and which in any case leave the power of profiting and exploiting in existence; of insurance, which acts in relief of wages and by improving the efficiency of labour increases its exploitability; and of regulation of factories, which tends to destroy some of the weaker factories, and to improve the working of and intensify the using up of the workers in those that survive. Or, the reformist may try to raise wages by wages-boards or arbitration: and this (here Labriola echoes conservative critics) will either raise prices and so more or less neutralise its own effect of apparently increasing wages, or, if it reduces the rate of profit below the average, will cause capital to leave the industry and throw those who were in it into idleness. (Some economists, I may say, do explain why these evil effects may not occur.) Labriola points to the effect of raising wages for agricultural workers in the Venetian and Mantuan districts as illustrating this last evil possibility on a small scale.

The economic error of reformism does not
Syndicalism and the General Strike

seem quite as inevitable as he supposes. Child-labour is obviously usually comparatively unproductive. Overwork, after a certain time, in many trades becomes bad work. The law is clumsy and inspection expensive and insufficient, but to weigh up the net economic result is not always so simple.

Reform, Labriola concludes, is conservatism, because it lays stress on certain reforms, and not on taking the power from those who have it. The letter of the law will never be worth much as long as the predominance of a class persists. The class that legislates sees its own claims most clearly. If they nationalise or municipalise undertakings, they take care that they lose no money—the guarantee of interest and destruction of competition make up for any apparent loss that the investor may suffer. Group advantage could be maintained even in a communist State if it had a governing class. Public opinion (which may maintain the normality of the existing order of society and the wickedness of the revolting striker and the praiseworthiness of the "loyal" worker, who is disloyal to his own class) is something; legal morality is something; but political power does most of all to give the concrete control of society to one class in it.
Italy

The reformer's worst crime is that he strengthens the State and sets his hopes on it. Luther was a reformer—he destroyed the rival power of the Church and handed its property over to the governing secular class. The Chartist movement was revolutionary because it intended to take the power from those who had it, the landed class; the movement was finally converted into harmless reformism by concessions yielded by those who kept their own control of power. It is to be noted that he considers the means more important than the end in politics—the essence of real change is that power passes from one class to another, the essence of conservatism is that the political power remains in the hands of those who carry out the reforms which are begged from them. It is possible that the machinery of State socialism might be set up (he thinks) and a unified method of production established, and yet the existing social hierarchy, the existing distribution of power and profit, be preserved.

It is, at first sight, somewhat contradictory that Labriola should praise political reforms and depreciate economic reform, but this is, I think, because by political reform he chiefly means reforms which destroy instruments of power or of subjection (the king, the "upper" chamber, the
Syndicalism and the General Strike

privilege of one over another), whereas he considers a parliament incapable of altering the essential relations between man and man, which are based on an economic structure which the Government did not make and has little power over. Parliament arose in England, he says, in order that oppositions of interest between sections of the dominant class, between the nobility and the Crown, could be settled, but not in order that the relative positions of the dominant and dominated class should be altered.

The reactionaries are those who try to restore rights to a power which has passed them over to the general collective body of individuals: to give back to the State, for example, the power of minutely regulating things which it had in the Middle Ages.

I think the germ of one of Sorel's ideas—that a revolution is good when it takes place while the power of producing is improving, but bad when it takes place when it is declining (and Sorel gives the irruption of the barbarians into the Roman Empire and the French Revolution as examples)—is found in those passages in which Labriola objects to "Christian social paternalism and philanthropic socialism" that they diminish the power of producing.

To sum up, he regards reform as essentially conservative.
Italy

Enrico Leone has written what may be regarded as a text-book of Syndicalism, based on lectures delivered by him at various places. It is rather rhetorical in tone, and his lectures, like most lectures, contained nothing absolutely new. The book has been successful enough to get translated into Russian and Spanish, and really expresses well one or two ideas which naturally arise when we accept Syndicalist principles.

Leone looks at the present state of the world, of politics, and also at Karl Marx's prophecies, and inquires how far there is a concentration of capital on the one hand and of workers on the other—the latter being so disciplined and massed together in large numbers and so desperate from misery (this is the Marxian prophecy) as to be ready to expropriate the expropriators. Now there are two existing revisions of these Marxian dogmatic prophecies. On one side the Fabians and the other reformist revisionists—Bernstein is their doctrinal exponent, and he got his ideas from the Fabians—deny that there is an increase of misery, and often that there is as much concentration of capital as was expected (they lay stress on the increase of medium incomes), and while retain-

1 Enrico Leone, "Il Sindicalismo."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

ing the name of socialist are probably out for a maximum income, a minimum income, and between the two a State-guaranteed moderate rate of interest; this is the revision accepted by those who frankly ask for reform by parliamentary intervention, which is what socialist parties have hitherto actually tried to obtain while verbally repeating phrases of revolutionary Marxism. The other revisionists would make their actions agree with their words, and, accepting the trade union as the implement of revolution, abandon parliamentarism, oppose nationalisation, and work for a cataclysmic transformation of society.

It is Leone's business to admit the need for some revision in order to square present socialist practice with socialist doctrine, and to argue against the reformist's revision, and in favour of a revision which will alter deeds and leave revolutionary words unaltered. He argues that democracy, while professing to open careers to capacity, does not do so because it classes among its special capacities the capacities due to birth, to inheritance of property, of culture, and education—which are largely the monopolies of a class—and of titles. It is characteristic that kings receive honorary titles without being examined for them. The socialism of the intel-
Italy

lectuals is all for the extension of this hierarchy of capacities—it would establish what I believe may be called a Chinese socialism—every one to receive a wage proportioned to the examinations which he has passed and the post given him by the State. Besides, Leone believes with Sorel that a large part of the intellectuals are useless: they are unproductive workers, political and administrative officials employed by the State (which is itself a removable evil), members of the liberal professions who are necessarily dependent on the capitalist class, or, at the best, are students of science and art, whose work ought not to be the monopoly of a class because the divine joy of knowledge should be open to all, and all should be forced to do their share (which would be far smaller than that now done by manual workers) of the necessary work of production.

In developing his theory Leone lays great stress on the incompatibility of Marx’s materialist basis of history, which asserts that economic conditions are the first causes of legal and political movements, with any attempt to radically alter society by attacking it in its unimportant places. Marx’s theory, which was a new idea in the history of political ideas, deserves probably more attention than it has received, because to the
Syndicalism and the General Strike

impartial mind it would have, I think, the air of being one of those obviously partly sensible ideas which men are likely to reject because they are not agreeable. It flatters no man's self-esteem. Men prefer not to believe that any act of apparent goodwill to men was not performed because it was an act of goodwill, but because it suited the pocket interests of certain rich men; men prefer to discuss anything rather than the bread-and-butter needs of the underfed class, and will not admit (until there is a strike which inconveniences them) that such a question can be effectively dealt with in any way; supply and demand are left to go their inequitable way until some display of force sets men discussing rights. Leone rightly insists that the materialist conception of history is not necessarily fatalistic; it does necessarily direct the will towards the more important things, which are economic facts, and not towards the less important, which are legal and moral changes. Leone refers to Marx's works as showing the right use of the materialist method:—

"In all his historical examples he has a method of interpretation which makes parties the descendants of an historical situation, and not vice versa. Parties neither make nor change history. On the contrary, they are moved by
Italy

the power of the changing wave of that never-resting sea which is the history of classes and of their fluctuating interests. On the other hand, he may sometimes go too far in his desire to find the immediate economic cause of some episode, as, for example, the distribution of sausages made by Napoleon III. to win over the army on the occasion of his coup d'état of the 2nd of December, but he does not ignore the fact that the momentum and partisan spirit of parties and of their leaders can give dramatic colour to events which they cannot bring about. For him, the crisis in potatoes is worth much more than a thousand efforts of the minister Guizot, or of the radical Barrès. The essential canon of the Marxian historical method is the tendency to explain all political developments, and thence all the actions of parties, by the relations between class-interests. When in '92 Louis XVI. was powerless, the republican idea was not consciously accepted, even by name, by any one in the revolutionary groups, although it began to be perceived faintly by Roland and some few individuals; however, France, through the force of circumstances, remained a republic until the Napoleonic period. The origin of the American Republic is to be found entirely in the history of the American peoples, who are without
any feudal-monarchic tradition, and not certainly in any prevalence of any convinced republican party more ardent than those who to-day fight in vain in ancient monarchic Europe.

"Parties in history translate the forces which work outside themselves; on a day of crisis the advanced parties are quickly conquered or superseded by those which on the day before were of little account or did not exist.

"If history depended on parties, England and the United States would be far from socialism, because in them there is no national working-class party. Ettore Cicotti, an experienced cultivator of historical science, is of our opinion in thinking, from what he saw on his journey in North America, that the United States will have a socialist system of production before any other country."

The influence of economic development on political events is said to be very distinctly seen in parts of American history. Slavery was beginning to be thought unremunerative when Whitney discovered the cotton-gin and thereby set the South, that needed slaves, in opposition to the North.1

1 See Dr. Ernst Schultze, "Eine Revolution in der Baumwollgewinnung," in Schmoller's "Jahrbuch" for December, 1911.

132
Italy

Leone attempts to show that socialism is inevitable owing to the slow-working but incessant effect of self-interest working on the masses. The difficulty about this argument is that the profit on a socialist policy cannot be realised with any certainty to-morrow: no truthful man can give a decidedly encouraging answer if the workman asks: "What shall I get out of it to-morrow?" and I believe it is man's faith in truth and justice (a word I have belief in, although it is said to be used mainly by fools) that leads men to socialism.

Leone argues the matter out thus: Competition between labour and capital is incessant, and the conflict of their interests is obvious—"industrial development" makes the "concentration of wage-earners an unavoidable necessity," and this suggests of itself the possibility of combining, so that the men may present their interests as a corporation, and collectively bargain for the selfish interests of each individual, and so that the power of the employer, who, because he employs and controls many, is in himself a host, may be lessened. But these unions provide an ever-accumulating aggressive force, impelled forward by the self-interest of its component parts.

It is curious to notice that Sir Arthur Clay,
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

looking at the subject from a point of view quite opposite to that occupied by Leone, sees something inevitable in trade union history:—

"The greed of employers and the effect of trade competition practically forced the men to combine in self-defence, and once initiated, the subsequent development of the trade union system was inevitable."¹

Leone's explanation of the inevitable development towards socialism is this:—

"In the light of these principles it is not at all difficult to rid ourselves of the thicket of difficulty that the sophistical fervour of our opponents patiently accumulates against us, and which we cannot here even take into consideration. If the force of competition, applied to wages, forces the workers, as a class and as a group of egoistic forces, to diminish the returns on capital, this means that the trade union is revolutionary in its natural character, and in a way independent of what its members intend to do with it or understand it to be. The struggles carried on by means of it for the raising of wages, for the ordering of the factory, the reduction of hours, and so on, are all episodes which strengthen and encourage this competitive

Italy

power of the union. But, as economics teaches, competition between economic factors (in our case between the worker and the capitalist) only ends when an equality of utilities has been reached. Now, so long as the workers are prevented from being in the same possession as is the capitalist of the external means by which their work is done, their egoistic energy will always be kept alive urging them to regain those means. And the association which is exclusively working-class creates this possibility by enabling the conditions to become such that these means can pass into the ownership of the whole trade union. Experience begins to show that only in such a society is the competitive impulse satisfied. Strikes are approximations to this economic state; they, by explaining this competitive force, create a knowledge of its inevitable end, and disclose the notion of the way in which to fight in order to end the struggle:—the expropriation of A (the capitalist) in the interest of the whole body of B (the workers).

"From these observations the effective morphological idea of the trade union emerges: it is not a species of democratic association, but an institution born of the economic laws of capitalist society and destined to generate in itself the skeleton of the coming society. In Syndicalism
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

more than in any other theory you can point to the socialism that is to be.

"By means of this common class movement, and considering the hedonist impulse assumed by modern economics, we are able to declare that—even if the process of concentration of capital does not go on—thanks to the Syndicalist vision, socialism has a material basis of necessity."

The "hedonist assumption" in modern economics is the assumption that every man will bargain for his own advantage, and never be satisfied until his satisfactions (in the form of commodities and potential commodities, or purchasing power) are equal to those of every other man—a principle which, if it worked everywhere equally, might lead to equal incomes, as soon as, for the sake of peace, any well-devised social contract could be drawn up. The economic motive, the only feeling known by the economic man, is the result of a hedonistic view of life, and if the world were really inhabited by economic men, the socialist State would soon come into existence.

"This necessity"—he refers, you will remember, to our necessary arrival at socialism by the impossibility of persuading the organised workers that their class is satisfied before it has
Italy

taken possession of all the capital which it uses—
"this necessity is shown by the attention and will-
force, with which men are necessarily impelled to
use their competitive energy, under the thrust of
the law of egoism. Thus the trade union is re-
vealed as the necessary manifestation of the pro-
found law of competition, and socialism appears
as the result of the inevitable laws of economic
value. Under this aspect, Syndicalism, as Bern-
stein well put it, is an organised liberalism." (I
need not remark that Leone here uses liberalism
to mean the Manchester liberalism of unchecked
competition, which, as he says, Syndicalism would
leave unchecked, but make use of in armies
instead of by each man fighting alone.)

"But since socialism is, and remains, a matter
of the mechanics of interests, can it possibly
retain the creative power of the forces of
enthusiasm? In the upper spheres of social
and political antagonisms—although at the
bottom of them this prosaic economic world lies
like the ferment of manure under the green shoots
of the flowers—the drama of the history of life
is coloured and beautified by the conflicts of
great passions, by passionate ideals, by heroic
violence, it may be by the obscure tragedy of
the worker or the vast and culminating changes
of history.

137
Syndicalism and the General Strike

"But no one should reject this baldly economic conception of socialism as a blasphemy against all the light of ideal truth. These ideal aspirations are chimerical dreams, graceful butterflies fluttering in this dark devil's forest which is the modern world, where are bloodthirsty conflicts between all beings.

"Life shows itself rebellious to idealising treatment. Socialism, which breaks out of the bowels of the life of society, out of the class of workers, is not, therefore, an ideal, but a class-war. The ideal of absolute human happiness can in no way be put into a formula.

"Humanity, sooner or later, according to the hypotheses of Kant and Laplace, is destined to be dissolved, together with the whole solar system. Everything leads us to believe that the process of the disappearance of human life will be a sad one; the cooling of the earth's crust, the lowering of the temperature and other such events, will cause an alteration in the whole human economy.

"Will our descendants in close ranks be able, as Leopardi advised, 'in a social chain,' to fight victoriously against the new conditions of nature that will be evolved in our planetary system? The hypothesis seems completely absurd; when his surroundings become a com-
plex of declining conditions, man will not be delivered. He was so bound to the earth, 'the dear earth,' that he can but follow its fate.

"Chemistry might free us from economic necessity by providing food direct from the atmosphere, which is rich in nutritive elements; but when he is reabsorbed in the earth, his throne is gone. Man is powerless. He is an inseparable part of the globe, and will perish with it. Humanity as the limiting phenomenon of the earth's increase has not yet reached the summit of progress, but the dissolution, and perhaps the growing brutality of the fight as society dissolves, in consequence of the great disturbance of the general physical conditions of life has yet to come.

"Man must breathe in order to live: the atmosphere in which he develops is adherent, like the shirt of Nessus, to the earth. A fantastic mind like that of Quinet, the utopian of Nature, or of Flammarion, that romancer of natural science, or of Figuier, the mystic naturalist, could boldly adventure on the hypothesis that man may dissolve, under the influence of changing environment, out of his present anatomical and physical structure. He breathes because he has lungs, but these can be transformed or a substitute found for them, and they may atrophy without
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

life becoming impossible. His life would acquire a new aspect: his environment would be space; that is, if the law of gravity did not make him fall into the void. But this fantastic evolutionary hypothesis, with its man-freed-from-the-earth, in every way confirms our belief that man in future cannot preserve his inheritance of being, without renouncing all being; he cannot preserve himself except by becoming a being different from himself, or by dying as homo sapiens so as to become a being living in interstellar space."

I know there is nothing very original in this passage, but when easy optimism uses the word "evolution" to justify the hope that all will be better and better without any one taking any trouble, it is well to remember that "the evolution of the solar system" seems to mean (I speak out of my ignorance) that the original solar mass whirling in a gaseous state gradually cools and condensed masses (one is our earth) fly off; but as the energy of the whole diminishes, the reverse process sets in, until, with a great shock, all the bodies in the solar system fall together again and generate enough heat to again vaporise themselves. Life follows this pendulum process of developing, upwards from homogeneity to heterogeneity and complex organisation, and then backwards, devolving, as the
conditions get worse and favour the lower organisms; if the universe is shut up in a box, so that no energy is lost to our system, the whole affair repeats itself exactly for ever.

However, Leone sets us a good example by leaving these gloomy visions of a future so distant that it is not necessary for the human imagination to consider it. “But why think in the clash of battle of this pessimist vision of a distant future?” he says. “Humanity is a baby, and has no way of thinking of the troubles of its end—which seems so far off. . . .”

“There are some, it is true, who propose not to occupy themselves with socialism—Stecchetti is one of these—because of the melancholy future of the earth and its annihilation. But the workers—forced to action by the competitive impulse which is not less powerful than the other laws which regulate the rising and setting of the sun, the velocity of light, and the Copernican revolution of the earth round the sun—they have no time to soliloquise in the melancholy manner of the literary decadents and the bourgeois philosophers. As long as the earth lasts, no one, as Zola said when they tortured Dreyfus, will be able to make rivers go back to their sources; until the end of the earth, socialism will pursue its way in majesty.
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

"Humanity, we said, is yet to stumble along for a long time, going from victory to victory against the hostile forces of nature. The history of humanity is recent.

"What we call ancient history is still under our eyes. We pass in Rome near the Forum where the voice of Cicero sounded, and near the Colossus of Titus, where the pagan soul boasted of its cruelty by admiring the 'beautiful death' of gladiators; at Athens, where we look again at the Acropolis of the Athenian period; at Cairo, where we are forced to exclaim, like Napoleon did to his soldiers, 'Forty centuries of history look at you from the top of those pyramids.' So that any one may see that humanity is quite young, you need only choose men of a hundred years successively up to our days from the Christian era, and eighteen in file are enough to see the whole of mediæval and modern history, and eighty men will see all written history. Eighty men, set one after another, are witnesses of all this famous history of the human race, full as it is of wars and victories, sorrows and triumphs!

"Who, then, will dare to despair already of the end of humanity, when we are but at the dawn of its history?

"Marx has said that with the war of the classes
Italy

will close the prehistory of humanity. Man for the first time will become master of his process of production.

"To-day, the working-class— with the automatic action of economic law—constructs the first nucleus of the future society of equals in associations of workers, which are to organise and discipline production, make it free from all control of the strong over the weak, and make themselves self-contained and free from any superior human power.

"And if the force which urges us on to so great a task is inevitable, its success will be inevitable also— it cannot fail in its aim.

"Now the workers' movement will be able from time to time to express itself in brilliant theoretical form, and possibly in mistaken theories; but it has in itself an incomprehensible force, that— like a mysterious torch— illuminates its way.

"This is the superiority of Syndicalism. It does not build a new social system according to its fancy; but emerges from the working-class movement, as an autonomous and distinct realm, and sees in itself the fertile soil from which, as a fruit springs from its own tree and a tree from its own soil, it will produce a new world.

"This world— the disinherited, a new Atlantis, will bear it on its shoulders. There is no need for
Syndicalism and the General Strike

other help. His shoulders of steel will not bend. The seductive whispers of the insidious siren, legalising, parliamentary, and bourgeois, does not stop him. He proceeds. And he will only stop on the heights, when the sad present will have become the dreadful past, buried in forgetfulness, and recalled between shudders of a complaint that now needs no remedy!"

In order to make the meaning of this extract clearer, I must point out that Leone, like all Syndicalist thinkers, does not believe that mere violence, mere pressure of numbers, can fundamentally alter society: Syndicalism, as we have seen, does not repudiate violence, and, indeed, in opposition to what it considers the useless verbiage of politicians, admits the occasional effectiveness of force, but, as Leone (expressing himself with an unusual epigrammatic brevity) puts it, "The present capitalist system does not rest on bayonets, but on the economic immaturity of the workers!" (This "immaturity" is undoubtedly more marked in Italy, with its large illiterate class, than in England.) The barricade of the political revolution is to be replaced by the general strike of the economic revolution; the huge armaments of the modern State force the workers to develop on their side arms of equally shattering efficiency.
Italy

Leone, like Labriola, is, of course, all for "direct action" as against State action and a political policy of "small profits" and gradual reforms. For this reason, he voices the dislike sometimes felt now for the word "evolution"—one of the many words which, when popularised, has been made to cover much muddle-headedness—and makes its use one of the sins for which the intellectuals are responsible.

"'Evolution' and 'social development by antitheses,' these are the two social conceptions which to-day hold the field of thought divided.

"They are the two theoretical forms that correspond to the specific needs of classes—the one of the bourgeois world, the other of the new working-class world.

"It is natural to the evolutionary conception to recognise in the history of evolution the predominance of the collective interest over the interest of one class. From this is derived the new tactical proposal for all classes to collaborate round common interests, which are no weaker than the special interests of classes, and which aim at becoming predominant.

"This ideology, so repugnant to the system of socialist thought, has been suddenly developed since the bizarre [evolutionary] clause was shut into the most bizarre of socialist utopianisms
Syndicalism and the General Strike

(and Marxianism has written an excessively laudatory elegy on it), and been passed off as the production of the intellectuals, from whom it has overflowed into the stream of the labour movement; and these intellectuals, instead of remaining, like the volunteers of the battle of independence, soldiers loyal to the death, wish for and claim the epaulettes of captains."

