governments or fascist occupation, then saw their society destroyed by the fighting. They were then occupied by western allied or soviet forces, which created puppet states under the control of either the United States or the Soviet Union. Each of these transitions often involved the brutal suppression of working class radicalism and the murder of many socialists, syndicalists, and anarchists.

SYNDICALISM TODAY

Despite this, syndicalism was never entirely extinguished, with various syndicalist and anarcho-syndicalist groups surviving the cold war as dissident minority tendencies within socialist and trade union movements that were increasingly turning to reformism and state action. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the continued failure of social democracy, and capitalism increasingly looking like it has no idea how to keep itself going without destroying the planet, we now has an opportunity to rebuild a radical workers movement, and anarcho-syndicalist unions and propaganda groups have become active again across the world.

This has often been a difficult task, as the Soviet Union and social democracy have done a great job of discrediting socialism in general. By their actions they have associated socialism with state tyranny at worst, and ineffective and dishonest political parties and trade unions at best. Most workers no longer have any intuitive understanding of bottom up, genuinely worker controlled forms of socialism. Because of this, anarcho-syndicalist unions today are often starting from scratch, having to rebuild the broader socialist understanding that they originally grew out of.

However, the history of syndicalism should give us hope. When the First International split, it was the proto-syndicalists who continued on with a functional new international, while the social democratic side was left with an empty husk. The later IWA had great global reach at the height of its powers, and many of its sections had memberships in the hundreds of thousands. The CNT had over 1.5 million members at its peak, and stopped a military coup with nothing but stolen and scavenged weapons while the Spanish state was paralysed.

The Spanish collectives, built from the bottom up and in the heat of a civil war, did more to put economic, social, and political power in the hands of the working class than the Soviet Union managed in over 70 years, and they offered more than any social democratic party has ever dared to even suggest. Syndicalist ideas can be popular, syndicalist movements can achieve the ends we want, and the alternatives have failed.

However, hope alone does not build movements, and there is a massive amount of work that needs to be done in order to rebuild the kind of militant, bottom up, and genuinely revolutionary organisations that characterised much of pre-cold war socialism. This work needs to be done if we have any chance of effectively opposing capitalism today.

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ANARCHISM AND SYNDICALISM

TWO IDEAS OF SOCIALISM

Today socialism is mostly associated with social democratic political parties like Labour or totalitarian states like North Korea. So close is this association that most people assume that socialism is an inherently statist idea that depends on great leaders to guide us to utopia through government action.

This kind of socialism has often been a disappointment to the working class, as it has never achieved a society in which we workers are empowered with real control over the economy we have built. At best it has achieved limited improvements to workers' living conditions without threatening the overall structure that strips workers of any real social, political, or economic power. Also, these improvements have often been later rolled back by the state. At worse, this socialism has been an authoritarian nightmare that inflicted just as much suffering, exploitation and oppression on the working class as the worst capitalist regimes. This has led many to conclude that we must accept whatever horrors capitalism inflicts on us, because the alternative is dictatorship and prison camps.

However, there is another kind of socialism. A socialism that rejects the state and is based on the idea that workers should organise together in our communities and our workplaces from the bottom up to push for our interests against not just capitalists, but also the state. In this kind of socialism workers cooperate together to build a world in which we control our workplaces, infrastructure, and communities directly, without any authority standing over us. One of the most developed forms of this free anti-state socialism is anarcho-syndicalism; a combination of the theory of anarchism and the strategy of syndicalism.

Anarcho-syndicalism as an idea did not develop out of the mind of any one theorist, but was built collectively from the struggle and experience of workers involved in fighting for ourselves against state and capital. Because of this, to describe anarcho-syndicalism, this pamphlet will talk both about its history and its theory, as the two are inherently bound up with each other.

THE INTERNATIONAL

Ideas that look like syndicalism and anarchism have always existed within socialism. However, they developed as cohesive movements out of the International Working Man's Association, formed in 1864, which is now most often called the First International. The First International was a broad coalition of different socialist groups from across the world including political parties, propaganda groups, and unions, who followed different theories and strategies.

Eventually these differing tendencies fell out over the direction of the International, which would go on to result in the First International splitting in two in 1872. Out of this split came a tendency that would go on to become what is today known as the theoretical framework of Marxism and the strategy of social democracy.

Social democracy is a strategy that revolves around the working class seizing the power of the state and using that power to take control of the economy from the top down to implement socialism. Its advocates in the international, including Karl Marx, thought that the working class should form political parties as our main revolutionary vehicle, with unions relegated to a supporting role and only fighting for better conditions within capitalism.

The other tendency to emerge out of the First International, which would go on to become the theoretical framework of anarchism and the strategy of syndicalism, opposed this idea. The early anarchists had already rejected all forms of authority as inherently exploitative and oppressive, including the authority of the state. They thought that seizure of the state would result in the creation of a new political ruling class that would exploit and oppress the working class, foreshadowing many of the problems we have faced in the last century and a half with "socialist" states.