So much for Leone; and I must here conclude on Italian Syndicalism.
CHAPTER V

GERMANY

In order to understand the position of the Syndicalists in any country and how they came to stand there, it seems necessary to know something of the Socialist party in that country, of the trade unions, and of the relations between the unions and the socialists, so as to see why Syndicalist criticism ever began to object to the progress made by the wage-earners and by the party supposed to work on their behalf. I shall assume that the reader knows enough about the Socialist party in Germany, since its progress has attracted considerable attention here.

Unfortunately, the history of German trade unionism is rather complicated, and I must confess that in this chapter I shall have to go rather a long way in order to give comparatively little information about Syndicalism, which is certainly as yet not prominent in Germany.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

There are in Germany several kinds of trade unions. The (a) Hirsch-Duncker Liberal unions,\(^1\) which contained, at the end of 1910, 122,571 members (their largest unions are for machine-makers and metal workers, factory workers and operatives, German shop assistants, and Württemberg railway workers); (b) the Christian unions with 316,115 members, of which 82,855 are miners and 40,320 textile workers (some of these are Catholic, some Evangelical, some undenominational or Christian social); (c) the independent unions with 705,942, of which the Prussian-Hessian State railway workers contribute 441,578, and the Polish trades union (largely of miners) 61,965; the (d) patriotic (vaterländische) unions—some of which are "mixed" unions containing masters and men organised in a particular locality, others are organised in the usual way according to trades—33,284, of which the largest part is in Saxony, 10,613; and the (e) "yellow" or free labour unions with 79,991 members. Opposed to these peaceful unions are (f) the "socialist" unions or "free" trade unions with 2,128,021 members, while the non-socialist unions a to e contain, taken all

\(^1\) Statistics taken from "Statistisches Jahrbuch für das deutsche Reich," 1911, Puttkammer and Mühlbrecht, Berlin.

150
Germany
together, only 1,258,443 members, and of these many are also members of the socialist unions—thus the railway workers are largely members of "independent" railway workers' unions and of the Socialist Metal-workers' Union.
The Syndicalist unions, the *Freie Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften*, decline to furnish their numbers to the Imperial Statistical Office.¹ They were stated by Michels in 1908 to contain 15,000 to 20,000; but these figures are said to be greatly exaggerated—division by 10, according to some critics of them, would bring them nearer to accuracy.²
The early history of attempts at working-class combination in Germany, with its secrets and its disputes between Marxians and Lasalleans, appears very complicated.
The right to combine was first gained between 1867 and 1869 in most German States, and the mutual improvement societies which had been in existence since 1848, as well as trade societies which, especially in the printing and tobacco industries, existed before trade unions were lawful, rapidly developed into a system of trade unions. Marx Hirsch, who in the summer of 1868 contributed a series of letters to the

¹ See note on p. 442 of the *Jahrbuch*.
² Robert Michels in " Syndicalisme et Socialisme."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

*Berliner Volkszeitung* on English conditions, did much to encourage the movement by presenting the English trade unions as models. Von Schweitzer, president of the socialist body, the *Allgemeiner deutscher Arbeiterverein* (originally intended to reconstruct the whole of society) and Fritzsche, founder of the *Deutscher Tabakarbeiterverein*, were convinced by his teaching and desired to found unions: the Arbeiterverein would, however, only allow von Schweitzer to call a meeting in conjunction with Fritzsche if he acted in an individual capacity and not as an official. The congress was held on September 26, 1868, and two sections of opinion revealed themselves: the followers of Hirsch, who were in a minority, and who believed in goodwill between master and man, and the followers of von Schweitzer (of whom I will say more a little later), who believed in socialist principles, and frankly accepted the strike as a weapon. The proceedings were probably not very orderly, as we read that "Hirsch was finally driven out of the hall by force." \(^1\) A meeting held soon after at which the Hirsch party were in a majority led to the formation of many unions, the *Gewerk-

Germany

vereine. This meeting was presided over by the member of the Reichstag, Franz Duncker, and the unions to which it gave rise are still called the Hirsch-Duncker unions. The Hirsch-Duncker unions were based on the idea of a natural harmony between employer and worker, and proposed to work chiefly by means of peaceful collective bargaining. The members are supposed to sign a statement on entering the unions declaring that they are not members of the Socialist party. The unions have not, in spite of their principles, been able to do without strikes, and the defeat of the 7,000 Waldenburg miners in the first year after their foundation, 1869, put back their growth considerably. Hirsch was elected to the Reichstag in 1891, and sat with the freisinnige party—which in England would count as a radical individualist party.

Meantime von Schweitzer had organised his Gewerkschaften, divided at first into ten trades or Arbeiterchaften. Their early life was not prosperous—von Schweitzer desired, like Robert Owen, to dissolve the whole of the trade organisations into one workers' union with socialist principles. The president, Hasenclever, the successor of Schweitzer, went so far as to issue an instruction in 1874 that the unions
Syndicalism and the General Strike

should be dissolved, seeing that the police "were taking energetic steps against all social democratic meetings" (whatever "steps" may mean),¹ but some refused to die. The stricter Marxians, who in their Internationale Arbeiterassoziation spoke rather contemptuously of trade unions, because so long as capitalism lasts the lot of the worker can never be improved, yet believed in organising the workers for common action and with a view to their complete emancipation, and by 1869 the Eisenach congress of the social democratic workers' party was able to recommend the further construction of unions, "on an international basis"—this, necessarily more or less theoretical, conception being a Marxian tradition.

It is important for our purpose to note that in these early years of the history of German trade unions, local unions (lokale Fachvereine) had been formed in the larger towns. The question as to the degree to which the unions should be managed centrally has occupied attention to a far greater extent in Germany than in England—perhaps for the simple reason that the former country is larger. These local unions were free from the need of deciding the question whether they should or should not be political,

Germany

as the political differences of the members of a small local group in a country like Germany, with centralised governments, are of no importance.

The *Sozialistengesetz* of 1878 killed the trade union movement in Germany—some of the unions were suppressed and the rest thought it best to commit suicide—the Government mostly believing that the interests of the whole of society were identical with those of the possessing classes and especially those of the employers, and using every means that the law when stretched could provide to obstruct the work of the unions; a few *Fachvereine*, which occupied themselves in maintaining funds for providing travelling expenses for out-of-work members, sick benefits, lodgings for men seeking work, local papers and registers of vacant situations, still, however, survived.

We have now reached the origin of the third group of trade unions. The Government having suppressed voluntary efforts for mutual aid of the workers was compelled to introduce legislation instituting compulsory insurance. The legislation was received without gratitude by the workers, who felt themselves oppressed, and the question came into men's heads, "whether, in fact, the work of elevating the working-class
Syndicalism and the General Strike

without their own participation must not be a mistaken undertaking.” The “Berlin movement,” aiming at the creation of a Christian-social party of its own, was started by Stöcker, Wagner, Henrici, and others in 1880. The Christian unions founded by them believe in social peace and loyalty. The construction of these Christian unions, which was permitted by the police, encouraged various trades to form other non-political unions for benefit and protection purposes. Some of these unions specifically excluded strikes from their permissible activities—others got out of the difficulty by making the strike the business of a special strike committee (Streik- or Kontrollkommission) to be elected at a special general meeting of the workers held at a time of strike, or of trustees (Vertrauensmänner) appointed for the special work at an open meeting.

The law, however, fought hard against the unions, and in particular tried to make a distinction between economic and political or State activities, even dividing strikes for raising wages into strikes in which the real object was simply to raise wages and strikes the real purpose of which was to ask for increased wages in order to widen the cleft between employer and worker, because of hatred of our whole social and political conditions.

156
Germany

After the law against the socialists had run out, a Trade Union Conference was called in Berlin in 1890 in order to strengthen and extend the unions, and a general committee of seven was appointed to preside over all the unions. This centralisation and unification of all trades, so foreign to what we see in England, should be noted, because German Syndicalism ultimately arose out of a revolt against it: from the beginning of this second start of the German trade union movement there was a conflict between the adherents of localism and the adherents of central organisation—these early localists being, however, firmer believers in definite political action in addition to trade union action than were the centralisers of that day. The localisers left the meeting when they found themselves greatly in the minority, and it was finally agreed that local autonomy should prevail to the extent that different branches of trade should be organised separately but there should be a common Kartellvertrag (approximately “joint-committee”), with defined powers, over the whole industry—over, that is, all the different branches of metal or wood-workers, and so on. Women were to be admitted to the men’s unions. The collections on May Day were to be devoted so far as the general collection was concerned to trade union
Syndicalism and the General Strike

purposes, but voluntary levies might be made by single branches for any purpose.

The socialists have not been always quite friendly to the trade unions, and especially have attacked Legien, the chairman of the General Committee, he having been regarded as a "pure" trade unionist.

It is a little difficult to sum up the present characteristics of this, the largest body of German trade unions—but they may be described as being centralised, and, although often classed as socialist, in actual working they are not more political than the English unions, especially since in recent years they have partly dropped the use of revolutionary phrases. At times they have professed political independence.

Particularly among the miners and foundry workers of the Rheinland and Westphalia, the Christian unions are of importance. They are either evangelical or Catholic. They believe in a peaceful relation between employer and employed. The Protestant unions are for religious and moral culture, for Kaiser and Empire, for the family and healthy homes, and for sickness, death, and out-of-work benefits. These unions are controlled from above; they contain employers as well as employed; and discussions and lectures on economic subjects held in them

158
Germany

are said to awaken little interest. To be "social" without being socialist or partisan is naturally difficult, and prominent members have not escaped being accused of an attitude which is too political or socialist.

The Catholic union, Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland, has the battle with socialism as its first aim. It is directed by manufacturers, professors, mayors, and councillors.

Christian social unions have been formed on an undenominational basis, containing both Catholic and Protestant members: the textile unions are some of the largest of these. These unions are practically supporters of the Centrum party, although nominally they are non-political and anti-socialist.¹

I have already referred to the presence of a minority at the Berlin trade union congress of 1890 who objected to the centralisation of the unions. In May, 1897, the first congress was held of "German trade unions which are organised locally or based on centralisation by trustees"—the second conception has been briefly explained already. The congress was, however, extremely orthodoxly socialist in its desire to fight for political power, and recognised the need

¹ Chiefly from Kulemann's "Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung,"
Syndicalism and the General Strike

for a class-war to be waged in "active and conscious connection with the principles and tactics of the social-democratic party of Germany." These new organisations were to be entirely independent of one another, and each was to control its own funds, and decide for itself with regard to strikes. A central business committee was only to consider means of propaganda and to connect the units, without having any control over them. In the event of a strike, all the unions have to act in solidarity, and assist the striking branch, provided its own members have paid up their dues according to the rules; these dues being paid to and retained by the local branch, the central committee having no funds whatever. A paper, *Die Einigkeit*, was founded, to protect the unions from attacks both by tyrannical leaders of the socialists and of the centralised unions. At present this paper (I have not seen the early numbers of it) is an excellent one, with a considerable amount of news concerning the relations between capital and labour all over the world—and considering the small circulation to which it must be restricted, is quite wonderfully good. Its "editorial" articles cannot, it must be confessed, avoid being rather monotonous in their perpetual attacks on the Socialist party.
Germany

The new unions in 1903 received the name of the "Freie Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften." Although these unions only differed from others in their objection to centralisation, and were not originally unorthodox in socialism, the "Lokalisten," as they are called, because of their localising methods, were, they themselves report, persecuted by the centralists—individual members were deprived of work, their strikes were "broken" in order to waste their funds, they were denounced to the police, so that Andreas Kleinlein speaks mildly, if his account of their experiences is accurate, when he says: "The fight with exploitation is always natural and open, but the fight with brothers about the form of organisation is a cruel one in Germany." ^

In 1903, the executive of the Socialist party (Parteivorstand) in conjunction with the general committee of the trade unions and the Berlin Gewerkskartell (trade unions' committee) attempted to bring the schismatic unions back to the true faith. The attempt failed.

In 1904 Dr. Friedeberg lectured to the Berlin members of the Freie Vereinigung and began to preach what we may briefly call anti-parlia-

^ "Der Syndicalismus in Deutschland," by A. Kleinlein, in the Jahrbuch der freien Generation für 1912. I am indebted to Mr. Kleinlein for assistance in obtaining the materials for this chapter.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

mentarism and direct action—strikes, May celebrations, and boycotts. At the end of his speech he recommended the general strike. He delivered similar speeches in many parts of Germany, and on his return to Berlin delivered a further speech on August 23, 1905, to a meeting of about three thousand persons on the "Theory of the World and Tactics of the German Proletariate" ("Weltanschauung und Taktik des deutschen Proletariats"), after which a very long resolution was put to the meeting and almost unanimously agreed to. This resolution may now be considered as expressing the principle for which the Freie Vereinigung stands. The resolution refers first to events in Germany in the last ten years (1895-1905) which have strengthened the reactionaries—the loss of franchises in Saxony, Hamburg, Lübeck, Dresden; the clericalising of the schools in Prussia; the strengthening of the Junker class by corn duties; the destruction of the rights of minorities in the Reichstag; the declaration of political neutrality on the part of the trade unions; the diminished observance of May Day: it then speaks of "apparent successes of parliametarianism," and of the replacing of direct revolutionary influences by attention to gradual economic changes; while admitting an im-
Germany

Improvement in the standard of life, the resolution attributes it to a general improvement in Germany's economic position, and not to any success in the class-war. Class-war for the overthrowing of the class-dominance is what is needed: the general strike is the best weapon in the war.

From this time on the Lokalisten called themselves also Anarcho-Sozialisten. The socialist papers criticised the speeches of Friedeberg severely, but Kautsky, while objecting to his "theoretical confusion," admired his "revolutionary temperament."

The Lokalisten declare their chief peculiarities, in comparison with the socialist unions, to consist in the power over their own money and over the right to strike retained by each local branch; in their belief in "solidarity" strikes and sympathetic strikes, and in their propaganda of the general strike; and in their objection to trade unions collecting money for any purpose except strike pay, all such other moneys encouraging the belief in a self-help which can never suffice for the needs of the worker.\(^1\)

The actual number of the Lokalisten is small, but their criticisms do influence small bodies of discontented trade unionists. Thus

\(^1\) Das Programme der F. V. d. G.

163
Syndicalism and the General Strike

a meeting of Berlin members of organisations belonging to the Gewerkschaftskartell, on September 7, 1908, at Kellers Festsäle, considered a long resolution complaining of "parliamentary hopelessness," and emphasising the need for propaganda and preparation for the general strike: it is not the conquest of political power which is requisite, but the destruction of political power, which is to be replaced by the organisation of productive forces and economic arrangements. What is objected to in the existing trade union and parliamentary worlds is this—and I have referred to this meeting in order to quote these complaints, which are characteristic of the kind of complaints that the left wing of a Socialist party makes:—

In trade unionism: the agreement to "strangle" the 1st of May celebration, and further a passive attitude with regard to strikes and lockouts, and even the driving of strikers back to work by refusing them strike pay (as with the weavers in Crefeld and the riveters in Stettin).

In politics: the congratulations offered by Socialist representatives on the birth of an heir to the throne of Hesse, the presence of labour representatives at the funeral of the Grand Duke of Baden, the patriotic speeches of socialists in
Germany

the Reichstag in debates on the army, and the granting of the budget in the Landtage of southern states.¹

I think I have made the general opinions of the Anarcho-Sozialisten fairly clear. They look upon the war of the oppressed against their exploiters as morally excellent, and the propagation of anti-militarism, anti-patriotism, and ant clericalism is combined with it. "The ideal of human love and national brotherhood, the task of freeing the dispossessed from bondage, making worthy, sensitive human beings of them," is the ideal that must be put before the young. "But also the dispossessed must be methodically enlightened about the character of the Church and educated in anti-religious and anti-clerical feeling. Before the worker has set himself inwardly free from the spell of divine and human authorities, he is not ripe for the war of the classes, for this requires free and completed personalities, who have settled opinions and have put away the last remnants of a hypocritical priestly capitalistic morality."²

Evidently wealthy in literary ability, the group issue a second paper, Der Pionier, in addi-

¹ From a copy of the resolution in the possession of the author.
² "Was wollen die Lokalisten?"
Syndicalism and the General Strike

tion to Die Einigkeit, the former being a general propagandist paper and the latter the "organ" of the Freie Vereinigung. The following extract from an article on elections is characteristic of the tone of the former paper:—

"The worker is told to choose representatives. He chooses by bits of paper political, and if all goes well, trade union representatives—talkers. Now, is it possible for these 'representatives' of those who have nothing to convince the 'representatives' of the propertied that they must come out from their property in order to bring about the equal rights of mankind? No!! Well, then, if that is not possible, then the whole parliamentarism is not only useless, but harmful. . . .

"Parliaments are as dangerous for mature men as barracks are for young men. In the one, as in the other, men are taken out of their own class. In the one, as in the other, most men are infected by militarism, and are made by it direct enemies of anti-militarist socialism.

"Only think of Bebel in Berlin, Greulich in Switzerland, Jaurès in Paris. They all declare loudly and solemnly that they have nothing in common with those who undermine the best supports of throne and capitalism, that is, the military.

166
Germany

"These men, at first so firm set, could never have decayed so far as socialists if they had remained among the workers and had used their undoubted abilities in order to enlighten the masses. And the expenses [of parliamentary action] are not as small as many assume. The elections of 1907 devoured twenty million marks [1 mark = 1 shilling], of which the social democrats workers' pence amounted to three millions.

"How much educational work [Aufklärungsarbeit] can be done with such sums by distributing good printed matter!

"But the most pressing reason why the workers should not take part in elections is the crippling effect which parliaments have on the decisions of the worker.

"As the more or less pious Christian, listening to his priest, hopes for heaven's manna, so the dispossessed turn their expectant gaze towards the houses of parliament [Reichstagsgebäude], or reads the speeches of their deputies with delight; and so their personal power of action is crippled, their own development is hampered, and their belief in their powers and those of their fellow-sufferers is shaken.

"Down with the electoral lie! Long live
Syndicalism and the General Strike

revolutionary socialism! Hurrah for the general strike!"¹

The following number (dated January 10, 1912) states that out of the 370 Social Democratic Reichstag candidates "there is not one single worker who slaves for capitalism for wages"; all are, it asserts, officials of the movement living on it—lawyers, doctors, publicans, manufacturers. It is a common complaint about labour parties.

¹ "Der Pionier," No. 1, 2nd year, January 3, 1912.
CHAPTER VI

ENGLAND

England is not a useful country in which to study formulated political theories. In England, the conservative is not a conservative, the liberal is not a liberal, and the socialist is not a socialist. In other countries ideas are fully discussed for a long while and then timidly experimented with; here we discuss nothing and carry the ideas out fully in practice. If you talk of a class-war in England, every one raises pious hands of horror; but in no country is there so much instinctive distrust between class and class and so much effort to keep the classes apart: our school system and our public-houses, as compared with continental cafés, show it; and we are led to the same conclusion when we reflect that conscript armies often cause contact between classes, and that common tastes in amusements may in some countries do much to promote intercourse irrespective of rank and income. Hardly had we heard that the English
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

working-man would never hold up the train service, as had been done by Italians and Frenchmen, in whose countries the general strike had long been discussed, when the English workers did do so, and only the statesmanlike eloquence of Lloyd George (which did not materialise into anything very useful to the strikers) set the railways back at work.

Action in England largely precedes theory.

There is a considerable public in England that is afraid of all political theory. Just as there are religious people who cannot bear to discuss why they think that man is immortal, or why Adam's sin is on all of us, so there are conservatives who cannot bear to discuss why the Marquess of Anglesey, the dustman, and the proprietor of Beecham's pills get their respective incomes, or to investigate in whose hands in reality (as opposed to text-book theory) great political power is held. That this faith in the utility of ignorance has great dangers, I need hardly point out. There is a large public entirely out of touch with the great productive industries of the country—with coal-mining and the metal and textile industries, for example: this public largely judges of the rights and needs of any class of the community by the source from which they hear of their grievances or demands: 172
England

the claims made by them are justified if a conservative paper says so in connection with its tariff reform agitation, but would not be if the socialist papers advanced them. Now, no idea is more constantly believed by the respectable man in the streets of London—the man who does not come up to the city in a workman's train and who is not working at the actual production of anything—than the idea that strikes are caused by "paid agitators."

I am anxious not to give any exaggerated idea of the importance of Syndicalist theories, and therefore I should like a little to consider the actual causes of strikes.

I have asked people who they think is one of these paid agitators, but have never heard a satisfactory answer. The branch secretary of a trade union gets 10s. to 50s. for three months' work—a merely nominal wage for work which must be done after the man has tired himself with a full day's work for his master. The work is undertaken by enthusiasts and by men who are anxious to rise in the world of trade unionism to better paid places, in which, naturally, only a very small proportion are destined ever to succeed. The branch secretary may win some local renown by a successful strike, and be elected district secretary because of his popularity,
Syndicalism and the General Strike

energy, and aggressiveness; but the risk he runs is great—the masters are likely to dislike him, to dismiss him because he is a source of discontent, and in many ways to make his life harder and his purse lighter. The steady routine work of negotiating with masters, of arranging meetings, and thinking out methods of attracting unorganised men into the unions; of corresponding with other branches and with higher committees of the union, of influencing the policy of the local Trades Council, and preventing waste of time in discussing resolutions on unworkable political proposals that may be put before the branch—all this clerical and administrative work requires a persevering, cool, and calculating type of mind rather than the mind belonging to an impulsive agitator. Further, the control of funds is the great source of caution in the management of unions. The general secretary of a great union is frequently a man who, in appearance, may look like a prosperous skilled artisan, but in type of mind and in manner seems exactly like a small, steady man of business. It is no exaggeration to say that he spends much time in trying to prevent local branches from striking. Their grievances are seen at headquarters from a distance, and with a clear idea of the risks of a strike and its cost. Whenever notice arrives
England

from any locality that a branch wishes to strike, the headquarters send a man down to investigate. The investigator will almost infallibly be opposed to a strike.

I hope it is not too personal to point out that Mr. George Barnes, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, seems a man of the artisan type, changed into a steady, eminently quiet, unspeculative, small business man.

No man was more frequently spoken of in the papers in connection with the coal strike than Mr. W. E. Harvey. This is his record according to the *Pall Mall Gazette's* "Extra," "The New House of Commons, 1911":—

"Mr. William E. Harvey, like most of the miner-members of Parliament, commenced life in the pit. Born at Hasland, near Chesterfield, in 1852, he had to go to work, ten years later, in order to help his widowed mother. He educated himself in his spare time, and quite early identified himself with the movement for the combination that eventually blossomed into the Derbyshire Miners' Association. He became its treasurer in 1881, and in 1886 left the mine in order to become the association's agent. He was instrumental in accomplishing a great feat at the time of the 1892 coal strike. Then the association had £32,000 in hand; but strike
Syndicalism and the General Strike

pay soon swallowed it up, and the offices of the association were mortgaged, and funds to the amount of £6,000 were borrowed in order to keep the men going. This debt was wholly redeemed within six months of the conclusion of the strike, and the mortgage paid off also. Mr. Harvey is on the executive of the Miners' Federation, and is a member of the Conciliation Board. School board, town council, and Primitive Methodist chapel also have occupied Mr. Harvey's evenings and Sundays at Chesterfield, and he is a hard worker in everything he undertakes."

It is, perhaps, an instructive record in several ways.

I have here made it clear, then, that while a local union secretary, working himself in an area where the conditions of working or the tyranny of masters and foremen are felt, may be in favour of a strike, the Executive and General Secretary in London is almost invariably in favour of a quiet, safe life. It must be remembered that the success of a branch secretary is likely to result from his success in speaking on trade unionism and politics, and by his making himself known. If he is victimised, that is, refused work in his trade because of his activity in politics, this may constitute a claim on his union for his employment by them, if they have a vacant position
England

suitable for him. But whatever advantage it is to him to make himself prominent in any way in his own district, in order that he may be nominated for election to the post of district secretary, it may be argued that it is also to his advantage that the officials above him in rank may have no reason to try to discredit him, as they can easily do by acting through their organiser. In so far as he rises, it becomes more and more advantageous to him to be in favour with those at the top. These, as I have said, have hitherto been always men of peace, except, perhaps, in the unions for unskilled men, where slightly stronger language is always used. The unpaid agitator, whether a workman or a middle-class man, is far more dangerous than the paid agitator—because he speaks what his heart dictates without having any official responsibility. Before proceeding further I may at once point out that the whole objection to paid agitators rings untrue when all political agitation is more and more organised and worked by paid servants.

The paid agitator is not, of course, the speaker paid by the Anti-Socialist Union, whose sincerity it would be impossible to doubt, and who delivers a speech which has sometimes been taught to him by the rich gentlemen who direct his organisation without pay; it is not the speaker who
Syndicalism and the General Strike
comes to protect Lord Rothschild from the ill-effects likely to be produced on society by half-starved wretches asking for a wage sufficient to maintain physical and mental health on; even the paid advocate of tariff reform, though he may paint in the blackest of colours the misery at present caused by foreign competition, is not included among the paid agitators, and still less are Cabinet ministers, although from time to time they agitate for or against something.

To return to the question of paid political workers and strikers. With regard to the working of the upper five-foot seam of the Ely pit of the Naval Colliery Company, the chairman of which is Mr. D. A. Thomas, who is also managing director of Cambrian Combine collieries, negotiations as to wages to be paid at piece rates were going on in August, 1910, the mine having formerly been worked on fixed day rates. No agreement could, however, be arrived at, and on August 1st, 1910, "notices were served by the company on all the workmen employed at the Ely pit." Nine hundred workpeople were thrown out of work. Twelve hundred colliers employed at the two other pits of the Naval Colliery company then struck in support of the locked-out workers of the Ely pit—the whole 21,000 being under one general manager, Mr. 178
England

Leonard Llewelyn, in mines owned by the same company of which Mr. Thomas is the managing director.

These facts are to be found in a book called "Labour Strife in the South Wales Coalfield, 1910-11," \(^1\) the author of which holds that one cause of the strikes during this period was "a severe contest for supremacy . . . between the younger and the older leaders of the South Wales Miners' Federation"—the younger leaders being socialists, and the older ones "orthodox trade unionists," and therefore his testimony (given on p. 13) that this strike, out of which probably the whole of the coal strikes up to the latest one (1912), which affected all Great Britain, developed, is peculiarly important, when he says that the strike was:

"Neither recommended nor acquiesced in by the local or executive leaders, it was largely a spontaneous act of impulse on the part of the rank and file."

For the time, a vote taken resulted in the conflict being confined to the men who were locked out, the others resuming work. On October 1st, however, the men in the pits under the control of the Cambrian Combine handed in their notices.

\(^1\) By David Evans, published by The Educational Publishing Company, Ltd., Cardiff, 1911.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

The strike lasted until August, 1911, when the men finally were beaten and returned to work, 1,200 men having been out for ten months. That part of the public which is instructed by the less scrupulous part of a press that is hired by the richer side, is under the impression that the average miner pays income tax. Wages as low as 3s. or 5s. a day are, however, to be found in the mines. It is not fair to pick out one or two well-paid men and make them stand for their whole class. The price of coal includes on an average six men killed a day in English mines, and some men have to work with one shoulder on the floor, one against the roof.¹

¹ Miners work from 5½ to 4½ days per week according to the time of year. The accidents as presented in a return furnished by the Home Secretary (reproduced in the Times of March 14, 1912) were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number killed</th>
<th>Number injured as reported to the Inspectors</th>
<th>Number injured and disabled for more than seven days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>1,308</td>
<td>5,860</td>
<td>141,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1,453</td>
<td>5,859</td>
<td>153,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>5,737</td>
<td>159,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1,259</td>
<td>Not yet available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures show from 4·7 to 6·7 men killed per working day.

180
England

The defeated Welsh miners, who had no minimum for abnormal places, sent representatives to the English miners' branches, and finally induced the whole Federation to declare the recent strike all over the British Isles.

Something has been said with regard to the difference between the passing and the coming generation of trade union leaders. The contrast is partly due to improved education and greater study of economics on the part of the new men; among the South Wales miners and in the Amalgamated Society of Railway Engineers there are many Central Labour College men trained under Dennis Hird among the "newer" men. The contrast is also, perhaps, partly that between the "local" leader and the "central" leader, to which reference has already been made. Among the "younger" men in the Welsh coal-mines are the miners' agents, Charles Stanton and Vernon Hartshorn.

During the summer of 1911, in addition to the railway strike, the dockers' strike, and first in time and most successful in results from the workers' point of view, the sailors' strike, which, after three days, gained great increases of wages from the rich and powerful Shipping Federation,

1 See Rowland Kenney's article in the English Review for March, 1912.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

which had never believed that the sailors could all strike at once—in addition to the strikes reported in all the papers, a large number of small strikes took place, many of which may be termed quite spontaneous. There were many strikes like those of the women employed in South London factories, who were paid sweated wages, and who struck because other strikes set the example and gave them courage. The Anti-Sweating League gives figures showing the expenditure of a woman earning 9s. a week. Her rent is 3s.; her two clothes clubs cost 1s., and her boot club 6d. a week; materials for washing clothes on Saturday afternoon, coal, light, wood, and death benefit insurance, absorb another 1s. 3d.; in all, these expenses come to 5s. 9d., leaving her 3s. 3d. for one week's food. No doubt, this is enough—for a woman of that class: it enables her to have six dinners at 1½d. each, six loaves coming to 1s. 4½d., and 1s. 1½d. of other food. Women, during the summer are said to have gained increases of wages of from 30 to 40 per cent. on an average. Unfortunately, where the women were not in trade unions, their gains cannot, with any security, be permanently maintained. It is not necessary to be at all revolutionary to feel that the existence of the spirit of revolt in people living in such miserable circumstances is more
England

inspiriting to us than any material gains they obtained. The *Morning Post* of September 15, 1911, said:—

"South London is the very centre of trades that exist, and probably can only exist, on low-paid women labour. For girls under eighteen wages as low as 6s. to 8s. a week are paid, while even girls over eighteen and married women can be at times found working for 9s. or 10s. This is not for short or intermittent hours, but for the steady five hours' stretch twice a day that is the limit allowed by law. Many live at home and thus get along, but some have to fight for their living unaided. One girl, looking after three machines in a tin factory, where the foreman so frightens her with sudden outbursts that she loses control and gets cut, has to pay 7s. for board and lodging. As she only earns 9s., she cannot leave and look for another job without being thrown on the street."

There were 22 strikes in these South London factories, in 18 of which increased wages were gained.

It is not disputable that wages are lower than public opinion (which has no clear theory of what wages ought to be) will support. Thus the *Times* of November 29, 1911, says: "So far as the lower grades [of the railways] are con-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

cerned, the situation may be summed up in a remark which was made to me at Cardiff: 'If a railwayman had no children to work for him, he can only live decently by taking in a lodger, the lodger being often, no doubt, a young unmarried fellow-worker.'” In country districts the late turn on the railway involves sixteen hours’ work; it is true that during part of the time the porter is on duty at a level crossing without much to do, but he has to be on duty. At every change, from the late to the early turn, he gets a short sleep, say from one till six in the morning, before resuming work. The wages for his work were, before the strike, 16s. a week. The alternate or early turn means work from six to six. Such conditions must be killing. These observations are intended to show that Syndicalism and theory are not of great importance in causing strikes as compared with the irritating effects of daily hardships.

Industrial changes have played their part. That machinery causes unskilled work to replace skilled, and that means that irregular employment replaces constant employment; that the recurrent anguish of unemployment afflicts an ever larger class; that businesses get ever larger and personal relationships are replaced by rules and officials; that wages have not risen with
prices; these are all generally admitted causes of growing dissatisfaction.

"Of what does the intelligent workman speak?" says W. C. Anderson, in an article on "The Significance of the Labour Unrest," in the Socialist Review for October, 1911: "He complains of the difficulty of keeping a home together on 20s. a week. He speaks of the excessive hours and speeding-up which makes overdrafts on his physical strength. He speaks of the increasing precariousness of his employment, of his increasing liability to be out of work. He speaks of little tyrannies, petty, and pin-pricking in themselves, yet none the less irritating, and entirely indicative of the complete divorce between capital and labour."

Further, it is almost universally admitted that to be ignorant is to be satisfied, and that the man who thinks may be a man who "thinks too much: such men are dangerous." Our society is not too stable, and even the power to read—

"The power to read, which is practically all that education means in England, operates as a solvent of every established custom. It strikes off the shackles that have limited the imagination of previous generations, and gives to the child of the humblest labourer a widening horizon. The slowest wits are constrained to note the disparity
Syndicalism and the General Strike

between's life's possibility and fulfilment. While education has not advanced far enough to supply to the great majority of the workers any new and attainable satisfaction, it has quickened the intelligence sufficiently to breed discontent with the monotonous routine of alternating toil and rest which satisfied their fathers." ¹

Such, then, are what I may term the general causes of discontent.

But is the paid agitator entirely a figment of the imagination?

Probably the Right Hon. John Burns, M.P., organiser of the unemployed and of the dock strikers, was more like the popular idea of an agitator than any English "labour leader" has ever been. He was not a trade union official: he lived on the wage-fund subscribed by local Battersea admirers of his work of agitation for his sustenance while acting as a London County Councillor. Attached to various socialist societies are one or two paid officials who are always willing to help in organising any men who are at all willing to start a trade union; but these officials, by temperament, by the fact that they have been, or wish to be, parliamentary candidates, are opposed to all unconstitutional and disorderly methods, and not likely to advo-

¹ The Morning Post, September 13, 1911.
England

cate striking in any but exceptional circumstances.

Tom Mann is at present an unattached speaker, who will speak for any audience that will pay his fee. He is opposed to all disorder, which he considers detrimental to success, and advocates the federation of the existing unions into large bodies representing the national industries. He naturally only meets a comparatively small number of the workers of the country, and there is no real ground to suppose that the audiences he has addressed have been the great sources of the determination to strike.

In short, this chapter might read thus:—

There are practically only one or two Syndicalists in England, but discontent with the degree of success obtained through the Parliamentary Labour party has led to a general return to trade unionism and strikes as a means of fighting the employers.

Judged by its actions, the Labour party is a Liberal party. It practically came into effective being because the "pure" trade unionist felt that the law attacked him through the Taff Vale decision, and because the Independent Labour party, a socialist body, worked hard at electioneering for it. The belief that at least one member of the party bargains with the Liberal Government with
Syndicalism and the General Strike

a view to his personal advantage; the moderation of its words in Parliament as compared with its words on the platform; the incapacity of many members of it who are only dolls in the hands of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald; the acceptance by certain of its members of paid posts given to them by the liberals; and its love of puritanism, have all helped to cause a feeling of disappointment and disillusionment in many who once trusted and believed in it.

The way in which Mr. Lloyd George appeared to deceive the railway workers after the strike of the summer of 1911 destroyed the last shred of belief in politicians' truthfulness which yet remained in the minds of others.

These considerations help us to understand why a reaction from efforts to gain advantage by canvassing, voting, and sending up resolutions towards efforts to gain by trade unionism and strikes has recently taken place.

The English and American Syndicalist movements are a little less aggressive and less fully provided with a complete system of thought than those of Latin countries, in that while they lay stress on the importance of industrial organisation, by entire industries, instead of by sectional trades, and on the direct action exerted by these unions rather than on the pressure they can bring
England

to bear on Parliament, they are not quite distinctly in favour of the abolition of Parliament. Thus Tom Mann has said that Syndicalists "are neither pro nor anti-political," and that Syndicalism "means a combining together . . . to unify the whole of the industrial forces to work out their salvation with a minimum of parliamentary action through a plutocratic House and with a maximum of direct organisation, using their power as workers industrially organised, to achieve their economic emancipation." 1

Tom Mann has issued a considerable number of pamphlets called by the general title of "The Industrial Syndicalist." In the first of these, "The Industrial Syndicalist," vol. i., No. 1, "Prepare for Action," is a passage on the general situation as seen by him:—

"The present situation is unique in the history of the world. Never before has there been so extensive a movement, which, surmounting the barrier of nationality, is consciously striving forward to the next stage in the evolution of mankind, where competition will have to give way to co-operation as surely as primitive society had to give way to civilisation."

He then proceeds to give a general descrip-

1 Tom Mann, "The Industrial Syndicalist," vol. i., No. 6, p. 43, and vol. i., No. 7, p. 19.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

tion of the nature of society as seen by a socialist:—

"Most of us have all along been ready and willing to take our share of work in any direction making for the advance of our ideal, viz., the abolition of poverty by the abolition of capitalism (not, as some of our intelligent critics say, by the abolition of capital)."

He goes on to express the disappointment felt with the results gained by parliamentarianism and the taming effect of Parliament on those who get into it:—

"I shall not here attempt to juggle with the quibble of 'Revolution or Evolution,' or to meet the contention of some of those under consideration that it is not revolution that is wanted. 'You cannot change the world and yet not change the world.' Revolution is the means of, not the alternative to, Evolution."

The weakness of trade unionism "is to be found simply, if not solely, in the sectional character of the eleven hundred unions of the United Kingdom—in the complete absence of the true spirit of working-class solidarity and, therefore, in the inability of the unionists to utilise the machinery at their disposal for scientifically conducting the class-war. That is to say, for obtaining anything worth getting towards mitigating the poverty of the workers."
England

"In the case of the engineering and shipbuilding industry, the action of the masters is aimed to cover, and succeeds in covering, the whole of those workers in the establishments owned by them, no matter how many trades there may be. It is the entire shipbuilding industry they are after, and so they take care to act concertedly over the whole, and this covers some twenty different trades, organised into some twenty-four different unions. These twenty-four unions have never been able to take combined action against the capitalists. Hence this weakness!"

Dealing with the conditions for the success of the federated trade union movement, Mann says it must be revolutionary, must be "out for the abolition of the wages system and for securing to the workers the full fruits of their labour," and as regards methods must "refuse to enter into any long agreements with the masters, whether with legal or State backing, or merely voluntary."

"Let the politicians do as much as they can, and the chances are that, once there is an economic fighting force in the country, ready to back them up by action, they will actually be able to do what now would be hopeless for them to attempt to do."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

"The workers should realise that it is the men who manipulate the tools and machinery who are the possessors of the necessary power to achieve something tangible; and they will succeed just in proportion as they agree to apply concerted action."

No. 2 on the transport workers contains an account of the workers' condition. Since the strike of 1889 the number of permanently employed men in London has slightly increased, and the minimum wage is "6d. per hour instead of 5d.," but in other respects—the number of men in a gang engaged on the work, the pace of working, the minimum length of employment (two hours instead of the four gained immediately after the strike)—"the conditions of the pre-strike days obtain at present." The improvements of machinery and consequent increase of employment is explained: for example, it is explained how "in the discharge of bags of flour from a ship's hold, formerly there would be nine men in a gang in the hold, four men on each side of the boat and one man to hook on the sling. Now the pace is set so keenly that there are only three men on each side, that is, seven men instead of nine, to do the same work. This is when working under the crane. When working under the winch, less powerful than the
crane, formerly they had six men in a gang, now only four, but there is the same amount of work to be done.” These improvements all mean “fewer men, less wages, more unemployed, and larger profits for the capitalists.”

With regard to the strike, he says:—

“There is a disposition on all hands to talk of the barbarous methods of the strike; as though anything was ever worse since the world began than the dying by inches, every week until death takes them, of thousands of the ill-fed in London! Under barbarism, nothing so vile, so foreign to refined feeling, so utterly hateful, ever existed; and what is more, under barbarism when anything approximating to such a condition of things showed itself, the more primitive barbarians exhibited a healthy spirit of revolt, and made short work of the oppressors.”

A warning against long agreements with the masters and promises to give notice if an increase of wages is to be asked for is contained in No. 3:—

“The capitalists, being so politely and considerately warned beforehand, are able to stock goods in such quantities that by the time the notice of the operatives expires they can defy them to do their worst.”

Tom Mann lays great stress on the differences
Syndicalism and the General Strike

between the wages of different working-men and
the need for working for the men classed as un-
skilled. Thus in No. 4, "All Hail, Solidarity!" he says:—

"The first work of the skilled workers, even in their own interest, ought to be, to force the bringing about of a substantial raise of the wage standard of the unskilled, and by this means they will have destroyed the strongest weapon of the employers.

"The wages received by millions of men in this country do not exceed 30s. a week, but there is an enormous number who do not get £1 a week; there are scores of thousands of labourers receiving not more than 16s. a week, and many less than that. We must encourage these men to demand a decent wage, and we must help them to get it. Less than 30s. a week cannot be considered a decent wage for a labourer, even as things are, and we of the Syndicalist movement must help them to get it. This must be a minimum demand, and we must organise forthwith to obtain it."

In No. 7, the report of a debate with Frank Rose, we read:—

"The vast majority of those who are not organised are the unskilled, or so-classed unskilled. They are receiving in some cases
England

one-half, in some cases not more than one-third, and in some cases not a fourth of the amount received by their fellow-workers classed as skilled, in the same workshops, shipyards, and other institutions."

In No. 6 ("A Manchester Message"):

"It is a big thing we are here for: nothing less than an endeavour to revolutionise the trade unions, to make unionism, from a movement of two millions, mostly of skilled workers whose interests are regarded as different from the interests of the labourers who join them in their industry, into a movement that will take in every worker."

In another passage in No. 7, Mann says:

"It does not mean that there will be any action tolerating or approving the pulling down of the skilled man's pay. But it does mean that, with the unifying of the unions in each industry, and the taking of common action embracing all labourers, the labourer shall receive the first and most important attention, because he is lowest in the social scale."

Nos. 5 and 8 of the series, as well as a rarer pamphlet (which was probably written by Tom Mann, but I am not sure about it) called "The Miners' Next Step," have attracted some notice in the press because of their appeals
Syndicalism and the General Strike
to the miners, and in the case of the first
two because of their prophetic appeals for
general action and for a minimum wage demand.
The following passage from No. 5 ("Sympos-
sium on Syndicalism") appeared to the Times
(which quoted it on February 28th) to be of
special interest:—
"The time has gone by when reactionary
officials are to be allowed to impede working-
class advance; it is really a case of 'get on and
lead,' or 'get out and follow'; and the sooner
this is fully realised the better for all concerned.
"I desire to here emphasise the fact that there
is not one coal-mine in the legal possession of
the working miners, or indeed of any body of
workers in the whole of Britain; if there is, I
know not of it; yet a very large percentage of
the miners are members of the co-operative
movement, and the co-operative movement in
some districts is burdened with more capital than
can be advantageously used.
"Many of the trade unions invest their accu-
mulated funds in distinctly capitalist business
concerns, or in municipal corporation stock; surely it would be wise on the part of the workers
in the co-operative and trade unionist movements
to get complete control in various parts of the
country of a number of coal-mines, from which
196
England

their household supplies could be drawn and thus ensure supplies during a dispute.