Instead, they proposed focusing on organising in the workplace, with unions not only using direct action to fight for better conditions within capitalism, but acting as the vehicle through which the working class would overthrow capitalism and institute socialism from the bottom up, bypassing or overthrowing the state along the way.

ANARCHISM AND SYNDICALISM

After this split, the anti-state tendency developed its ideas and eventually adopted the names those ideas are know by today; syndicalism and anarchism. Syndicalism, as a movement independent from anarchism, developed as an apolitical strategy, attempting to organise as many workers as possible in the workplace regardless of their political views. Alongside this there developed a tendency within Anarchism that thought that, while anarchists should take part in worker organisations and push for our ideas within them, those worker organisations should remain apolitical and open to as many workers as possible.

On the other hand, anarcho-syndicalism developed as a direct combination of worker organisation and anarchist theory. This was based on the idea that only anarchism could provide an analysis that would keep syndicalist unions from developing internal hierarchies that might become a new ruling class, or from becoming reformist and abandoning their revolutionary goals. These concerns were validated, as during the heyday of syndicalism many apolitical unions either drifted into reformism or split in two, creating a reformist union and a functionally anarchist union.

The development of anarcho-syndicalism led to the creation of a specifically anarcho-syndicalist international in 1922. This was formed at a congress in Berlin, attended by Argentine, Chilean, Danish, Dutch, German, Italian, Mexican, Norwegian, Portuguese, and Swedish unions, with the Spanish sending their apologies for being unable to attend due to their delegation being arrested at the border. This international would go on to have affiliates in fifteen countries in Europe, fourteen in Latin America and an affiliate group in Japan, while maintaining sympathetic contact with labour organisations in India. This international continues on to this day after over a hundred years as the International Workers' Association (IWA), of which the Solidarity Federation is the British section.

DEVELOPMENTS

Syndicalism organised across multiple continents in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and workers faced different problems according to the different situations they organised in. Syndicalists were involved not only in small, workplace specific struggles, but also general strikes, rebellions, and revolutions throughout this period. This lead to various refinements of syndicalist practice born out of that hard won experience.

Firstly, syndicalists developed two different strategies for organising within the workplace. In areas without a strong union movement, syndicalists organised their own independent unions. In areas in which there was already a strong union movement, syndicalists attempted to work within those unions and advocated for syndicalist ideas to the rank and file members and form bottom up workers power independent of any mainstream union hierarchy.

Secondly, syndicalists came to understand the importance of organisation outside the workplace in building working class power and participated in rent strikes, struggles over benefits, and mutual aid initiatives. Increasingly syndicalist unions became general purpose vehicles for working class direct action, maintaining workplace organising as a strong central plank of their strategy, but also incorporating broader struggles.

Thirdly, the syndicalist idea of revolution changed and developed. Originally, revolution was pictured as a general strike in which the majority of workers would refuse to work, which would cause the collapse of capitalism. After this the union structure would provide the basis of a new socialist society. This slowly developed into an idea of revolution in which the general strike still plays a part, but in which workers will then have to directly seize their workplaces and defend them against state and capital. Revolutionary unions are a springboard to start a revolution, but new organisations like workplace councils, community councils, and worker militias will have to be formed from this starting point to both better manage the economy and to defend workers from the inevitable violent reaction of the state.

Lastly, anarchism contributed to anarcho-syndicalism a broad critique and disdain for all forms of authority, hierarchy, and privilege outside of simple capitalist exploitation or state oppression, such as patriarchy and white supremacy. This lead to a focus not just on building a revolutionary union, but a revolutionary culture of equality and resistance needed to unify the diverse working class. Building and maintaining such a culture is something that socialists of all stripes often still, unfortunately, struggle with at today.

HIGH POINT AND DECLINE

This all culminated in the Spanish Civil War; in 1936 the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) was involved in stopping a fascist military coup, with workers going on strike and fighting rogue military units in the streets with any weapons they could find while the Spanish republican government mostly sat around looking confused. Workers, seeing the state falter and threatened by a fascist takeover, went on to seize land and workplaces across the areas in which the CNT and other radical unions were active. They formed collectives and federations of collectives, and ended up running significant parts of the Spanish economy from the bottom up without bosses. This is an important achievement in the history of syndicalism and well worth reading up on if you want to know how a genuinely free and egalitarian socialist society might work.

However, although the workers prevented the fascists from taking over the state, fascist forces did manage to seize large parts of Spain, the situation turned into a bloody civil war, and the republican state, aided by the Soviet Union and some fatal mistakes by the CNT, was able to reform itself. Under the guise of united anti-fascist front the state slowly subverted and undermined the workers' collectives, culminating in the violent suppression of much of the bottom up organisation in the republic. Having crushed the working class initiative that stopped the fascist coup in the first place, the Spanish Republic lost the war in 1939 and Spain suffered decades of fascist rule.

The anarcho-syndicalist movement did not get much time to learn from the successes and mistakes of the Spanish Civil War as syndicalism was almost destroyed in World War Two and the following Cold War. Many of the syndicalist strongholds first suffered under fascist