"We ought to be able to command all necessary stores for sustenance of all the women and children in time of hostilities. To do this it would be wise of all workers identifying themselves with the co-operative movement and dealing regularly with the stores; already as co-operators, they are the owners of some of the finest flour-mills in the country, and if they had a bit more 'horse' sense we should even now get hold of ten times the number, and take steps to control the wheat supply to the mills also."

The same article in the Times quotes also the following passage from the pamphlet, and I fear many readers of the Times did not feel its picturesqueness and humour:—

"The coal industry, being a monopoly, gets a higher rate of profit than the average profit obtained by average capital. If we therefore transfer a certain portion of those profits into wages—from the employers' pocket into our own—we shall be doing ourselves a good turn, and at the same time leave the mining industry quite as good an investment as the average. Is that clear? And remember the consumer will not pay any more than he pays to-day, unless the market rises in the ordinary way. What is wrong in these arguments, Mr. Miner?"
Syndicalism and the General Strike

“The goose will still continue to lay golden eggs, the demand for coal will, as we have shown, not be affected by the operation of the **minimum**, but the eggs which the employers take will be smaller in number and less in size than before. Those which the miners take will have increased. But since the tiger will fight as fiercely for the tip of his whiskers as for his whole carcass, we have now to discover what power we have to bring about this ‘consummation most devoutly to be wished.’ . . . Coal is an economic necessity. On it all modern production rests. A few weeks’ stoppage, with coal mounting to famine prices, would paralyse industry in such a way that there would never again be the slightest doubt of the despised miner’s power.”

This part of the pamphlet is written by W. F. Hay and Noah Ablett. They certainly prove that there is some literary ability in coal-mines.

They develop an argument, with part of which all newspaper readers are now familiar.

In coal-mining, “the same labour, skill, energy, and strength in places not a hundred yards apart will produce tremendously different results.”¹ Mining being paid by piece-wages, calculated on the weight of coal brought to the

surface, the price-lists and their allowances for workers in "abnormal places," which are abnormally bad places, give rise to great difficulties. Badness is due to quality of the coal, the state of the roads, and other factors, usually more or less taken into account by the employers, although ventilation and heat of the mine at the place in question, which affect the miner's power of working, are not considered.

Tom Mann is by nature exactly suited for doing propaganda among unskilled workers. To understand his influence—and Tom Mann is Syndicalism in England—it is necessary to hear him speak. He has two voices—a loud take-it-or-leave-it voice, which he mainly uses, and a low, smooth voice, in which he delivers satirical passages descriptive of the respectable trade union official and the mistakenly conciliatory tactician. He is full of energy, and runs about the platform.

"My own personal experiences," he said, when I heard him at the Latchmere Baths, Battersea, on January 14, 1912, "teach me to have no longer confidence in parliamentary action. The working of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts which I have seen in Australia, where labour men and socialists have power, have taught me how little parliaments can do.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Only where workers themselves undertake to decide what their conditions shall be are conditions tolerable.” He went on to speak of the wages of miners at Ballarat, a gold-mining town seventy miles from Melbourne, where the standard rate is 7s. 6d. a day for eight hours for a qualified miner, but where many cannot get employ at day rates. At the less profitable mines men contract to develop the mine without wages, but taking a percentage of the output. Usually a group of four work together—often they strike no metal for three months; they have to find their own picks and utensils, and in the end they get an average of 12s. or 18s. a week. Fifty per cent. of the men are on these tributing wages. “They belong to unions, but the unions have easy-going officials who do not understand the necessity for fighting and for complete unity. These men are living on their own children to a large extent—they are compelled to do so. You may say, But are the members of Parliament there able men? The parliamentarians are singularly smart. They find that they have not the power to make a change.” He continued to speak of farmers’ conditions, and of the impossibility of finding land in some states on reasonable conditions, and that at the very time when the Government was saying in
England

England that there was lots of room for men to go out to. Then he spoke of the Queensland sugar industry, where until this year twelve hours' work was done in one shift, with no stoppage for meals, and the wages consisted of 22s. 6d. a week and rough housing. Work was done like this for five months in the year, and then 95 per cent. of the men were discharged, and they tramped away and got one week in four of work afterwards. This district had returned a labour man since 1893, and his activities had made no difference. This last year a change has taken place—the hours have been reduced to eight, and a minimum wage of 25s. has been gained. "Parliament is alien to working-class interests. Too often the leaders of working-class movements have encouraged them to trust in that all-powerful, dignified institution, the mother of parliaments, the House of Commons. I do not deny that honest and self-sacrificing men have worked hard to get working-class representation in Parliament, but these honest men have been barking up the wrong tree. We have worked twenty-five years to get our man returned to Parliament; then he has sat there five years waiting to catch the Speaker's eye. At last he has caught it and made a speech, and then people came round and slapped him on the back,
Syndicalism and the General Strike

and said, 'That was an excellent speech!' 'What a real good speech that was!' and there the matter has ended.' He spoke for an hour and a half, and then answered questions. He was of opinion, he said, in answer to one of them, that a central government might be necessary as a Local Government Board, and also to look after foreign affairs; but he was chiefly interested in economic matters, and in them Government had no power: trade unionism had done for the workers what Parliament could not do.

When asked whether he believed in each trade taking over and managing its own affairs by means of its own union, he said he believed in each union controlling the conditions of its own trade and distributing the products in conjunction with all the other trades. He therefore combined to a certain extent what I have suggested calling the French and the Italian forms of Syndicalism.

Tom Mann, like other propagandists, has advocated more than one line of action. But he has always been on the same side, and, after all, any one who wishes to persuade must suit himself to times and persons.

An exceedingly clever (as it seems to me) article which appeared in the Syndicalist for
England

January, 1912, led to the printers and editor, Benjamin and Charles Buck and Guy Bowman, being prosecuted for "endeavouring to seduce persons serving in the Forces of his Majesty the King by land or sea from their duty and allegiance to his Majesty, and of inciting" them to "traitorous and mutinous practices." The original defendants were found guilty, and, as is now well known, Tom Mann has since declared himself responsible for the same publication and has been found guilty and sentenced. I can quote part of the "Open letter to soldiers," omitting the incitement to mutiny:—

"Men! Comrades! Brothers!
You are in the army.
So are We. You in the Army of Destruction, We, in the Industrial, or army of Construction. . . .

YOU ARE WORKING MEN'S SONS.

When We go on Strike to better Our lot, which is the lot also of YOUR FATHERS, MOTHERS, BROTHERS, and SISTERS, YOU are called upon by your officers to MURDER Us. . . .

We stand out as long as we can. Then one of our (and yours) irresponsible Brothers, goaded by the sight and thought of his and his loved ones' misery and hunger, commits a crime on property. Immediately You are ordered to MURDER Us as You did at Mitchellstown, at Featherstone, at Belfast.

Don't You know, that when You are out of the colours and become a 'Civy' again, that You, like Us, may be on Strike, and You, like Us, be liable to be MURDERED by other soldiers? . . .

'Thou Shalt not Kill' says the Book. . . .
It does not say 'unless you have a uniform on. . . .'

YOU, like Us, are of the SLAVE CLASS."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

At Ilkeston in Yorkshire, and at Harlesden in London, men have been charged with similar offences. The Harlesden defendant, a railway-man named Crowsley, who distributed leaflets to soldiers at Aldershot containing a reprint of the "Open Letter," said in his own defence at the police-court:

"I am not guilty of any crime. Had I been guilty, my conscience would tell me so. The law you say I have broken was made over one hundred years ago, when the middle and working classes had no voice in making the law. It was made by a class who live on the labour of another class. But if passed yesterday, I would still tell you that there is a higher law which says, 'Thou shalt not commit murder.' I have simply made an earnest appeal to the honour of soldiers not to shoot their brothers who are fighting for the right to live. If that is breaking your law, so much the worse for your unjust law. You say my action was undermining society. If the society will not stand the attacks of truth, does not that prove the rottenness of your society, and sooner a more just state exists the better? Your prison missionary called me a traitor for calling attention to the creed he preaches. You and he are entitled to your opinions, and I to mine. But you are traitors to your creed. You say with
England

your mouth, 'Love one another.' In your heart you say, 'Shoot, and shoot straight!' Why are you prosecuting me for distributing leaflets which preach what Tolstoy preached all his life in Russia undisturbed? You may send me to prison; I shall not be the first or last to go there unjustly. But you will have to send many more before you can hope to suppress the truth. And you will stand condemned for ever before the eyes of all truth and freedom-loving people. I know and believe every word on the leaflets to be true. Why are you so afraid of the truth?"

In the Ilkeston case, three men—Mayfield, a furniture dealer, Morley, landlord of a public-house, and King, a tailor and outfitter—are alleged to be responsible for the publication of a paper called \textit{Dawn}, which appears in Ilkeston, Yorkshire,\footnote{Published by T. Mayfield, 22, Colmanhay Road, Ilkeston.} in the February number of which appeared the article "Revolution," on which the charge against them is based. "Friction is bound to be caused by these extra police," it declares. "They are usually men who would do anything for about 3s. per day. They are the stuff blacklegs are made out of, and to shoot a few of these off would be doing the nation a great service. . . . If blood has to be shed, I
Syndicalism and the General Strike
do not see why it should always be the worker's blood. . . .

"The master class have got everything in their own hands; they manipulate the political machinery. They are backed up by police and soldiers, by press and pulpit. Even the trade union leaders are soft-soldered by them. Where is the workers' chance? . . . The workers are beginning to revolt; in every industry there is a seething mass of discontent. In some places they are kicking out the old fossilised leaders and taking on young enthusiastic men."

Tom Mann had much to do with the very well-managed strike last summer of men connected with the Liverpool Docks, and became editor of the Liverpool *Transport Worker*. This monthly paper deals with definite grievances in various trades and with points of trade union policy; it advocates trade unionism and concerted action on the part of the unions, and warns the workers against the Labour party, and a policy of nationalisation and municipalisation. In turning over the pages of the numbers issued up to the present, I find every number contains what appear to be carefully written articles dealing with the conditions of work of different classes of workers. These articles appear to me to make it a very valuable paper. Thus the first number
England

(August, 1911) has an article on cotton-workers, which deals with the "book-man" who checks, takes the weight of, and examines the cotton received.

"The book-man only receives the same rate of wages as his labourer, as he is pleased to term him; that it to say, 4s. 6d. per day. In most of the warehouses the book-man takes his books home with him, and the following morning he has to claim first turn; consequently that means that he had to get out of his bed an hour or so earlier, for which he receives nothing; but there are others on that game besides him, and they cannot all claim first turn, so they who do not get first turn will possibly get first 'sacked.' His time, according to custom, should be for knocking-off at 5.30 p.m. from the exchange, instead of which it is usually 7.30 p.m., for which he receives no overtime. He often has only half an hour or twenty minutes to eat his twopennyworth of hot-pot, and has to tramp miles and climb narrow iron stairs and face all kinds of weather. His mate, the putter-out, has to go into dark jigger lofts in which machinery is in motion, and often meets with terrible accidents, when all these could be prevented by fixing a skylight. If those who are so anxious for the profits were half as anxious
Syndicalism and the General Strike

for the safety of those out of whom they grind those profits, and took proper precautions, there would be fewer accidents."

The paper has taken a commendable interest in efforts to organise some of those workers who are most helpless. The barmen and barmaids of public-houses work enormous hours, especially in London. Their employers exert great political influence, and the public-house is never regulated like other shops. It is necessary for the public-houses to be open for long hours, but in the name of ordinary humanity there ought to be two shifts of workers a day in them. "Gray Quill," in this same first number, argues: "Suppose the organised dockers, carters, railwaymen, seamen and firemen, stewards, boiler-makers, and engineers were to bring pressure to bear on the managers and barmen of the dockside public-houses in which they get their midday meal, how long would it take to convince Messrs. Walker, Cain, Threlfall, Bent, Archibald Salvidge, and Parrington that their industry could not escape the general rule of industrial organisation?"

So, too, the third number (October) has an article on the National Union of Clerks; and who that sympathises with the black-coated worker, whose work has its own peculiar worries,
England

and is seldom regarded with any respect, but will be glad to see it? There are, of course, well-paid clerks; there are clerks with unearned incomes—and there are others. Usually those least in need of the money get the largest salaries.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the majority of clerks work amongst insanitary surroundings, in foul air, for cruelly long hours very often, and for abominably low pay; under conditions, in short, which are a disgrace to a community calling itself civilised.

"This being so, the question arises: 'How is this?' 'If some of our fellow-workers are in enjoyment of relatively good conditions of labour, how come we to be in this parlous state? Why is the clerk the Cinderella of the Industrial World?'

"The answer to these questions is to be found in the defenceless position of the clerk. He has hitherto neglected to take those precautions which practically all other sections of the working-class have taken, and has trusted to the good-will of his employer for those benefits which have been obtained by his fellow-workers in other branches of industry by collective effort, with the result that his conditions of labour are what they are to-day."

In No. 4, "Trade Unionism and Solidarity"
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Teaches that small, local strikes can be defeated by the masters: "The workers must understand that the only way they can succeed is to stop one union scabbing on another, and the only way they can put an end to that curse is by ORGANISING BY INDUSTRIES, Nationally and Internationally."

In the December number an article headed "Solidarity and the Medicos" explained briefly how the medical profession is acting as one man in its opposition to the Insurance Bill.

Each number of the paper contains on its cover a portrait of a trade union secretary or other labour "organiser."

Ben Tillett, a gaunt, square, deep-voiced man, with a slightly clerical manner, has spoken in favour of revolutionary trade unionism. Speaking at the Pavilion Theatre, Glasgow, on Sunday, February 11, 1912, for example, he said:—

"We are going to organise to demand the utmost possible out of capitalism, and at the same time work for the overthrow of the present system. . . . The revolutionary trade unionism, which believed in direct action, also wanted to see the different sets of workers coordinated into big federations such as those of the transport workers or miners."

Speaking of the Glasgow dock strike, Mr. 210
England

Tillett said if it had not been settled on Saturday, they would have seen the liveliest times possible in this country, because the transport workers were not only prepared to act together nationally—they would also act internationally. "There are some 50,000 to 60,000 transport workers in London, and the recent strike has shown that society cannot do without them. A week before the strike a Cabinet Minister pleaded with me in a tearful voice to prevent the strike. Of course, this pleading was unheeded until the men got what they wanted."

Before leaving England, I may refer to a pamphlet which attracted an attention out of proportion to its importance and circulation during the coal strike—"The Miners' Next Step; being a Suggested Scheme for the Reorganisation of the Federation, issued by the Unofficial Reform Committee." The Miners' Federation appointed an official committee, which reported in 1911, to consider improvements in its methods. In South Wales an unofficial committee, discontented with the reforms officially recommended, then sat and issued a report. In this they declare that conciliation has not kept up wages: that it is ineffective owing to its extreme slowness: that

1 Derived from the report in Forwards (Glasgow) of February 17, 1912.

211
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the employer’s outlook is alone considered on conciliation boards—he asserts that the colliery won’t pay, and “we don’t audit their books”—a little colliery with out-of-date methods governs the whole district, because it would not pay if the men’s position were improved: and the leaders have too much power in conciliation. The advantages and disadvantages of being led are then considered, and the disadvantages are declared preponderant. The establishment of one organisation to cover the whole mining and quarrying industry of Great Britain, with one central Executive, is recommended; this is to demand a minimum wage of 8s. a day, and a day of seven hours; the organisation is to have a political programme—and this shows that the pamphlet is not markedly Syndicalist.

After giving certain details concerning the proposed organisation of the new union, in which the leaders are to be led, there follows the extensively quoted paragraph on “The Use of the Irritation Strike.”

“Pending the publication of a pamphlet, which will deal in a comprehensive and orderly way with different methods and ways of striking, the following brief explanation must suffice. The ‘irritation strike’ depends for its successful adoption on the men holding clearly the point
of view that their interests and the employer's are necessarily hostile. Further, that the employer is vulnerable only in one place, his profits! Therefore, if the men wish to bring effective pressure to bear, they must use methods which tend to reduce profits. One way of doing this is to decrease production, while continuing at work. Quite a number of instances where this method has been successfully adopted in South Wales could be adduced."

The pamphlet goes on to recommend "unifying the men by unifying their demands," so that at the end of a strike all the strikers gain some advantage. Finally, it defines the ultimate object, which is not nationalisation of the mines, which only leads a government to use its whole force "to see that the industry is run in such a way as to pay the interest on the bonds, with which the coal-owners are paid out," but to get rid of employers, and enable the miners to decide by vote "who shall be your foreman, manager, inspector, &c."; "on that vote will depend in a large measure your safety of life and limb, of your freedom from oppression, by petty bosses," and he who works in the mine would "surely be as competent to elect these as shareholders who may never have seen a colliery."

"Our objective begins to take shape before
your eyes. Every industry thoroughly organised, in the first place, to fight, to gain control of, and then to administer, that industry. The coordination of all industries on a Central Production Board, who with a statistical department to ascertain the needs of the people, will issue its demands on the different departments of industry, leaving to the men themselves to determine under what conditions and how the work should be done. This would mean real democracy in real life, making for real manhood and real womanhood. Any other form of democracy is a delusion and a snare.”

A Syndicalist ideal of an exceedingly centralised type—too centralised, probably, to be realisable.
THE GENERAL STRIKE
CHAPTER VII

THE GENERAL STRIKE

It is a sad fact that the arrangements of society are all based on force: if then the employer differs from his hands with regard to the just price to pay for their services, his final argument is, "If you do not like it, you can starve," and that is an appeal to coercive force: if the wage-earners in sufficient numbers are determined to oppose his decision, they can only take his advice and perhaps succeed in cutting off his profits, damaging his materials by non-use, or destroying his reputation for reliability with his customers, until he submits: force in all cases decides.

A logical extension of the local strike leads to the "general strike," which, in its extremest form, is a strike of all the workers in the world, in order to expropriate all the owners of land and capital, and accomplish a world revolution. This is to be brought about by the spread of the strike-spirit—from small beginnings unfore-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

seen conclusions may come, and the most improbable dogs may have their days.

Obviously, if miners, transport-workers (that is, railway, dock, cartage, and tram employees), textile-workers, and building-trade workers (to select a few trades), all stopped work, it might be near enough to a total strike for all practical purposes, and the phrase "general strike" is not applied with any much stricter meaning than that of a very large strike.

There is a long history behind the idea of the general strike, which was discussed by the Internationale in 1868 (I do not say the idea is not even older than that), and in 1869 the Brussels journal Internationale referred to it and said that if it took place "it could only end in a great cataclysm which would cause a new skin to be placed on society"—a curious prevision of the words of Mr. Bateson, who recently at Oxford said society was suffering from histolysis or change of tissues, and no one with any power of sympathy (I have not got his exact words, but it came to that) could feel otherwise than glad. The Chartists proposed to make use of a strike of a month's duration.

During 1904 the paper, the Mouvement Socialiste, collected a great number of opinions from socialists in all countries on the general
The General Strike

strike, which has been reprinted in a volume edited by Lagardelle under the title of “La Grève Générale et le Socialisme: enquête internationale”: it is from this that the material used in this chapter is mainly derived.

I may at once say that most socialists are opposed to the general strike.

The advantage of the general strike has been declared to be that “it is a revolution which commences in legal action, with legality,” and that it is so general that the mobilisation of an army of suppression would be difficult if not impossible.”

“If you believe in the necessity for maintaining what has been called the catastrophic conception—the feeling, that is, that the world will only be born again by a complete regeneration, a complete rupture of the present social structure; if you are persuaded that the idea of the social revolution is the necessary symbol which must guard in the heart of the workers the sense of the abyss which separates the classes, and of the gap which exists between capitalist society and socialist society; then you must recognise that nothing but the idea of the general

1 Briand at Socialist Congress at Paris, 1899. In 1910, as Prime Minister, he defeated the French railway strike. His life must be a good illustration of the irony of heaven.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

strike (by placing the fate of the workers in their own hands, and causing them to expect their triumph only from their own energy) is capable of creating and developing these revolutionary ideas." So writes Lagardelle in defence of the general strike.¹

The most important part of a general strike, however, would be a strike of soldiers and police. If this took place while many great trades were arrested, a revolution might actually be near at hand.

"What barricades and refusal of taxes have been to the bourgeois, the general strike is for the working-class. It is the ultima ratio which enters the scene after all other means have been exhausted," says Hillferding.

It is usually conceived that the shooting of unarmed strikers, innocent of any crime, is likely to be, at some time or other, a great cause of an extension of a small strike into a very large one: the mere presence of crowds in the streets has on many occasions been a means of spreading an idea: sabotage can do much to keep mainsprings of industry idle—short-circuits in dynamos are easily made.² Military engineers would

¹ "Conclusion" of "La Grève générale et le Socialisme."
² Pataud and Pouget, "Comment nous ferons la Révolution."
The General Strike

no doubt as far as possible take the place of strikers.

A complete disorganisation of the means of communication (the letter-post and telegraph) would probably produce a greater psychological effect (as apart from directly material inconvenience) than any other single failure in the routine of society.

Society, although based on force, is largely carried on by means of the knowledge that force can be exerted. In a general uprising, in which the masses were all concerned, it might be a physical impossibility to protect bakers' shops: it might be impossible while a world revolt was in progress to scatter the soldiers and police outside all the bakers. The real success of a general strike must depend on its generality: if a vast majority of the workers of a country ever voluntarily struck, it is no doubt true that the entire system of present-day society would be at its end. What, however, must usually happen in great strikes, is that some men are thrown out of work "without in the least sympathising with the strike or its purposes. They will be the shopkeepers, the business men, and great sections of the working-classes. As the strike proceeds and the price of food reaches famine levels, and its scarcity becomes chronic,
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the ranks of the malcontents will be increased."  

The point is obvious: you cannot get in actual fact a division of society with all the workers on one side.

By many, the idea of the general strike will be quickly dismissed as a wild fancy, a horror of the night, to which it is not necessary to devote serious day thoughts. It may, however, be thought that although the general strike is exceedingly unlikely to take place, in days of growing discontent, the possible methods by which a strike might really paralyse society are worth considering.

If we imagine that all the clerks—of course, I know it is impossible, and no class of wage-earners is so loyal to its employers, but as we are here considering some theories which are highly theoretic, let us just build this castle in the air—if all the clerks struck work: ours is a civilisation built on ledgers, and just imagine—if the money in the rich man's purse was all the money he could get because there were no cashiers at the bank—if the railway porters were blacklegging the ticket clerks' jobs (as it is said the ticket clerks have blacklegged the porters) and there were a string of people out into the street

1 J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., in the Socialist Review for October, 1911.
The General Strike

because the porters were slow in counting change—if, for want of shipping clerks, no one knew how to send goods from Antwerp to Pernambuco—if the builders and decorators spent hours in puzzling over the real cost of jobs in order to send in estimates to customers, and partners in financial houses, absolutely unaware what bills were due for payment or who was to do what in the multitudinous subsidiary wheels of the details of their business, simply raved uselessly and idly around—in a week no one would know whether he was bankrupt or had multiplied his fortune. Now let us imagine that there was simultaneously a strike of transport workers—workers on railways, trams, ships, omnibuses, tubes, cabs, and public conveyances of every kind—while the clerks had stopped all the book-keeping, letter-writing, insurance, and record-keeping business of the country, and that no one could get to business except by walking—unless, perhaps, we suppose that private coachmen and chauffeurs remained at work and so enabled a small body of the richest class together with their special friends to get to and from their offices and factories; but without clerks and probably messengers, and with all their staff arriving or not arriving at different hours, and no means of moving goods, what could they do?—to say
nothing of the disorganisation of home life—the rise in cost of food, injury to health, want of news owing to non-delivery of papers, and so on—which would follow. If to these two strikes—the clerks and the transport workers—a third, that of the coal-miners, be added, it will, without explanation, be seen how fearful would be the position of society, if the wage-earners ever became even approximately able all to strike work together.

The vast majority of socialist leaders are opposed to the general strike.

Hyndman declares the general strike "is a kind of sentimental attempt to hasten arbitrarily the development of humanity." Quelch holds that if the workers were sufficiently organised, determined, and disciplined all to stop work on one day, "they would be masters of the situation," and there would be no need for a general strike. Keir Hardie would only countenance a general strike if its success were practically certain, and would therefore require as preliminary conditions that most of the workers were in their trade unions; that the strike from the start was international; and that its purpose was thoroughly understood.¹

¹ Lagardelle, op. cit. The statements given are in French translations which I translated back into English.
The General Strike

Jaurès says, "It deceives the working-class," because he argues that while it would begin by promising to redress specific grievances of wages and hours, it looks forward to such misery as will lead to a diffused disorder all over the country and seizure of property. It proposes to use a strike as a means for producing a surprise revolution. Jaurès thinks it anti-revolutionary in that it would, if successful, break national life into fragments instead of exalting it by the feeling of a vast unity. Van Kol declares it to be "an anarchist Utopia"; if it were possible because of the strong organisation of the working-class and their unshakable discipline, better means would also be at their disposal. The poor would suffer first from the famine caused by it. Kautsky says that in a real general strike, as every employer would be equally hit, the main weapon of the striker, the fear of losing trade to competitors, would be non-existent. Like many others, he approves of the political strike intended to obtain definite concessions from a government, but not of a general economic strike; the political strike tends to destroy a government by a direct disorganisation of the country governed: it is a contest between the cohesive force of the strikers on the one side and of the government on the
Syndicalism and the General Strike

other. The more foolish and feeble the government, the better the occasion for striking: also the more unforeseen and spontaneous the strike the greater is its effect.

But the Syndicalist's ideal is precisely the general economic strike.

Cohesion, solidarity, the power to suffer and work together for the common good, is the greatest of strikers' virtues, and blacklegism is the greatest of sins; therefore, refusal to join unions, to take part in the common effort for the benefit of the whole of your trade or class, is the greatest of sins. Hence the presence of non-union labour may in itself lead to a strike. The blackleg is willing to accept increased wages and diminished hours, but not to help gain them by his own weekly pence; at critical times of danger he takes the high pay of a spy and traitor.

In so far as men unite, and twenty-five shillings a week does not look down on eighteen, the chances of success increase, and the general strike becomes more possible.
CHAPTER VIII

OTHER COUNTRIES

My purpose in this chapter is to tell you something about the countries about which I know very little, and if I make mistakes, they are not to be thought to indicate my standard of accuracy throughout the book.

If there is any Syndicalism in Spain (or if any develops there), it is not developing as it did in France. Syndicalism is an attempt to construct a new society by means of a trade union, which, in addition to resisting the masters, is to develop the men and make them really capable of being independent of all other classes—by trade union action alone are they to be able to alter society, and so State action is disliked. Antipathy for the State and desire for a new communist society have long been felt by the Spanish anarchists, as they are felt by the French Syndicalists; and when, in January, 1908, the anarchists, following Malatesta, agreed to join trade unions and a new federation, the "Solidari-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

dad obrera” was formed at Barcelona it was necessarily Syndicalist in nature; it contained 103 trade unions and 24,000 members. Roughly speaking, it may be said that in France the trade unions have, to some extent, been induced to give up political action; in Spain, the anarchists, who by their principles never were politicians, have been induced to join trade unions. (I may say that all statistics relating to Spain are open to doubt, as the records are unsatisfactory.)

In 1909 the General Union of Syndicates (Trabajadores) contained 43,478 members in 301 sections. The unions are mostly small, scattered, and independent. Strikes are very common, and usually, I think, the masters win. In many trades there are masters’ federations. Strikes frequently end in a general being sent to besiege the town.

The Socialist party, “El Partido Socialista obrera,” is small; it has no representative in the Cortes, but 71 councillors on local bodies. At the Stuttgart Conference of 1907, it was said to contain 6,000 members. A large proportion of these are miners in the mines of Asturias. “We are not unaccustomed,” says Havelock Ellis in his book, “The Soul of Spain”—“we are not unaccustomed to find a veneer of humanity and courtesy ever an underlying violence and hard-
Other Countries

ness, but in this [the Spanish] temperament, it is the violence and hardness which lie nearer to the surface, and they fall away at once as soon as human relationships are established.

"This tendency of the Spanish peasant, together with his liking for abstract laws which can be modified in concrete cases, his individualism, his love of independence, and his clannish preference for small social groups, may help to explain why it is that Spaniards, peasants and workmen alike, are attracted to the ideals of anarchism. There is no country in which collectivist socialism of the Marxian school has made so little progress as in Spain, and anarchism so much progress. This has been the case for at least forty years. . . . It flourishes in Catalonia, where it actively foments and supports the frequent strikes in Barcelona; it finds a stronghold in Andalusia, where the contrasts of wealth and poverty are very marked; while all the intervening Mediterranean coasts, especially Valencia, an important industrial region, are affected by its influence. The more northern parts of the country also show similar developments, but in a less degree, and the Atlantic coast is not so favourable to anarchism as the Mediterranean; in Bilbao, the second great industrial centre of Spain, the Labour party has
Syndicalism and the General Strike

frequently been hostile to anarchism, but in most parts of Spain the ideals of labour are largely the ideals of anarchism."

It is significant that some revolutionary Syndicalist French pamphlets have been translated into Spanish—a pamphlet on "The General Strike," for instance, and Pouget's "Les Bases du Syndicalisme," and at least one of Sorel's books.

Spain is notoriously a poor country. Famine causes Andalusian risings at times, when bakers' shops are looted, the civil guard is shot at, and farms are attacked. In the iron-mines of Bilbao (which are on the sides of hills and open to the air) the miners are forced to make use of credit in order to live; the socialists say the men should be paid weekly, not monthly; but some of the men (about half, it is said) would prefer fortnightly payments, as they argue that if wages were weekly credit might be refused, and after a week with a poor yield, it might be hard to live. Barcelona, the chief manufacturing town, is a port of refuge for foreign exiled revolutionaries. Hours of labour in the factories are long, and children under ten, nominally excluded by law, are found in them, while children between ten and fourteen work over six hours, although the law forbids this also.
Other Countries

Cost of living is higher in Madrid than in Brussels or Paris. Marvaud, in his “Question sociale en Espagne,” 1 gives the following figures as representing the cost of the same food, clothes, rent, household expenditure, &c., when purchased in a year in the three towns:—

At Madrid ... ... ... 1,138.80 pesetas. 2
" Brussels ... ... ... 737.30 francs.
" Paris ... ... ... 602.25

From these and other figures he establishes the statements that wages are 15 per cent. higher in Brussels and 69 per cent. higher in Paris than in Madrid. It is significant that the death-rates for the three cities were:—

Madrid ... ... ... 27 per cent.
Paris ... ... ... 17
Brussels ... ... ... 16

Agriculture in Southern Spain is largely capitalistic—the landlord lives in Seville or Madrid, a manager, or labrador, engages and manages the labourers, or braceros, in Andalusia and Estramadura. The small proprietors are few, and growing fewer. The labourer is kept in an isolated dwelling, the cortijo,

1 Published by Felix Alcan in 1910, p. 119.
2 A peseta is 9d.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

separated from his family and from all the rest of the world, the villages being far apart. The labourers work from half-past three in the morning to half-past eight in the evening for 1 peseta, or 9d. His food consists largely of *ajo caliente* made of bad bread, bad meal, inferior oil, garlic, and salt; this he eats twice a day, varying it with *gazpacho*, which differs from it only in that it contains vinegar and is made without boiling the water; at midday he eats a soup made of very hard peas.

In Galicia the land is frequently excessively divided, the cultivator being by custom not evictable, but having to pay (often in kind) a rent to the proprietor. Poverty is very great, and burning of harvests, or destruction of plantations, not unknown in riots caused by discontent with misery.

Co-operative agricultural associations for the purchase and sale of implements and manure and of products respectively, have made some headway since the law of 1908 (amending that of 1906) encouraged their formation.

Strikes are not illegal in Spain, but a law passed in 1909 makes it illegal to exercise any constraint over individuals to cause them to remain members of an association which forms or supports a strike. Leaders and founders of
Other Countries

strikes can be punished, even though the strike itself is legal. Strikes which affect the supply of water or light, or disturb the railways and the hospitals, must be notified to the authorities eight days before they take place: those affecting trains and the supplies of necessaries, five days before they occur.

Education is nominally compulsory since 1857, but half the population is illiterate.

An attempt at a general strike marked Portuguese discontent with the republic's indifference to working-class conditions. In the establishment of the republic every kind of political and economic discontent was exploited; but naturally, when once the middle-class republicans have obtained political power, they were not very conscious of the bread-and-butter difficulties of the working-class.

Knowing that a general strike has been attempted in Sweden (in 1909), it is natural to inquire with some interest about Swedish conditions.

With regard to Sweden, we must remember that it is largely an agricultural country and a sparsely populated country. "In 1873, 72 per cent. of the population lived by agriculture, in 1900 the figure falls to 54 per cent., while the industrial classes properly so-called pass from
Syndicalism and the General Strike

600,000 to 1,500,000 persons out of a population of five millions."

The socialist and trade unionist movements date from about 1881.

The idea of the political general strike as a means of obtaining universal suffrage was discussed in 1893 by the Folk-rigsdag, an unofficial parliament, elected on a basis of universal suffrage by the people on their own initiative, to discuss how to acquire universal suffrage. And in 1902, 120,000 men actually ceased work in order to persuade the Government to pass the desired law.¹ There was no country in Europe except Hungary at that time in which the suffrage laws disfranchised so large a proportion of the adults as they did in Sweden,² the franchise being dependent on ownership of a certain income. Plurality of votes was carried to extremes—one elector in 44 cases outweighed all the other voters in his commune.

Outside its Socialist Labour party, there is a more extreme or revolutionary "Jung Hinkarner" party (young socialist league), led by Hinke Bergegren, the organ of which is Brands Månadshäft.

¹ "L'organisation Socialiste et ouvrière," par le Secretariat Socialiste International, 1904.
² "Le Mouvement ouvrier en Suède," by Ch. Lindley, in L'humanité nouvelle for January, 1900.
Other Countries

In the spring of 1909 there were strikes in several industries; for instance, among dress-makers, road-makers, and workers in cellulose factories. State-appointed conciliators failed to quieten the "unrest." The masters, who were unwilling to concede the demands made for higher wages and for the dismissal of non-unionists, proceeded to fight the workers by lock-outs, which took place in the tailoring, wood-working, road-making, smelting, and mining industries. The "general strike" was the workers' defence against this attack: it was proposed that all trades should strike except those concerned with the care of the sick and of animals, and the provision of light, water, and sanitation. When, however, soldiers were sent to guard gasworks and electric light stations, the men refused to work under the soldiers' supervision. The railway workers and the little organised agricultural labourers declined to stop work. At its height, the strike called out 285,000 out of 460,000 wage-earners. The price of bread, however, did not rise, because the master-bakers worked, and because, in Sweden, many private families were able to bake for their own needs.

The strike broke down, as is well known, owing to the capacity of the professional and
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

"upper" classes to replace the manual workers. The large country-bred population of Sweden is favourable to such an all-round handiness as can certainly not be found among the softened, town-bred populations of England.

At the end of the strike, the victorious masters asked their men, as a condition of service, to sign an undertaking not to join any trade union. The trade union leaders held that such "an immoral slave contract," signed under compulsion, was not binding.¹

The strike, as I have suggested, was not due to Syndicalists. There were, at that time, few of them. There are not many now in Sweden. They derived their ideas from France. It is said that there never will be many Swedish Syndicalists, because the temperament of the people will never be anti-parliamentarian; but I, personally, feel that most statements about the temperament of any people are wild, unreliable generalisations. Their chief stronghold is in the Bohuslän district, north of Gothenburg, among the workers in granite and other kinds of stone, which are largely exported to Germany, Denmark, Russia, and England. They issue a newspaper, Syndikalisten, which formerly appeared weekly, but which, since January 1, 1912, has

¹ Tänzler, "Der Generalstreik in Schweden."

238
Other Countries

appeared daily. As with Syndicalists everywhere, their doctrine varies, some of them being more bitter than others against "orthodox" socialism; in general, their speakers, the more notable of whom are working-men, attack violently the trade union officials and the parliamentary socialists. They hold no yearly congresses.¹

America is a very backward country, as its wild religions, crude worship of success in money-making, and want of intellectual initiative, show. It is not, therefore, I think, of much interest to us. Industrial unionism in America is unlike the Syndicalism of other lands in its hostility to the existing craft unions and its desire to start fresh unions, uniting all the workers in one trustified concern irrespective of their trades. "We propose that the workers shall all be organised, and if there is any agreement it will embrace them all; and if there is any violation of the agreement, in the case of a single employee, it at once becomes the concern of all. That is unionism; industrial unionism, in which all of the workers, totally regardless of occupation, are united compactly within one

¹ Mr. E. B. Lloyd and Mr. Rof Steffan (Member of the Swedish Riksdag) have very kindly supplied me with the information on which this paragraph is based.

239
Syndicalism and the General Strike

organisation, so that at all times they can act together in the interests of all.” 1 In short, there is, according to industrial unionism, to be a single union for all workers—a class, not a trade union.

However, their doctrines have two points of resemblance with those of other Syndicalists. Debs puts one of these before us in this way:—

"The industrial workers declare that the workers must make themselves the masters of the tools with which they work; and so a very important function of this new union is to teach the workers, or, rather, have them teach themselves, the necessity of fitting themselves to take charge of the industries in which they are employed, when they are wrested, as they will be, from their capitalist masters."

Debs puts the second idea to which I wish to refer thus:—

"When we are lined up in battle array, and the capitalists try to lock us out, we will turn the tables on the gentlemen and lock them out." Industrial unionism favours political as well as economic action.

The principles of industrial unionism are adopted by the "Industrial Workers of the

1 "Industrial Unionism," by E. V. Debs. (Socialist Labour Party, 28, Forth Street, Edinburgh. Price 1d.)
Other Countries

World.” While admitting the need for branch unions, consisting of men belonging to the “sub-departments of a given industrial plant,” or of “working-places in the same industry” which closely adjoin one another, or of men speaking the same language, it argues that—

“The complete elimination of craft divisions in departments of big industrial plants in itself would be a great improvement in the struggle for improved conditions; but how much more effective, of course, would be an organisation that eliminates all dividing lines between one group of workers and the others, embracing all in one industrial union, combining them all for the protection of their interests.”

The preamble of the party declares that “the trade unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry.”

“Political party frauds and compromises will always operate to defeat the true mission of the working-class, industrial freedom, until the workers understand their class interests and are organised to maintain them in shop, mine, mill, factory, farm, and all departments of production and distribution,” says Edwards in his “Analysis of the Preamble of the Industrial Workers.”

1 “Handbook of Industrial Unionism,” by Trautmann.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

The problem of the method of organising the workers is one to which they devote great attention. Thus we read: "A salesman or clerk in a shoe store would be a member of the organisation, or a branch thereof, in which are organised all workers engaged in the shoe industry."

In the fourth department, "Department of Manufacture and General Production," Sub-department G., "Manufacture of Foodstuffs," Section V., we have, "All workers in hotels and restaurants and saloons, as cooks, waiters, bartenders, bakers and butchers in hotels, barbers, if employed in the hotel service, chambermaids, hotel clerks, &c., chauffeurs and cabdrivers, if they are in the hotel service exclusively." The purpose finally aimed at is the formation of "one big union for the entire working-class the world over!" ¹

The bulk of the American trade unionists are opposed to "the theory of revolutionary industrial unionism," and the Industrial Workers of the World is said to be "a byword for factionalism and ineffectiveness." ² The idea of a vast union of all workers is so stupendously Utopian as, in my opinion, to be worth no consideration.

In Denmark some signs of revolutionary

¹ Trautmann, "One Big Union."
² Skelton, "Socialism: a Critical Analysis."
Other Countries

tendencies have been seen—the agreement entered into between the masters and the leaders of the men, after the strike in which 3,000 concrete workers and navvies were involved, was repudiated by the men and long discussions over the matter were carried on in the "Dansk Arbejdsmandsforbund." Complaints were made as to over-centralisation of the unions, and want of militancy.¹ The unions in which discontent with orthodox socialism and trade unionism has manifested itself to the greatest extent are those of the concrete workers and the excavators, in which, for a time, leaders of the "new school" were elected; these, however, were unable to prevent a fall of wages, and the old leaders regained their positions.

The Syndicalist opposition has attacked the personal motives of the old leaders as much as their methods and profited by a recent period of bad trade and much unemployment in Denmark.²

In the Christiania trade unions a resolution was passed early in 1912 recommending the abolition of all existing agreements as to wages and the

² Information kindly supplied to me by Th. Stanning, Secretary of the Danish Social Democratic party.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

acceptance as chief means of fighting the capitalists of strikes, sympathetic strikes, boycotts, obstruction, sabotage, and co-operative undertakings.
OBJECTIONS TO SYNDICALISM
CHAPTER IX

OBJECTIONS TO SYNDICALISM

If we examine any existing society we shall find that it embodies more than one conception of society: this is probably peculiarly true with our own world, but must always, I think, have been more or less true. Any plan, according to which it is proposed that society is to be reconstructed, suffers on this account from the fact that it is comparatively simple and therefore open to direct and unconditional objections. Although the existing order of society is unjust, wasteful, and cruel, it may be held to preserve an intimate equality within the family, to provide marvellously well for efficiency of production, and (in spite of its wastefulness) to adjust supply to demand as well as can be done without such interference with liberty as human beings will not submit to; such arguments are, however, not really very satisfying, because they consist partly in comparing real capitalism, in which there is some collectivism and communism, with
Syndicalism and the General Strike

an ideally complete and rigid socialism, such as is in no case likely to come about. If the family is too individualistic for a socialist State, why is it not too communistic for an individualist State?

People are very fond of this way of comparing what they like with what they do not like, by either presenting the one with all its earthly imperfections on its face while the other is generalised into an ideal form, or, on the other hand, giving to the one all the charm that the light of the sun so often confers on things which in their design are utterly commonplace, while the other is seen in all the repulsiveness of a plan drawn to a given scale, without any sky over it or a living twig near it. Thus the opponents of monogamic marriage have done nothing, when they have attacked marriage as it at present really is, and shown that Mr. A. regards his wife as his property, and Mr. B. concealed his habit of getting drunk until he was married. The ideal of monogamic marriage is what they need to attack. The real polygamy and polyandry will also be open to objection.

To confront real monogamy with ideal promiscuity is unfair. To confront real capitalism with all its religious and humane ameliorations with an ideal Syndicalism and socialism is unfair.
Objections to Syndicalism

The great advantage that Syndicalism has over the step-by-step parliamentary socialism is that it really offers some idea of how a complete abolition of property could be brought about. Now, property is the whole source of evil. There is a great uncharm in ownership: as soon as a man owns a garden or hangs up a picture, it loses its attraction for him, and romance is in some place seen when passing. The difficulty of wages is abolished at a blow when property is abolished. At present income distribution is absurd; the Englishman who invests his money in Japan or the Malay States does nothing to produce the wealth that comes to him, and the existing idea of inheritance is right only if the murderer's son ought to be hanged. "There may come a time when the saying, ‘Have I not the right to do what I like with my own?’ will appear to be a barbarous relic of individualism; when the possession of a part may be a greater blessing to each and all than the possession of the whole is now to any one." ¹

As J. S. Mill said in an article in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1879:—

"The very idea of distributive justice, or any proportionality between success and merit, or between success and exertion, is, in the present

¹ Professor Jowett's Introduction to Plato's "Republic."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

state of society, so manifestly chimerical as to be relegated to the region of romance.”

That our society seems natural in spite of its injustice and unnaturalness is not hard to explain. “If it had been a thing contrary to any man’s right of dominion, or to the interest of men that have dominion, ‘that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two angles of a square,’ that doctrine should have been, if not disputed yet by the burning of all books of geometry, suppressed, as far as he whom it concerned was able,” says Hobbes, the cleverest of all conservative theorists. When to the force of interest is added the inert force of established custom, the difficulty of altering an accepted order becomes clear to us. “The laws of conscience, which we say to proceed from nature [if not from God], rise and proceed of custome: every man holding in special regard and inward veneration the opinions approved, and customes received about him. . . . And the common imaginations we finde in credit about us, and by our father’s seed infused in our souls, seem to be general and naturall.” But it is clear that the “social reform” that costs no one anything is a deception. Levelling means levelling a few down and many up, and if waste can be diminished, the total wealth of society will be
Objections to Syndicalism

increased, and when the brute struggle for necessities is gone, the general level of intelligence must rise somewhat.

Our present system is, I think it must be admitted, indefensible. But if you alter it, what are the objections to other systems? Mr. Devas, in his pamphlet on "Socialism," 1 says:

"Either all must receive alike, skilled and unskilled, physician and farm labourer, all ranks of workers in the iron, the cotton, or the building trades, to the utter discouragement of skill and intelligence; or else there must be discrimination, some receiving more, others less, with no standard to go by. A municipality now can pay according to current local wages or trade union rates; but under collectivism there would neither be trade unions nor any outside wages with which to make a comparison. And thus we should have to do the very thing we should wish to avoid, and entrust our good fortune to the arbitrary decision of Government officials. This I call wages at Bumble's discretion." Of course, payment could be made, as we found Labriola advising, according to needs.

The whole conception of establishing a rational

1 "Socialism," by C. S. Devas, M.A. (The Catholic Truth Society, 69 Southwark Bridge Road, S.E. Price 1d.—Antisocialist.)
Syndicalism and the General Strike

system of distribution may be objected to on the ground that nature, or God, as revealed in the world around us, distributes strength and cleverness very unequally, and that because we cannot in any case completely abolish or neutralise this inequality, we need not trouble about our property inequalities which are partly (but not entirely, for inheritance counteracts the natural handicaps)—I say, because we must leave men with unequal gifts, we need not trouble about their unjustly unequal incomes. But all civilisation is a struggle against nature; man, clothed, housed, sewer, and eating cooked food, and riding in a railway train, is a child of unnature; his music, his painting, his poems, try to set up a regularity of design and a purposiveness such as nature never presents; it is the artificial alone which provides the whole charm of art: we are born into such complex traditions, that what seems to us automatic and natural is often the result of long effort and violent conflict. However unjust nature is, it does not alter our idea of justice. All life is a struggle to set up unnatural conditions which please man more than untouched nature does.

The pamphlet by Mr. Devas, to which I have already referred, has an objection to both centralised and localised socialisms, on the
Objections to Syndicalism

ground of the difficulty in organising socialist production, he says:—

"Either all the productive property of Great Britain would be worked from one centre as one business, keeping work and wages uniform; and this plan would break down instantly by the pure overweight of clerk-work; or else local autonomy would be granted to parish, urban district, county or municipality; and then, though the work might possibly be within manageable proportions, there would be other difficulties. For gradually, according to local varieties of opportunity, talent and luck, inequalities of wealth would develop among the different localities, Blackburn, perhaps, be earning 25 per cent. more than Preston; and back comes the inequality that was supposed to have been banished. Nor can this be remedied by allowing labour to flow to where it was best paid. For to work the collectivist plan at all, there must be some fixity in the numbers of the hands to work and the mouths to feed. To provide employment or to cater for ever-fluctuating numbers would be impossible. The present liberty of moving about would in consequence have to be restricted. Even to migrate no further than from Manchester to Liverpool would require a special permit, and we should find
ourselves chained to the soil or to the municipal workshop. This I call something like serfdom.

"Secondly comes the difficulty of supply. Instead of a body of traders to cater for the public taste, you would have as your providers a body of officials eager to get through their work and not be bothered by individual peculiarities. There must be barrack-room uniformity if the collectivist scheme is to work, no genuine liberty of consumption, not for the men only, but even for their mothers and sisters, their wives and daughters. This I call something like despotism."

Possibly the objection to localised Syndicalist socialism here advanced comes from imagining it carried out with an impossible, ideal exactitude.

It is rather a satisfactory than a logical answer to what he says about "liberty of consumption," to say that there is no liberty of consumption today for most men and women—low wages and multiple shops have destroyed it.

But I must go on to objections more definitely directed against the Syndicalist's socialism. I shall merely look at a few disconnected examples of them.

The objections to Syndicalism advanced by Challaye may be summed up by saying that he
Objections to Syndicalism

argues that society is not composed of two directly opposed classes, because there is a middle class; that Syndicalists trust too much in the natural goodness of men when they assume that when men are made free and responsible instead of being enslaved and irresponsible tools, they will be industrious and eager; that the unjustifiable hope of a successful revolution in the near future may prevent immediate action which alone will lead to real benefits; that “only a city of angels, the city of God, could do without police and politics,” and that suppression of restraint would let loose the most unsupportable war between man and man; that capitalists and workers have both antagonistic and identical interests—identical in that they aim at producing as much as possible, antagonistic in that they aim at opposing methods of dividing the product; that distrust of elected persons, perpetual watchfulness over their actions is good, but not distrust of the whole idea of democratic government; that the workers could not in the past get even the right of combination without using the State, and that it is by the State that they must at present increase their powers.

Challaye is probably mistaken when he assumes that the Syndicalists say that the State and laws have never done anything for the workers: what
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the more moderate among them say is that action on the politicians from without is quicker than attempts to get into power yourself, seeing that parliaments (and councils) only act without endless friction when they are doing harm. "Direct action is not a dogma," says Griffelhues: "it signifies simply the will of the working-class to regulate its affairs for itself, instead of giving them over by delegation and by mandate to third persons empowered to act on its behalf. Whether it acts against the State, as representative of the masters, or against the masters themselves, it matters little, provided that the disinherited class acts for itself, educates and transforms itself."¹

Challaye objects that the State is useful in doing certain things for the working-class which do tend to alter the fundamental structure of society. Thus, he says, taxes on the rich can be used to buy up public services which will be of use to the workers—this position needs further consideration, and it may be pointed out that if interest continues to be paid on the capital employed in the State undertakings, no alteration of system has been made (and this is what has hitherto always happened), but if the profits from the service are used to acquire fresh capital, on which no interest will

¹ "Syndicalisme et Socialisme."
Objections to Syndicalism

need to be paid, the State is really wiping out surplus value, or the share of unearned wealth taken by the non-producers. Sorel would no doubt argue that death duties and free services (bread, housing, and medical attendance, for example), leave the system of production unaltered, and only change the system of exchanging some of the products: the vital principle of society is just that which it is hardest to attack.

It may be objected that amelioration of existing evils is what in essence all socialists aim at, even if, by adopting a mechanical formula, they appear to ask mainly for a system, and that, therefore, it may be indifferent whether the vital principle of our society is, or is not, killed. But, unfortunately, it is hard to see clearly that our reforms do add to the workers' personal control over more property and more liberty. Grandmotherly legislation, in which the rulers are the grandmothers and the ruled, a separate class, are the grandchildren, is in spirit the contrary of socialism.

More property—more control over the conditions of their own work, are what the working-class tends more and more to ask for.

In Sombart's opinion 1 Syndicalist criticism of

1 Werner Sombart, "Socialism and the Social Movement."
Syndicalism and the General Strike

the movements in modern society rightly emphasises the following evils:—

1. "The weakness of democracy and the dangers of demagogy."

2. The danger of the centralised State.

3. The bad influence of growth of a bureaucracy.

4. The dehumanising effect of excessive division of labour which spoils the human tool.

Further, "none of these evils (which are the cardinal evils in our social system) will ever be swept away by the socialisation of the means of production."

But Sombart holds that two reasons prevent it being possible to replace the present economic system by "self-governing groups of workers," these being:—

1. The large present population of the world.

2. The use of modern technical methods, with coal and iron and railways.

He cannot see that the manual workers are trained in trade unions for doing the whole of the initiative and planning work of production for themselves and sees in State, municipal, and co-operative undertakings something more like the beginning of a new era than he does in trade unions.

The general strike could, he thinks, be ex-
Objections to Syndicalism

pected to lead to a new order of society only by those who believe in a "natural" order of society, with a harmony of its own, only requiring to be discovered in order to be adopted; or if the workers really were ready to live in a new way, to undertake fresh and less "routinified" duties, they could probably not be prevented from seizing more power, strike or no strike.

An interesting letter by Kautsky, addressed to America, on "unlawful direct action," is worth referring to here, although it should be remembered that the more authoritative Syndicalist writers have never spoken favourably of unintelligent violence, and sabotage is condemned altogether by Sorel (to mention one Syndicalist opponent of it) as diminishing the present power of production and not conducive to the acquisition of greater power of independent production by the working-class free from all interference by capitalists and managers.

The most interesting passage in Kautsky's letter, a translation of which appeared in the Socialist Review for February, 1912, reads as follows:—

"We must not forget that private property rests not only on laws that were created by the ruling classes, but also upon an ethical sentiment
Syndicalism and the General Strike

which is a product of thousands and thousands of years of development in society, and which is alive in the toiling proletariat as well as in the peasantry and the middle class. On the contrary, the practices of the capitalist class show greater disregard for the sanctity of private property than the practices of wage-earners. The mass of wage-workers despise the thief. The capitalists bow reverently before the successful big thief.

"To preach the individual struggle against property means to turn the interest of the workers from mass action to individual action; in other words, to turn their interests from effective to the ineffective form of action. But this form of action is not only ineffective. It is in opposition to the moral ideas of the masses of the working-classes; it will repel them and injure seriously the propaganda of socialism, if this action is looked upon as a product of this propaganda.

"The individual struggle against property takes us out of the ranks of the masses of wage-earners and brings us in contact with the slum proletariat (Lumpenproletariat). The conditions of existence and struggle of this class are entirely different from those of the wage-earning class. Just as the former are indispensable to the well-being of society, so the latter, the slum pro-
Objections to Syndicalism

letariat, are useless—yes, even harmful, for they are pure parasites.

"Both carry on a struggle against existing society; both are propertyless and disinherited; both must combat the existing form of property. But the working proletariat fights openly as a mass, its weapons are solidarity and economic indispensability, its aims the changing of the laws regarding property. The slum proletariat fights individually and secretly, its weapons are lies and breach of confidence; its aim is not the changing of the property laws, but the possession of the property of others.

"Contact with the slum proletariat and acceptance of its war methods cannot but compromise and disorganise the proletarian movement. This is bound to happen all the more, because the proletarian elements, which foster such methods, invariably fall victims to provocative agents and police spies.

"The ruling classes have every reason to encourage individual action against property and life of individuals, because, through this, they can hurt the cause of the working masses. For this purpose they employ spies and inciters who hobnob with those elements that are inclined to individual action. Never yet has a ruling class employed provocative methods to advance the
Syndicalism and the General Strike

legal, open organisation of the masses. This form of organisation our enemies fear. It can jeopardise their power. Individual action by the workers, on the other hand, they do not fear, for while it may be dangerous to individuals of the ruling class, such action ultimately strengthens the ruling class and weakens the proletariat.”

To conclude this rather scrappy chapter, it will be for some time yet necessary in considering Syndicalism and other suggested cures for the evils of our day, to distinguish between the real difficulties that face us and bogy terrors, social precipices, and political earthquakes, painted before us by those who are afraid of any revolt on the part of the servile population, and who try to persuade us that nothing of any importance can be altered; for, after all, a great objection to change, even if it is not openly expressed, is the fact that reform costs some one something. When Dickens was assisting those who were for the reform of Chancery procedure, he was met with this objection, that it would take employment from those who lived by unnecessarily circuitous formalities. In reply, Dickens created Mr. Vholes, and made his opponents argue thus:—

“Take a few steps more in this direction, say

262
Objections to Syndicalism

they, and what is to become of Vholes's father? Is he to perish? And of Vholes's daughters? Are they to be shirt-makers or governesses? As though Mr. Vholes and his relations being a kind of minor cannibal chiefs, and it being proposed to abolish cannibalism, indignant champions were to put the case thus: Make man-eating unlawful, and you starve the Vholeses!"

"In a word, Mr. Vholes, with his three daughters, and his father in the vale of Taunton, is continually doing duty, like a piece of rotten timber, to shore up some decayed foundation that has become a pitfall and a nuisance. And with a great many people in a great many instances, the question is never one of a change from Wrong to Right (which is quite an extraneous consideration), but is always one of injury or advantage to that eminently respectable legion, Vholes."

Of the general strike and its possibility, I have spoken in the previous chapter.
CHAPTER X

SOME GENERAL REFLECTIONS

When we try to discover how far what the Syndicalists say is likely to be said all over the world, and how far it is local and sectarian, we note at once that the revolt against representative government is to be seen in England as well as in France. Among socialists the discontent with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. John Burns, and Mr. Richard Bell proceeds from the same causes as the discontent with M. Millerand, M. Jaurès, and M. Viviani. Parliamentary life forces men to bargain peaceably: they soon begin to preach a class-war in their working-class electioneering meetings, and social peace and goodwill elsewhere: their revolutionary followers perceive the discrepancy. Commissioners and Board of Trade conciliators are used to delay strikers from striking until the masters have finished the most urgent orders, and arranged what it will best suit them to do
Syndicalism and the General Strike

if there is a strike: the probability of the strikers winning is lessened.

There are certain fundamental reasons why arbitration on industrial matters are never likely to work well in times when there is much discontent among the workers. Briefly, it may be said:—

1. It is difficult to apply any rule in order to decide some of the fundamental questions. The masters would always like to pay as little wages and the men to get as high wages as possible: the claims of both may with tact be lessened, but no equitable standard can be applied to them, because wages are not fixed by what a man needs or does. Consequently the upholder of the present system always argues that they are what they should be so long as he can find any one to accept them; while, on the other side, the socialist says they are necessarily unfair so long as any payment is made to the pure capitalist, who does no part of the work of initiation or management and lives wholly by ownership, and while high salaries correspond not necessarily to vitally necessary services, but to services for which either the training or the needed authoritative air demands a control over income which severely limits the number of those entering these services. So long as wages and
Some General Reflections

conditions of labour are fixed by "the state of the market" there is no principle by which they can be decided.

2. The "impartial chairman" is always a man of property and an educated man—that is, his pecuniary interests, class prejudices, and habitual sympathies put him on the side of capital.

3. A strike may win advantages for the men if it takes place when the masters do not expect it, whereas, if the men have to arbitrate first, the delay may cause them to lose. Arbitration seems to them, therefore, merely a dodge for beating them.

Of course, if a more or less arbitrary standard is admitted, it can be applied to specific cases. There is no such thing as a "living wage": the wage which will keep any particular man alive or in health depends on all kinds of things, and it is undesirable to keep men down to a life of brutal emptiness of all mental pleasure. If any existing standard is admitted—such as 30s. in London, or the wages in some branch of the textile trade—the equivalent of that wage can be calculated elsewhere: but there is no principle of right or reason behind such a wage, and behind any arbitrary division of spoils between capital, management, and manual labour.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Much that the ordinary man of any political views blames the English party system for is seen with quite different political machinery in France, where the permanent officials work the electoral arrangements, which here depends on party organisations; but the representative's calculations of personal disadvantage, if he offends his chiefs, the consideration of votes not principles, the corrupting need for bargaining for support, and the power of wealthy supporters of a party to decide its policy, operate in the one system as in the other.

Again the demand that central government shall be made less important, even though it is not, as Syndicalists predict, to disappear, will be, I think, heard more of in England. There are three reasons why it should be: (1) Parliament is over-worked; (2) its work is not real to the electors, and fails to gain their real interest because it is too far off—real caricature is absent in the abuse of the wrong side, and real admiration is absent in the praise of "our" leaders, because the masses are not acquainted with the features of the models from which the journalists are supposed to draw their pen-pictures; and lastly (3) Parliament is ignorant: if it is more and more to deal with intimate details of industry its reliance on documents will be more
Some General Reflections

and more inadequate to guide it. The large employer always sees through other people's eyes, and the general secretary of a trade union is not in touch with the thought of the minute in the workshops.

Those who are engaged in working at any trade are the best critics of technical abilities of others in the same trade, and for this reason professional groups would be better managers of a communal business than the whole of the people. Democratic control means that a talker must be the ostensible head of a department, in order that some one may be ready to explain anything that needs explanation—and to explain it to people more or less incapable of understanding it: the really capable worker is often bad at this task. The incompetence of democracy is most real where the control of complex affairs is concerned, and a localised Syndical control of industries is far more workable than that rigid centralised state, with every industry worked from Westminster, which is what most socialists either wish for or lead the ordinary man to believe to be what they wish for. Services arranged for each small locality and federated into a whole could be worked on a socialist basis—this is, I think, generally conceded by the enemies of socialism who have considered the
Syndicalism and the General Strike

matter seriously—far better than an industrial State controlled at one centre.

I need not say that a postal or railway system throughout Europe does not need one European Government. Our States must be broken up into federated minor States. The complexity of vast economic affairs is more apparent than real: much economic complexity is apparent not real, because it is the result of many easily solved local problems—thus railway time-tables for all Europe are obviously not planned out at the start at one centre, but are due to the adjustment and addition of many local plans. It is the same with the world-wide post. The Syndicalist criticism of the unnecessary, repellent, and dangerously powerful nature of the unified State-socialist scheme as opposed to the possible and attractive method of dealing with local needs locally and making wider arrangements only as need arises is therefore reasonable.

The demands for self-expression and self-action, instead of action by delegates, and for free co-operation instead of compulsion are all likely to operate more and more. Excessive reliance on some one else or on the State cannot long remain in operation. Whenever an idea spreads among the masses, it creates its own local leaders for the execution of its own plans:
Some General Reflections

the great leader, known to the entire country, and thinking out the entire scheme from the start, does not really exist in great national or international movements. If he seems to exist, either he is working with a machine not an inspired multitude or he is a figurehead. The English trade unions and Labour party, whatever be their imperfections, are much more purely working-class than the socialist unions and parties on the Continent, so that part of the Syndicalist aim has here been already achieved. We see how far we are at present from self-government when we consider how the policy of the Cabinet—a co-opted group—is imposed on Parliament instead of being derived from them, as it should be if there were anything representative of the people's opinions in it: a few wealthy supporters of one party, attached to it, no doubt, because one item of its policy meets with their approval, arrange its bills, and they are in no way expressive of the natural desires of the people. Liberal criticism of Sir Edward Grey, conservative criticism of Mr. Balfour, the unanimity with which both liberals and conservatives in Parliament supported an unpopular Insurance Bill, are just as clear as the refusal of the members of some trade unionists to accept advice given them by delegates, mis-called leaders: there has been
Syndicalism and the General Strike

a bad outburst of political originality and a surprising refusal to accept ready-made ideas and phrases. In some degree, all this shows that politics is losing its attraction and more direct action gaining favour. The strike appeals to Englishmen because it is a fight. "There's some fun in it," says the Englishman who is weary of voting and talking. If he does not believe overmuch in it he will yet be interested; for the Englishman likes games. Politics in England, a country with a proverbial capacity for politics, was never taken very seriously: that is why political untruths are so little resented and vote-catching promises which are never kept produce so little resentment. But is no deceit intended? The lying politician, who will do anything for the people—anything the promise of which wins for him votes and power and money—who perorates and weeps over the sorrows of poverty—does he prostitute his powers by one of the less excusable methods of prostitution—is he more vilely deceitful and falsely painted than the stalest woman: or is he only a poor player on an insignificant stage, and recognised by every one as a sham-fighter—a knock-about comedian using terms of abuse to amuse the populace and intending no harm or good to any one? Or does he (like a man who gets thanks for a bad coin
Some General Reflections

from a blind beggar), does he actually accept the people's gratitude for his spurious generosity?

The energy devoted to the movement for votes for women shows how people can over-estimate the value of anything for which they have long struggled—seeing that the vote, apart from any granting of more valuable rights to those to whom it is given, is of no great use. Low wages, prostitution, and marriage difficulties are often spoken of as if the vote were a cure for them: but the vote is practically no cure for economic evils. Trade unionism is worth more as a cure for low wages. Fellowship in trade unions would discourage blacklegging by pocket-money earning amateurs who are subsidised by husbands and fathers, and that would do more for women's wages than a vote. Prostitution is partly economic: late marriages of men (due to desire to keep up the class standard of comfort)—overcrowding, and bare dullness of life, which destroy imagination and so prevent women from perceiving what life holds, and throw a glamour over the well-dressed and correctly pronouncing gentleman, lead to it; and the under-payment and oppression of the ordinary unskilled wage-earner do not conduce to an abandonment of it. Even unhappy marriages are more economic than they look. Man's
Syndicalism and the General Strike
disservices to man, performed in order to make money easily, make life ugly and dull, and marriage is an escape. Men's want of interests and ideas are connected with the commercialisation of man and man's work; and man's character made dull by a commercial idea of life makes him a repellent marriage companion. Where unhappiness is due to a child too many (miserably feared and avoided by the expectant but undesiring mother) income again is mostly to blame. "Equal pay for men and women" is a much better cry than "Votes."

Man after working hard for what he at first knew to be only means towards an end, at last comes to think of it as an end and sacred in itself. When we step back and take a fresh view of the world we see that votes and parliaments are only tools for altering the world. If they do not work well, there are other tools.

The Syndicalist return to more direct methods than legislation—strikes, threats, riots—is likely to be seen in many countries.

The English admiration for action, for character, as revealed in forcible and unexpected deeds of endurance and heroism, rather than for phrases and intellect, made many men who are unsympathetic to theories of workman's rights, sympathetic at once to the striker. Even the
Some General Reflections

people whose word is, "They ought to be shot down," by the opposition they create and the decisive judgment they provide, do much at a time of strikes to cause progress.

Trade unionism, taught by experience, will again become a fighting movement, instead of a benefit-society movement. It is the men little organised and with no funds who are said to have no chance of winning who do win—seamen, dockers, women-workers—while the strong unions are weak in a fight; they give the masters long notice of their intentions and their leaders are full of doubts and look anxiously at the bank balance. However, men unprotected by a union have difficulty in keeping what they have won. If the masters go back on their word, the men cannot strike incessantly. There is a strong movement against the too tame and business-like trade union official.

We hear much of the tyranny of trade unions, but it should be remembered that in a time of war—and what is a strike but a forcible struggle between masters and men?—martial law must prevail and the blackleg is a deserter, a spy, a traitor. The masters, if they win, win by the force exerted by starvation: they appeal to force quite as much as any one can.

The sanction of safety on which the conven-
Syndicalism and the General Strike

tional church morals is based will never permanently be enough for the more energetic human beings. It has been enormously apotheosised by the common sense and calculating philosophers—the Herbert Spencers, Haeckels, and so on—but the demand for the adventurous and heroic does not die out—man is not so exhausted as to behave reasonably. Whether strikes are right or wrong, the Syndicalists have done well in proclaiming the excellent qualities shown by strikers—the power of self-sacrifice, of heroic decision, of sympathy with those worse off than yourself, of uniting for a common end, of taking risks for a worthy object. Newspapers which are fond of writing about patriotism and the need for considering the needs of the whole nation, not the immediate selfish aims of an individual, have also written with surprised horror about the incomprehensible conduct of men who are well-paid and have no grievance of their own, but who starve and spend all they have in order to improve the position of others; this active testimony to their co-operative spirit, this willingness to accept collective responsibility, is not understood by those who have on other occasions praised loyalty to the community and willingness to work for the honour of all. Even if the aims for which the
Some General Reflections

men strike are condemned, something in the spirit of the strike ought to be admired. The great coal strike of 1912 was admirable in that the English miners struck in order to get for Wales and Scotland the minimum which they themselves already possessed.

There is a great amount of false spirituality and even of conscious hypocrisy in much conventional religious morality, in which love is held up as the one satisfactory motive, and proposals to forcibly obtain a more equal distribution of the means of living are condemned.

Whenever experience shows the difficulty of obtaining any improvement in the position of the working-classes or whenever on theoretical grounds it is believed that no improvement can be gained "under capitalism" and without a great alteration in the fundamental structure of society, more or less revolutionary movements are bound to arise. The idea that with the present order of society every gain on the part of the workers is necessarily neutralised by some loss is probably false, but it is fairly commonly believed. The working-man sometimes has the idea that increased prices, which, broadly speaking, are due to the increased output of and gradual accumulation of indestructible gold, are due to a deliberate capitalist conspiracy. If wages rise,
 Syndicalism and the General Strike

prices rise also, and the gain is neutralised; this is the kind of argument often advanced. In the past it is probably true that an increased wage has meant an increase in the efficiency of labour or better equipment of machinery; but these will mean diminution of employment unless the cost of production actually falls so as to increase the demand: prices have not risen, but unemployment may have increased. That if the labourer insists on higher wages and the consumer on no increase of prices (and the consumer in France in the summer of 1911 struck against high prices), profits can be cut down is usually true—although there is a minimum interest (more often, perhaps, heard of than reached), below which capital leaves the trade and employment in it is restricted. Capital has not, however, the power of protecting itself which it is popularly supposed to possess. The interests of capitalists are not sufficiently the same for capital to act as one man—the financier, the landlord, the investor, and the expert are not at one.

Again, as wages do not constitute the whole cost of production, unless (to put it simply) rent, interest, and cost of management are increased in the same proportion as wages are, prices will not rise as much as wages do, so that the wage-earner's position will be improved.
Some General Reflections

A country with highly trained industrial workers has often labour advantages not to be found elsewhere, and when it is suggested that Japan and China can undersell us in textile goods or engineering, the suggestion is fantastic to any one who knows that the Far East is as inexpert compared with us in factory work as it is superior (or recently was) in craftsmanship. Hence, when wages rise, profits may not fall simply because the work may be better and more rapidly done. Every country, when it has the ability to dissolve the tissues of State and to prepare to develop a new organism, will have intelligence enough to prevent the results of an extreme panic: a moratorium could always be decreed to prevent alarmed emigrants from exporting so much gold as to disturb the credit of the country.

The power of the capitalist to reimburse himself by raising prices is, of course, limited by other possible supplies which his increased prices might bring into the market, or by alternative goods, perhaps as suitable for the required purpose as those he had produced, which the public may make use of as soon as their natural conservatism is sufficiently discouraged by an increase in their expenses. Thus coal prices must, in the end, be checked by the possibility, if it is
Syndicalism and the General Strike

necessary, of now replacing coal by oil-driven machinery.

These reflections lead to the conclusion that the idea that there is necessarily an unalterable level of poverty for the working-class so long as capitalism persists is not, in all probability, true. But great alterations in the respective positions of different classes, and of the ideas attaching to property, are by themselves equivalent to an alteration of the whole structure of society; so that without any marked ending to the capitalist system of society, perpetual diminution in class differences of wealth may practically set up a new type of society. If it were once proved that the fate of the working-class cannot "under capitalism" be improved, a violent, sudden revolution would be the only possible hope of those who cannot leave things as they are.

Among the masses of the population (particularly in a country like England where detailed facts are so greatly preferred to clear theories), there is more demand for the cure of specially felt grievances than for any systematic reorganisation of society; but we have reason to think that the redress of grievances, and attempts to remodel society, according to a theory, are so intermingled among both of the two hostile
Some General Reflections

classes of society as to render disentanglement of motives impossible when any acts of aggression are actually being performed. While the master may wish to break up trade union federations, to protect "free labour," to increase the workers' cautious disinclination to face the risk of strikes (and of collective action generally) by diffusing a little property and by profit-sharing; on the other hand, the worker may have a theory respecting the abolition of the private ownership of capital or the indefensible nature of interest: thus both masters and men are theorists as well as advantage-seekers.

It is of interest to note that there have persistently been two streams of tendency in the modern reconstructive movement. The following paragraph in Mill's essay on socialism (published in the *Fortnightly Review* for 1879, and included in the appendices to the edition of Mill's "Principles," edited by Ashley, which appeared in 1909 1) is worth attention in this connection:—

"Among those who call themselves socialists two kinds of persons may be distinguished. There are, in the first place, those whose plans for a new order of society—in which private property and individual competition are to be

1 The publishers are Longmans.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

superseded and other motives for action substituted—are on the scale of a village community or township, and would be applied to an entire country by the multiplication of such self-acting units; of this character are the systems of Owen and Fourier, and the more thoughtful and philosophical socialists generally. The other class, who are more a product of the Continent than of Great Britain, and may be called the revolutionary socialists, propose to themselves a much bolder stroke. Their scheme is the management of the whole productive resources of the country by one central authority, the general government.”

Here we have contrasted with each other the local communes of the anarchist communist and of the French Syndicalist and the centralised State of the Marxist. It cannot too often and too emphatically be pointed out that the fundamental idea at the back of all socialistic and anarchist movements is the idea of giving more liberty and more property to the millions; any machinery advocated by them, such as the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, is a mistranslation and a falsification of their essential spirit, if it would fail to give more property and liberty to millions. State-owned industries can, obviously, be worked
without transferring any property or authority from the dominant class to the dominated class, and further, it may be argued (and I believe it), that a centralised system of production places a dangerous amount of power in the hands of a few persons. But, after all, systems are only contrivances by which people hope to succeed in getting what they want; the force and life of the reform movement in society cannot be criticised by pointing out the difficulties involved in any suggested solution of social problems or its crudeness. The essential desire to level or equalise property if it cannot get its way through laws and nationalisings will simply set to work in another way: hence the opposition between Syndicalism and socialism is an opposition of method, not of aim. Its method will be described as "impossibilist," but in regard to changing society, everything is said to be impossible by many people.

Of course, the exact value of the Syndicalist's criticism of politicians and of State services depends on the country you are living in; some observers, at any rate, think English administration more efficient and impartial than that of Latin countries. Much of this book may not, I think, be understood by some of its readers, because the fact
Syndicalism and the General Strike

is that those who take a static view of society will never understand many movements in politics, art, and philosophy. To them it seems as if mechanical laws which explain why A is always followed by B, as if structural principles which build up definite forms, as if economic laws, according to which stable class relations are created, are eternal. But what if man can avoid and neutralise even the laws of nature; if emotion, right, beauty, desire—slow-working, apparently feeble but immortal—can in the end alter the most solid facts? If property is doomed, if classes are doomed, if mechanical toil is to be replaced by creation; if millenianism has at least as much sense as the idea that nothing essential can be altered—then many ideas of possibility require revising.

Who is there who, if you turn to matters of knowledge and of the application of knowledge, will say what it is possible to observe and to invent? What disease will you set down as incurable for ever, and leave on one side as worth no observation, no questioning of those who suffer from it? A hundred and fifty years ago the ordinary ignorant man would have told you railway trains were impossible; eighty years ago he would have told you telegraphs were impossible; seventy years ago, anaesthetics were impossible;
Some General Reflections

ten years ago, flying machines were impossible; and undeterred, thought, observation, experiment have gone on, and all are possible. The man's idea of possibility was wrong. But take marriage, poverty, unemployment—at once you hear the ordinary ignorant man saying all cure for any evil connected with them is impossible; why disturb my leisure with any vulgar question of this kind? says Professor Dry-as-Dust, and why disturb my pleasure—what has it to do with dogs, horses, women, boxers? says Mr. Greatman; what profit can be made out of it? says Mr. Business. It is impossible to do anything: so this word impossible checks all discussion by which the facts would be revealed—all collective effect by which experiment could be made—unobserved, unquestioned, undisturbed, the festering sores eat further into the body of the State. The word impossible, the foolish word supports Mr. Dry-as-Dust in his pedantic faithlessness in what books have not told him, and Mr. Greatman (so called) and Mr. Business, who have their reasons for saying hastily it is impossible, for the one is comfortably off so long as he can fool the people with promises, and the other so long as he can defraud them with papers.

Poverty and unemployment are curable, but only when you make a direct and revolutionary
Syndicalism and the General Strike

attack on the private ownership of land and capital. As long as you have competing employers, you will have disorganisation and reckless taking on and "sacking" of men, and you will have some ground down in a struggle for life to the most insufficient wages.

The difficulty undoubtedly in dealing with social questions is, that unlike mechanical problems the experiments needed in order to solve them must be made after a crowd has agreed to act. The single thinker can do nothing without the consent of others.

The uninstructed man who has no idea of the lines along which thinkers are proceeding, or of the information which observers have collected, is in no position to judge whether it is, or is not, possible to solve any problem, mechanical or social.

The richer classes who pay for, and therefore control, the press, the pulpit, and the platform, and all the main sources by which opinion is influenced, may, if they take a narrow view of their own interests and see nothing but their banking accounts, do all they can to spread false opinions on economic subjects. If discontent appears, the discontented can be put off with shams. The sham-doctors are ready to give them sham medicines—not the true remedy of
Some General Reflections

more real liberty of action, more real command over property (anything but that, since that would mean for their money-lords less of the liberty of tyrannising and less of property for their thrice-sated owners); rather regulate them more—these regulations are always so easy and popular in a parliament composed of rich men, who will not need to obey the regulations—nearer let them come to what Belloc has called the servile State—and meantime if any one gives sound advice, denounce him—denounce his cure, as all that is wicked, impossible, irreligious, in order that, too literally, the advice of Kent to Lear may be carried out—the advice which he gave when he said:—

"Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease,"

and the people may, if not kill, at least ignore their wise doctors, who understand the revolutionary courses which alone can give relief, and bestow again a fee upon the embodied disease of the present order of society. . . .

In conclusion, I have not defined Syndicalism yet, and there are always people who want to have definitions, although the words which describe movements in which crowds are contained can never be satisfactorily defined;
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Christians cannot agree (take them all and at all times) about Christianity or socialists about socialism; but if a definition is wanted, I have read that "a definition of Syndicalism was attempted by the Recorder in his charge to the Grand Jury at the Old Bailey.

"Referring to the charge against the printers and editor of the Syndicalist of publishing seditious matter, his lordship said: 'Many of you who might not have known a month ago what Syndicalism means, probably know by now what it is, as it has occupied a prominent position. It is a diabolical system invented by somebody or other for the purpose of promoting a general strike, and apparently to establish a socialistic republic.'"

To this judicial definition I would add:—

(a) It is opposed to the central Government, and therefore dislikes the use of Parliament in attaining its ends.

(b) It proposes to replace the centralised State, either—

1. By making the workers in each trade regulate their own industries, or

2. The workers of all kinds in each small locality or commune regulate the production of their own locality.

¹ Daily News, March 20, 1912.
Some General Reflections

(I propose to call the former Italian, and the latter French, Syndicalisms, while not pretending that the writers in either country keep rigidly to either conception.)

(c) The final catastrophe by which society is to be altered is a great class battle, the general strike, by means of which the working-class will lock-out those belonging to other classes and force them to yield.
ANNOTATED LIST OF WORKS ON SYNDICALISM CONSULTED BY THE AUTHOR

(Books on general political conditions are not mentioned here)

The list is arranged under the authors' names, but periodicals are not listed under the names of the editors. However, Tom Mann’s Industrial Syndicalist, being almost entirely written by himself, is not treated as a periodical.


Anonymous.
The Miners’ Next Step: being a suggested Scheme for the Reorganisation of the Federation, issued by the Unofficial Reform Committee. (Tonypandy, Robert Davies & Co.) 1912. 30 pp. N.p.
A summary of the contents of this pamphlet is given on p. 211. It is said to have been withdrawn, and is certainly difficult to get.

Revolutionary Syndicalist pamphlet issued by the above-mentioned federation.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Beaubois, Gabriel.
A passionate attack on the French Post Office as a State monopoly; it is said that it is wasteful in its methods; and that the appointments in it are made for political reasons and out of favouritism. It proposes an immediate programme of independent management of the service—parliament having only to examine the cost and to see the service carries out the duties it contracted to do.

Challaye, Félicien.
Explains theory of revolutionary Syndicalism, and criticises it from the point of view of a reformist trade unionist. The notes and appendices contain useful bibliographical information—including lists of periodicals. Readable and reasonable.

Clay, Sir Arthur (Bart.).
Gives good accounts of strikes in Europe which took place between 1907 and 1910. Is written exclusively from a capitalistic and anti-working class point of view, the Times being the author's chief source of information. The latter part of the book is on English trade unionism, and repeats a familiar story of the Osborne decision and the trade unions' support of the Labour party. The author's own reflections are very conservative and do not seem enlightening.

Debs, E. V.
Industrial Unionism. (Edinburgh. The Socialist-Labour Party, 28 Forth Street.) 1908. 21 pp. + 4 pp., on Industrial Unionism. 1d. Report of "an address
List of Works

delivered at Grand Central Palace, New York," on Sunday, December 10, 1905, advocating the formation of one union for all workers.

Delesalle, Paul.
Begins with an explanation of social structure—how one class lives by ownership and one by labour, and how unions are formed in order that the latter class may fight the power of the former. Revolutionary methods are praised and the failure of various French attempts at social legislation is pointed out. The pamphlet contains useful local colour with regard to Syndicalist views of French politicians, but repeats itself sometimes.

Edwards, A. S.
Analysis of the Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World.
Large folding-sheet at the end of the "Handbook of Industrial Unionism" (see Trautmann), the principles being analysed and expanded in successive columns.

Weekly paper. The organ of the "Freie Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften."
Contains news concerning the unions in this federation and trade union news generally; also contains propagandist articles attacking the socialist politicians in a rather monotonous way. Started 1896, but did not occupy its present position of revolutionary Syndicalism until June, 1906.

Freiermann.

297
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Argues against political action and gives instances (taken chiefly from Italy) to show that direct action is more effective.

Grave, Jean.

An anarchist tract: defends Syndicalism but does not believe the Syndicats are the productive associations of the future. Argues against specialisation and division of labour; therefore existing trade groups cannot be permanent; in future groups will overlap. It ends with a plea for unpractical anarchism.

Has not very much to do with me, being in the main a criticism of Syndicalism.

Griffelhues, Victor.

A careful account of Syndicalism with an anti-patriotic chapter, and others on the relation between Syndicalism and Socialism, on Syndicalism and the trade unions of non-French countries. Important but not lively.

—— See Various Writers, “Syndicalisme et Socialisme.”

“Groupe de Syndicalistes, Un.”

A clear, popular account of Syndicalism and its aims. Very readable.

Guesde, J., Lagardelle, H., Vaillant, E.
List of Works

Discussion between a revolutionary Syndicalist, a State socialist, and a man who believes in both parliamentarism and "direct action."

Harley, J. H.
Syndicalism and the Labour Unrest. (In the Contemporary Review for March, 1912.) 9 pp. [348-57], 2s. 6d.
Describes "labour unrest" in its present manifestations as a revolt against rationalism; gives some information about Sorel, his life and opinions; derives his doctrine from Marx and Proudhon. The writer concludes by arguing in favour of constitutional and industrial evolution—the slow path which (in his opinion) can alone be followed by a parliamentary party.

Kautsky, Karl.
Unlawful Direct Action. (In the Socialist Review, 38, Blackfriars Street, Manchester, for February, 1912.) 4 pp. [453-7]. 6d. net. Main part of it quoted on pp. 259-262.

Kenny, Rowland.
The Brains Behind the Labour Revolt. (In the English Review for March, 1912.) 13 pp. [683-96]. 1s. net.
Gives many interesting facts with regard to the growth of a new school of educated trade union leaders, who will be more aggressive than the old and now partly discredited leaders have been.

Kleinlein, Andreas.
Der Syndikalismus in Deutschland. (In the "Jahrbuch der freien Generation für 1912." Brussels. 42 Rue Haute.) 1912. 9 pp. [104-13]. 1.20 fr.
Gives an excellent account of the origin of the "Freie Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften."

Kritschewsky, Boris.
See Various Writers, "Syndicalisme et Socialisme."

299
Syndicalism and the General Strike

**Kritsky, Mlle.**


Terribly detailed (giving resolutions passed at various Congresses), but a most important history of trade unions in France from the French Revolution to 1906, written from a Syndicalist point of view.

**Labriola, Arturo.**


Chiefly a criticism of reformist socialism. Of importance, but rather wordy.

See Various Writers, “Syndicalisme et Socialisme.”

**Lagardelle, H.**

See Various Writers, “Syndicalisme et Socialisme.”

**Lagardelle, Hubert (editor).**


It is difficult to read through such a mass of papers, most of which repeat a few arguments for and against the general strike, but the contributors are some of the well-known socialists of the world.

**Lanzillo, A.**

Le Mouvement ouvrier en Italie. (Paris. Marcel Rivière et Cie.) N.d. 60 pp. 60 centimes.

Deals from a revolutionary Syndicalist point of view with recent Italian history, especially recent strikes; it attributes the failure of the Italian Labour movement to the reformist socialists, who are accused of being traitors and self-seekers.
List of Works

Lanzillo, Agostino.
An excellent account of Sorel's intellectual life and works. A prefatory letter from Sorel to the author gives the history of Sorel's life. It contains a portrait and bibliography, in which, however, only the Italian translations of books translated into Italian are given, and only the names of the periodicals to which Sorel contributed and the years during which he did so, without the titles of his articles.

"Lee, Vernon" (Violet Page).
M. Sorel and the Syndicalist Myth. (Fortnightly Review. October, 1911.) 16 pp. 2s. 6d.
I think she misunderstands the Syndicalist myth. Sorel means the general strike more as a concrete dramatisation of a real conflict and real hopes, and less as a lie than she assumes. Written from the point of view of a satisfied non-producer. Myths are "vast, even if inevitable blunders." Very unsympathetic to "labour" hardships.

Leone, Enrico.
May be called a text-book of Syndicalism. Somewhat rhetorical, being based on speeches delivered by the author, and, like most speeches, there are no absolutely new ideas in them. The best ideas (or what I thought such) are referred to on pp. 127-146 of this book.

Louis, Paul.
An important history. The author is a Syndicalist, but the book looks impartial.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

MacDonald, M.P., J. Ramsay.

Syndicalism. (In the Socialist Review for October, 1911.) 8 pp. 6d. net.

Argues that the Syndicalist method is "a mere escapade of the nursery mind," but favours "the absorption of the small sectional union and the federation of the unions."

Mann, Tom.

Industrial Syndicalist, vol. i. No. 1. Prepare for Action. (Guy Bowman, 4, Maude Terrace, Walthamstow.) July, 1910. From 24 to 60 pp. in each. 1d. each.

Argues in favour of a federation of unions.

No. 2. The Transport Workers.

Argues they have lost some advantages once gained by the '89 strike. Asks for more fighting spirit and federation of transport unions.

No. 3. Forging the Weapon.

Contains a letter from Eugene Debs, the American socialist leader. In favour of using existing unions and making them more aggressive.

No. 4. All Hail! Industrial Solidarity.

Lays special stress on the needs of the unskilled man.

No. 5. Symposium on Syndicalism.

Tom Mann on beginning of Welsh coal strikes of 1911; T. J. Ring on need for education in trade unions, for a trade union newspaper, for shorter working hours; E. J. B. Allen on "Working-class Socialism"; and W. F. Hay on "The Miners' Hope."


Gives a full report of the first Syndicalist conference held at Manchester, November 26, 1910, including Tom Mann's speech.

No. 7. Debate on Syndicalism between Frank Rose and Tom Mann.

Rose is opposed to strikes, and favours parliamentarism.
List of Works

No. 8. Miners, Wake Up!
   Introduction by Tom Mann and essay by W. F. Hay
   and Noah Ablett on "A Minimum Wage for Miners."

   On "Syndicalist Education Leagues," with a report of
   a speech by A. G. Tufton to the Walthamstow Trades
   Council on "Osborne Judgment Outcome" against
   political action.

No. 10. A Twofold Warning.
   Points out growing power of capitalism and danger of
   sectional unionism. After Mann's introduction contains
   G. Moore-Bell's essay on "The Cotton Ring," showing
   masters federated but not the men.

No. 11. The Railwaymen. Against Board of Trade
   Settlements of 1907 and State ownership. (2 pp. by
   Tom Mann; rest on "Conciliation or Emancipation?"
   by Charles Watkins.)

Mermeix.
   Le Syndicalisme contre le Socialisme. (Paris. Paul
   Ollendorff.) 1907. 322 pp. 3.50 fr.
   Written from a conservative point of view. Contains
   a history of the labour question since the days of slavery,
   deals with the French Combination Acts, their repeal,
   the Labour Exchanges, the C.G.T., the general strike,
   and the numbers represented by the "revolutionary
   Syndicalist" movement. Has the garrulous and sneer-
   ing tone common in conservative books on labour
   movements.

Michels, Robert.
   See Various Writers, "Syndicalisme et Socialisme."

   Review of Lanzillo (Agostino), "Giorgio Sorel," in
   the Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der
   Arbeiterbewegung. Band. II. Heft. 2–3. 3 pp.
   Rather an interesting review.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

**Le Mouvement Socialiste.** Paris.
Monthly journal.
This was for a time an "intellectual" organ of revolutionary Syndicalism. Georges Sorel, Lagardelle, and Berth have contributed to it.

**Niel, L.**
A propaganda speech in favour of Syndicalism. Rhetorical in style and without anything very fresh in it.

**Pataud, E., and Pouget, E.**
A Syndicalist romance—the title sufficiently explains the subject.

**Pierrot, M.**
35 pp. 10 centimes.
Contains good explanation of difficulties arising from placing power in the hands of delegates and politicians.

**Pionier, Der. Unabhängiges sozialrevolutionäres Organ.**
Revolutionary Syndicalist paper.

**Pouget, Émile.**
Shows that political reforms are useless to the workers; and that association is necessary (and answers Rousseau and certain Darwinians’ views on this point). Rhetorical and wordy.

304
List of Works

Pouget, Émile.
A general defence of the C.G.T. The earlier pages explain its constitution.

—— Le Sabotage. (Paris. Marcel Rivière et Cie.) N.d. 68 pp. 60 centimes.
Justifies sabotage as a way of fighting the capitalist and a necessary consequence of treating labour as a commodity to be bought as cheaply as possible, explains methods of practising it, and gives interesting narratives of the occasions when they have been put into action. A lively pamphlet.

The argument here set forth is: The position of the capitalist is nearly the same as that of the master of a slave or the lord of a serf. He saves that which others produce by their work. Capital is theft. Property is authority over things: authority is property in human beings. It then explains the advantages of Syndical unions and the disadvantages of democratic government, where powers are delegated, and recommends constant preparation for the general strike and social revolution. A rather rhetorical pamphlet.

Pouget, E., and Pataud, E.
Comment nous ferons la Révolution. See Pataud, E.

Contains programme agreed to at the Seventh Congress and report of proceedings at Eighth Congress, where regulations respecting strike pay were more minutely defined and differences between the Lokalisten and the centralised unions specified.
Syndicalism and the General Strike

Monthly journal.
A moderate trade union paper—not "revolutionary Syndicalist" in tone.

Skelton, O. D.
Pages 267–80 are on Syndicalism and furnish a very good summary of the aims of the movement.

Sombart, Werner (translated by Epstein, M.).
Chapter V. (30 pp.) is on "Revolutionary Syndicalism.” It is too impartial to be lively, but very careful and learned. It attempts to explain why Syndicalism appeared.

Sorel, Georges.
Of historical importance. Remarkable for its bitter attacks on intellectuals, who are declared to have interests opposed to those of the workers and to be largely parasites. The value of trade unions as a training-place for working-class capacity and as a weapon of attack insisted on.

—— La Décomposition du Marxisme. (Paris. Marcel Rivière.) 1908. 64 pp. 60 centimes.
Explains (i.) how revolutionaries weaken into social reformers; (ii.) points out that the efforts of popular state are in the direction of turning the proletariat into a bourgeoisie; (iii.) declares that politicians abandon Marxism; (iv.) mainly investigates how far capitalism has solved problems which Marx foresaw; (v.) examines nature of Marx’s myth of the coming revolution;
List of Works

(vi.) states that he general strike corresponds to the Marxian catastrophe; (vii.) this idea, though mythical, is of value because its keeps the revolutionary separate from the rest of the world. Contains much criticism of socialist writers, and of the relations between the ideas of Marx, Engels, the Syndicalists, and the parliamentarians. Near the end are some remarks on social myths, one of Sorel's most interesting ideas.

Sorel, Georges.


Shows how Sorel obtained some of his ideas.


Describes various illusory ideas respecting progress and attempts to account for them by the interests and class movements of the times. The examples are, of course, all taken from French history and literature. Real progress is progress in methods of production, but, as the author has apparently no theory as to there being a continuous process of improvement of any kind, genius is rated highly.


A long summary of the contents of this book is given by me on pp. 70–79 of this work, so I need only state here that it is mainly a clever attempt to show that reforms which do not upset capitalism strengthen it. Like all Sorel's books, it is rather stiff reading.


This important book contains arguments (largely illustrated by historical examples chiefly taken from Renan's works on the Jews and early Christians) as to the decay
Syndicalism and the General Strike

of the bourgeois; the utility of revolutions if they occur when production is improving; the need for the sublime and uncalculating in morality; the glory of a war of liberty and a class-war; the untrueness of the "Society is an organism doctrine."

Tänzler, Dr. jur.
An account from the employers' point of view of the events of the general strike in Sweden, particularly the positions of the masters' associations and trade unions at various times.

The Transport Worker.
Edited by Tom Mann. Monthly journal. (Liverpool. 6, Spekeland Buildings.) No. 1. August, 1911.
A journal of trade unionism.

Trautmann, W. E.
One Big Union. An outline of a possible industrial organisation of the working-class, with chart. (Chicago. C. H. Kerr & Co. Co-operative.) N.d. 31 pp. and chart. 10 cents.
Explains ideal organisation of workers and its purpose.

An explanation of the principles of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Various Writers.
A series of speeches on Syndicalism in Italy, France, Germany, Russia, delivered in Paris in April, 1907. These speeches attempted to gratify the audience and contain little information.
List of Works

**Voix du Peuple, La.** Paris.
Weekly journal. Organ of the C.G.T. Started December 1, 1900, with Pouget, Guérard, Niel, Latapie, and Griffelhues as its chief contributors.

**Yvetot, Georges.**
A B C Syndicaliste. (Chez l'auteur. Paris. 48 Rue du Rendez-Vous and L'imperatrice—Imprimerie communiste. 3 Rue du Pondichéry.) 1908. 93 pp. 10 centimes.

Begins with explanation of development and evils of capitalism; contains arguments in favour of trade unionism and explanations how a union is to be founded and worked. It contains excellent matter on "direct action."
INDEX

“A B C Syndicaliste,” 20, 25, 29, 31, 33
Ablett, Noah (coal-miner), 198
Agitators, paid, 173, 186
Agitators, unpaid, 177
Agriculture in Southern Spain, 233
America: Backwardness in politics, 239; Syndicalists in America aim at new unions, 239; agree with other Syndicalists in need for increased capacity among the producers, 240; and in belief in lock-out of masters, 240; stress laid on elimination of craft divisions, 241; and final formation of one big union throughout the world, 242
Anti-militarism, 11, 33, 165, 166, 202, 206
Arbitration in labour disputes, 22, 91, 191, 268
Asquith’s Budget, 117

Barnes, George, M.P., 175
Bell, Richard, 267
Bergson, 54, 68, 89
“Berlin movement,” 156
Bernstein, 127
“Bibliographie des Socialismus und Communismus,” 94
Birkbeck Bank, 86
Blacklegs, strikers’ view of, 205, 226, 277
Bonomi, 112
“Book-men” (cotton warehouse), 207
Burns, The Right Hon. John, M.P., as an agitator, 186, 267

Capacities of producers, 29, 75, 144, 258
Capital, power to resist labour’s attacks, 280, 281
Capitalist’s theories, 283
Challaye on objections to Syndicalism, 254
Children of strikers removed, 33
Index

Chinese competition, 281
Class-war, 60, 93, 137, 163, 165, 255
Clay, Sir Arthur, on the inevitability of Trade Union development, 133
Clerks, 208, 222
Confédération Générale du Travail, founded 1895, 14; two sections, 14
Co-operation in Italy, 111, 113
Crispi, 104, 105, 108
Critica Sociale, 107
Crowsley’s defence, 204
Custom, effect of, 250

Darwin, 74
"Dawn," 205
Decentralisation, 27, 159, 161, 272, 283
Democracy, 10, 20, 23, 48, 271
Denmark: Strike of concrete-workers and navvies, 243; Syndicalist criticisms of unions and Socialists, 243; views of certain trade unions in Christiania, 243
Development by antitheses, 79, 145
Dickens, Charles, on the cost of reform, 262
Difficulties, bogey, 263
"Direct action," 30, 31, 32, 145, 167, 256, 259, 272
Distribution of payment, difficulties with in "ideal" societies, 251

Dock strike, Glasgow (1912), 210
Duncker, Frantz, 153

Einigkeil, Die, 160
England: peculiarities of England unfavourable to clearness in political theories, 171; dislike of theory in, 172; influence of paid officials of trade unions, 173; Mr. George Barnes, M.P., and Mr. W. E. Harvey, M.P., as types of trade union "leaders," 175; how a branch secretary gains advancement in his union, 176; the Anti-Socialist Union, 177; contest between old and new leaders in South Wales Miners’ Federation, 179; spontaneity of strike, 179; wages in mines and accidents, 180; the "new" leaders, 181; small strikes in the summer of 1911 and their effect, 182, 183; wages on railways, 183; industrial changes causing discontent, 184; effect of education, 186; John Burns as an agitator, 186; Tom Mann, 187; discontent with the Labour party, 187; moderation of English and American Syndicalism, 188; Tom Mann’s writings, 189; the
Index

Syndicalist and "An open letter to soldiers," 202; Crowsley's case and the Ilkeston case, 204; the Transport Worker, 206; Ben Tillett, 210; "The Miners' Next Step," 211; the Irritation Strike, 212

Evolution, 74, 140, 145

Fabians, 127

Fédération de la Bourse de Travail, Congrès de, 1896, 14

Ferrer, 63

France, general idea of Syndicalism in, 10; history of trade unions, 14; C.G.T. founded, 14; various types of unions, 15; Syndicalist doctrines, 16-28; immediate programme, 29; examples of sabotage. See also entries under Syndicalism, Syndicat, and Sorel

"Freie Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften." See Syndicalism in Germany

General Strike, 30, 53; preached in Germany, 161; production of, 217; history of the idea, 218; Mouvement socialiste on, 218; Briand on, 219; Lagardelle on, 219; Hillferding on, 219; Ramsay MacDonald on, 221; possibility of, 222; Hyndman, Quelch, and Keir Hardie on, 224; Jaurès on, 225; Van Kol on, 225; Kautsky on, 225; in Portugal, 235; Sombart on, 258

Germany, trade unions in, 150; statistics concerning, 151; history of, 151; local unions, 154; effect of Sozialistengesetz on, 155; remarkable centralisation of, 157; Christian, 158; congress of those organised locally, 159; "Freie Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften," 161; Dr. Friedeberg's lectures, 161; Anarcho-Sozialisten, 163; their programme, 163; criticisms of trade unionism and socialist politics by Syndicalists, 164; antimilitarism, 165, anti-clericalism, 165; Der Pionier, 165; Syndicalist criticisms of political methods, 166 et seq.

Gioletti, III, 112

Harvey, W. E., M.P., 175

Hatred praised, 58, 93

"Haute-Italie Politique et Sociale, La," 97

Hay, W. F. (coal-miner), 198

Heroic, demand for the, 278

Hervé, 63

Hirsch, Max, 151, 152

Hobbes on self-interest, 250

Hobbes on self-interest, 250
ILKESTON case of anti-militarist crime, 204, 205
Impossibility, 283, 286
Improving worker's skill, 29, 75, 144, 258
Indeterminate sentence, 92
"Industrial Syndicalist The," 189 et seq.
Inequality, argument in favour of, from nature, 252
"Inspired Millionaires," 76
Insurance Bill, 49, 83
Insurance, effect of, 123
Intellectuals, 10, 19, 44, 45, 146
Irritation strike, the, 213
Italy: importance of agriculture in, 97; land tenure, 97
socialists round Mantua, 98; agricultural labourers' wages, 99; Sicilian conditions, 99; illiteracy, 101; the industrial north, 102; trade unions, 103; strikes, 103; the Right, 105; corruption in politics, 101, 105, 106; radicals and republicans, 106; clericals, 106; Lega Democratica Nazionale, 107; Labour party, 107; socialist policy, 107; village banks, 108; Crispi's anti-socialist law, 108; minimum programme, 109; riot in 1898, 109; middle-class socialists, 110, 112; socialists quarrel with Syndicalists, 111; co-operative societies, 113; Labriola's writings, 116 et seq.; Leone's writings, 127 et seq.
"Italy To-day" (by King and Okey), 99, 105, 106

JAPANESE competition, 281
Jaurès, on the general strike, 225, 267
Justice as part of the economic environment, 83
Justice, chimerical, 249

KAUTSKY, on "unlawful direct action," 259
Kol, Van, on the general strike, 225

LABOUR EXCHANGES in France, 13
Labour legislation, 20, 61, 123
Labour party (English), 187
Labriola, Arturo, 111; "Riforme e Revoluzione Sociale," 116; educational effect of Parliament, 117; on the future revolution, 119; lock-out of capitalists, 120; on violence, 121; on revolutionaries, conservatives, and reactionaries inside Socialist parties, 122
Le Chapelier law, 12
Legien, 158
Leone, Enrico, 111, 127; on two revisions of socialism, 127; on the intellectuals,
Index

129; on the materialist conception of history, 129; on the inevitability of socialism, 133, 134, 143; on the nature of the trade union, 135; on class-war, 137; on the hopelessness of man's final end, 138; on the brevity of history, 141; on evolution and social development by antithesis, 145

Lloyd George's Budget, 117
Lloyd George and railway-workers, 172, 188
Lock-out of capitalists, 120
"Lokalisien." See Syndicalism in Germany

MacDonald, J. Ramsay, 188, 221, 267
Madrid, cost of living in, 233; death-rate in, 233
Malatesta founds the "Solidaridad obrera," 229
Mann, Tom, 187; his writings, 190 et seq.; on "the barbarous methods of the strike," 193; miners advised to buy mines, 196; style in speaking, 199; on conditions in Australia, 200; his ideal form for the control of industry, 202; at Liverpool, 206; editor of Transport Worker, 206
Marx, Karl, 51, 53, 67, 78
Messianism in Marxism, 78
Mill, J. S., on justice, 249; on two kinds of socialism, 283
Millenianism, 286
Millerand, 43
"Miners' Next Step, The," 211
Mines, nationalisation of, 213
Montaigne on Custom, 250
Moratorium, decree of, 281
"Mouvement ouvrier en Italie, Le," 104

Natural inequality, 252

Objections to Syndicalism: the middle-class, 254; the revolution, 255; class-war, 255; need for the State, 255; Sombart on, 258; Kautsky on "unlawful direct action," 259; bogy terrors, 262; Dickens on the cost of reform, 262
"Open letter to soldiers," 203

Parliament, discontent with 187, 267, 270, 273, 276
Philadelphia, French delegation of workers at exhibition, 13; tailors strike at, 34
Pionier, Der, 165
Political strike, the general, 225
Politics in England, 274
Public-houses, hours of work in, 208
Index

Railways, State, Sorel on, 85
Recorder of London, on Syndicalism, 290

Sabotage, 11, 16, 31, 32, 33, 62, 220
Sabotage, Le, 33
Sabotage, Sorel opposed to, 62
Schweitzer, Von, 152
Self-interest, effect of, 130, 250
Skill, improving, 29, 75, 240
Smith, Adam, on justice, 83
Social myth, 52, 55, 89, 93
Social peace, 59, 145
Socialist minimum programme, in Italy, 109
Socialist policy in Italy, 107, 112
"Socialists at Work," 112
Society does not conform to a plan, 247
Sorel, Georges, Michels on, 37; born at Cherbourg, 37; career and marriage, 38; early works, 38; on democracy, 39; "Le procès de Socrate," 40; on marriage, 41; L'ère nouvelle, 41; Devenir social, 42; as revisionist, 42; Dreyfus affair, 42; his opinion on Millerand's entry into the cabinet, 43; on intellectuals, 44; "L'avenir Socialist des Syndicats," 44; interests of masses opposed to those of intellectuals, 45; prefers the candidate for Parliament who knows least about labour matters, 30; "La décomposition du Marxisme," 51; social myth, 52; "Réflexions sur la violence," 54; on myths and Utopias, 55; violence and force, 58; his view of the early Christians, 61; on sabotage, 62; on Ferrer, 63; Sorel's present sympathy with French conservatism, 63; "Les Illusions du Progrès," 70; on the general will, 73; on the historical school, 74; on Darwin, 74; on real progress, 75; admiration for saints, 77; on Biblical Judaism, 77; objection to moralists, idealists, and reformers, 79; socialisation of economic environment, 80; on cartels and co-operative stores, 82; on state industries, 85; on credit, 86; on interest, 87; on the uselessness of all "laws of history," 88; movement the essence of reality, 89; on arbitration in labour disputes, 91; on society as an organism and division of labour, 92; his style, 94
Sozialistengesetz, 155
Spain, anarchists join trade unions, 230; formation of the "Solidaridad obrera," 230; statistics as to unions, 230; Socialist party, 230;
Index

reasons for anarchism in Spain, 231; Syndicalist pamphlets, 232; famines in Andalusia, 232; condition of miners in Bilbao, 232; child-labour in Barcelona, 232; cost of living and death-rate in Madrid, 233; agriculture in the South, 233; in Galicia, 234; co-operative agriculture, 234; law as to strikes, 234; education, 235; State intervention, Labriola on, 123

Stecchetti, 141
Strike, barbarity of, 193

Strikes, 27, 33, 120, 153, 193, 234, 237, 243. See also General Strike, Irritation Strike

Sweated wages in South London, 182
Sweden: importance of agriculture, 235; start of socialist movement, 236; Folk-rigsdag discusses general strike, 236; used in 1902 as suffrage argument, 236; Jung Hinkarner party, 236; strikes in 1909, 237; history of 1909 labour war, 237–8; Syndicalism in Sweden, 238

Syndicalism, approves of poor trade unions, 10, 25

Syndicalism, approves of all strikes, 10, 31

Syndicalism, immediate aims of, 29

Syndicalism, in Denmark, 243; in England, 187–8; in France, 10, 14, 16 et seq.; in Germany, 151, 159, 161; in Italy, 111, 115 et seq.; in Portugal, 235; in Spain, 229; in Sweden, 238

Syndicalism indifferent to theories, 10, 16

Syndicalism, middle-class sympathisers disliked by, 10, 18

Syndicalism, ultimate aim of, 27, 289

"Syndicalisme, Ce qu’est le," 29, 31

"Syndicalisme, Les bases du," 24, 28, 30

"Syndicalisme, Le . . . dans d’Évolution Sociale," 33

"Syndicalisme, Les deux Méthodes du," 22, 27, 30

"Syndicalisme et Révolution," 19, 23, 24, 27

Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et Syndicalisme réformiste," 62

Syndicalisten, 238

Syndical, Le, 18, 23, 26, 30

Syndical of printers in Paris, 120

Syndicats jaunes, 16

Syndicats mixtes, 15

TILLET, BEN, 210

Trade unionism as a fighting movement, 277
Index

Trade unionism: English, 24, 173, 181, 190 et seq.; French, 12; German, 149 et seq.; Italian, 103; Spanish, 229, 230; Swedish, 236
Trade unionism and women's wages, 182, 275
Trade unions, federation of 25, 26, 190, 239
Trade unions, Leone on, 135
Transport Worker, 206
Turati, 111

Unskilled workers, 194
Viviani, 267
Votes for women, 276
Wages, 91, 181, 182, 194, 200, 201, 207
Waldenburg miners' strike, 153
"Wealth of Nations, The," 83
Welsh coal-miners' strike, 178, 195